

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5372

I am Yvette Goorevitch, Chief of Specialized Learning and Support Services in the great city of Norwalk. I have recently joined the leadership team in Norwalk after 4 decades of educational, clinical and administrative leadership roles in the State of NY. I began teaching in 1975, and for those of you old enough to know the significance of this, it was the year that PL 94-142, the pre-eminant Federal Legislation mandating services for students with disabilities was passed. Studying with the leaders at Teacher's College, Columbia University for my graduate school programs, I have known first hand, the need for higher education to ensure adequate teacher preparation programs. Over the past four decades I have ensured in-service opportunities to hundreds of special educators and support staff to build capacity to serve students with disabilities.

In September 2018, I joined the Norwalk Public School District. In large measure, I was convinced that I should make Norwalk my new professional home because of the leadership in the State who recognizes that students with Dyslexia require appropriate assessment and identification procedures and because Norwalk Public Schools understands and has committed to systematic specialized intervention to serve the students with reading disorders, specifically dyslexia.

During the past 6 months, I have seen the cost to the local taxpayers for the cost of IEEs, days spent in PPTs, mediation and hearings to defend the assessments and interventions provided by the school district. Most importantly, I have witnessed the emotional cost to parents and teachers when distrust is developed because of insufficient capacity to serve our students.

I am here today as the Administrator of the 7th largest city in Connecticut. I am here to urge this committee to support House Bill 5372 to ensure that teacher training programs in higher education will prepare staff trained in Structured Literacy. Districts need the ability to recruit staff who meet the special education teacher certification requirements and have the clinical skills to serve our students with reading disabilities, specifically students with Dyslexia. I urge this committee to assure that candidates are available to build capacity within the public school district. Parents should not need to choose between their local school and private high cost services to ensure that their child will be provided with the systematic interventions needed to learn to read. Inclusive communities build inclusive schools where all means all, including students with dyslexia.

Norwalk is proud of our collaboration with Fairfield University which has helped to develop the first public school district dyslexia clinic. Fairfield University has partnered to provide in-service training to special education teachers, speech pathologists and psychologists in research based assessment and intervention strategies. We are in our first year of implementation. This can serve as a Statewide model, in fact it can serve as a National model and requires legislative support of HB 5372 to assure that School district's can recruit teacher candidates eligible for State certification prepared to meet the reading challenges presented by our children with dyslexia. We can provide excellence, equity and cost effective interventions when

we build capacity at the local public school level. We need your support to make HB 5372 a reality.

Your school districts cannot wait. Your children cannot wait.

Yvette Goorevitch  
Chief Specialized Learning and Student Support Services  
Norwalk Public Schools  
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