



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Bill Analysis

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H.B. 96

129th General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Reps. Celeste and Brenner, Stebelton, Amstutz, Garland, Foley, Letson, Weddington, Pillich, Dovilla, Patmon, Ramos, Hollington, Phillips, Lundy, Thompson, O'Brien, Yuko, Murray, Williams, Stinziano, Stautberg, Antonio, Reece, Hagan, Fende, Snitchler, Fedor, Milkovich, Clyde, Winburn

BILL SUMMARY

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a pilot project to test the delivery of early screening and intervention services for children with dyslexia through voluntary partnerships among school districts and regional public libraries.
- Requires the state Superintendent to evaluate the pilot project and report results to the General Assembly.
- Specifies in state statute that dyslexia is a learning disability for which a child may receive special education services.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Dyslexia pilot project

The bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a pilot project to provide early screening and intervention services for children with dyslexia. The pilot project must establish three separate partnerships, each between a school district and a regional library or library system. It must operate for three full school years, beginning with the school year that begins at least three months after the bill's effective date. In the middle of the third year, the state Superintendent must submit an evaluation of the pilot project to the General Assembly (see "**Pilot project evaluation**" below). The specified goal of the pilot project is to "demonstrate and evaluate the

effectiveness of early reading assistance programs for children with dyslexia and to evaluate whether those programs can reduce future special education costs."¹

The state Superintendent must solicit and select districts and libraries to participate in the pilot project on a voluntary basis, but one of the partnerships must operate in an urban setting, one in a suburban setting, and one in a rural setting. While the bill does not provide funding for the pilot project, it requires the state Superintendent to apply for private and other nonstate funds, and to use whatever state funds are available to the Department of Education, to support the pilot project. In addition, the state Superintendent must consult with the International Dyslexia Association in establishing and operating the pilot project.²

Duties of participating districts and libraries

Each school district-library partnership participating in the pilot project must screen children who are six years old or younger for indications of dyslexia and provide those suspected of having dyslexia with reading intervention services. After providing those early intervention services, the partnership must administer assessments, approved by the state Superintendent, to ascertain whether the intervention services have improved those students' reading and learning. Moreover, the partnership must provide the parents of children suspected of having dyslexia information about (1) the disability, (2) recommended multisensory treatment for it, and (3) possible services under state and federal law. (See "**Background on IDEA**" below.) Finally, each participating partnership is required to report to the state Superintendent about the operation and results of the pilot project to facilitate the Superintendent's evaluation of it.³

Pilot project evaluation

The bill requires the state Superintendent to evaluate the pilot project and report its results to the General Assembly by December 31 of the third school year in which the pilot project is operating. The report also must contain legislative recommendations whether to continue, expand, or make changes to the pilot project.⁴

¹ R.C. 3323.25(A).

² R.C. 3323.25(A).

³ R.C. 3323.25(B).

⁴ R.C. 3323.25(C).

Definition of "dyslexia"

For purposes of the pilot project, the bill defines dyslexia as "a specific learning disorder that is neurological in origin and that is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, which difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language."⁵

Statutory specification that dyslexia is a learning disability

The bill adds a recognition in state statute that "dyslexia" is a learning disability for which a child may receive special education services.⁶

Both federal and state law define a "child with a disability" as a person between three and 22 years old who has one or more prescribed learning, physical, or developmental disabilities and, because of that identified disability, needs special education instructional and related services.⁷ Federal statutory law, federal administrative regulations, and the Ohio Administrative Code (the latter two of which also have the force of law) further delineate the disabilities for which a student may receive special services. In so doing, all three currently specify that (1) a child with a disability includes a child with a "specific learning disability" and (2) one of the recognized specific learning disabilities is dyslexia.⁸ However, the state statutory definition does not specifically include dyslexia. The bill adds to that statute a recognition that the term specific learning disability includes dyslexia.

Background on IDEA

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires each state that receives federal funding to ensure that the state and local education agencies identify children with disabilities and offer them a "free appropriate public education" (often referred to as "FAPE").⁹ In Ohio, a "local education agency" (LEA) is a city, exempted village, or local school district, a community school, or a STEM school.¹⁰ The LEA must provide these services in accordance with the student's "individualized

⁵ R.C. 3323.25(D).

⁶ R.C. 3323.01.

⁷ R.C. 3323.01(A) and 20 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1401(3).

⁸ 20 U.S.C. 1401(3) and (30), 34 Code of Federal Regulations 300.8(a) and (b)(10), and Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-01(B)(10)(x).

⁹ 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.* See also R.C. 3323.02, not in the bill.

¹⁰ R.C. 3323.01(L), 3323.012, and 3326.12 (latter two not in the bill).

education program" (generally called the student's "IEP"). The IEP is a document uniquely developed for each student that prescribes the special services needed by that student to benefit from education.¹¹

The state has implemented the federal provisions through R.C. Chapter 3323. and Chapter 3301-51 of the Ohio Administrative Code. But the mandate for services to children with disabilities and most of the details in how those services must be provided, including due process procedures, are mostly a matter of federal statutory law and administrative regulations.

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	02-10-11

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¹¹ R.C. 3323.011, not in the bill.