

Senate Bill 1003-A

Testimony in Favor, with exceptions
Date: May 3, 2017

Chair Doherty and House Committee on Education Members,

I am Susan Farmer, a licensed teacher specializing in dyslexia.
I have a 21-year-old daughter with profound dyslexia, and currently tutor dyslexic students.

The public school system failed my child and I was forced to home school her and get her private tutoring. This bill is a crucial first step toward getting help for as many as 20% of our population. Schools should be the FIRST place to notice the symptoms of this #1 cause of reading failure in our nation. When children are identified early and given the proper intervention, their entire life can be dramatically changed.

I am concerned about the wording for Page 2, (6)(b) which reads:

(b) Provide guidance for notifications to be sent by school districts to parents of students who are identified as having risk factors for reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

This language has a loophole which does not actually REQUIRE the school to notify the parent of the outcome of their child's screening. Telling ODE to "provide guidance for notifications," but then not have a law which mandates the school to actually notify the parents, will allow schools to decide to not notify parents.

Can you imagine a physician screening a child for diabetes, and then not telling the parent that the child actually has it?

The wording could be changed to say:

Provide guidance for notifications which must be sent by school districts....

Please pass SB1003-A so our students can be properly screened.

Please consider adding language to mandate schools notify parents of the screening results, rather than assuming they will do so.

I sincerely appreciate your time and attention to the points in my testimony. Thank you.

Susan Farmer