S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

9116

I N A S S E M B L Y

January 28, 2016

Introduced by M. of A. O'DONNELL -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to establish a pilot program to provide early screening and intervention services for children with risk factors for dyslexia

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. (a) The commissioner of education is hereby directed to establish a pilot program to provide early screening and intervention services for children with risk factors for dyslexia, including low phonemic awareness. The commissioner shall select three school districts to participate in the pilot program, one of which shall be located in an urban setting, one of which shall be located in a suburban setting, and one of which shall be located in a rural setting. Any school district selected to participate in the pilot program may establish a partnership with a regional library or library system for purposes of the pilot program. To be considered for the pilot program, a school district shall submit a proposal to the commissioner which:

(1) identifies a method of screening children for low phonemic awareness and other risk factors for dyslexia;

(2) provides for the enrollment of children identified as having risk factors for dyslexia in a reading program staffed by teachers trained in multisensory structured language programs; and

(3) includes a methodology for evaluating the effects of the reading program on the children's identified risk factors.

(b) The goal of the pilot program shall be to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of early reading assistance programs for children with risk factors for dyslexia and to evaluate whether those programs can reduce future special education costs.

(c) The commissioner shall establish guidelines and procedures for the pilot program. The commissioner shall consult with the international dyslexia association or any other nationally recognized organization that specializes in multisensory structured language programs for the treatment of dyslexia in establishing and operating the pilot program.

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [ ] is old law to be omitted.

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(d)(1) Under the pilot program, each participating school district, through early childhood reading instruction and reading assistance programs, shall:

(i) screen children six years of age or younger for indications of dyslexia;

(ii) provide appropriate reading intervention services for those children suspected of having dyslexia; and

(iii) administer assessments, approved by the commissioner, to ascertain whether the intervention services improve those students' reading and learning.

(2) When a child is suspected of having dyslexia, the district shall notify the child's parent or guardian of that fact and that the child, as part of the pilot program, is eligible to receive reading intervention services to measure the effectiveness of early reading assistance programs. The district shall require the parent or guardian to indicate in writing that the parent or guardian voluntarily and knowingly consents to the child's participation in the pilot program for the provision of reading intervention services. Each district shall provide to the parents of children suspected of having dyslexia information about the learning disability, recommended multisensory treatments, and possible services under this pilot program or the education law.

(3) Each participating school district shall report annually to the commissioner data about the operation and results of the pilot program, as required by the commissioner in the manner prescribed by the commissioner.

(e) For the purposes of this act, "dyslexia" means a specific learning disorder that is neurological in origin and that is characterized by unexpected difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities not consistent with the person's intelligence, motivation, and sensory capabilities, which difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language.

(f) The pilot program shall operate for three full school years, beginning with the next succeeding school year that begins at least three months after the effective date of this section.

S 2. The commissioner of education shall apply for private and other nonstate funds, and shall use available state funds appropriated to the department of education for the pilot program established pursuant to section one of this act.

S 3. The commissioner of education shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature no later than the thirty-first day of December of the third school year in which the pilot program is operating containing the commissioner's evaluation of the results of the pilot program and legislative recommendations whether to continue, expand, or make changes to the pilot program.

S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.