

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5349

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to reading instruction.

**Brief Description:** Creating a dyslexia reading instruction pilot program.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 3/21/05, 3/28/05 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**

- Creates a dyslexia reading instruction pilot program.
- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to evaluate the individual pilot projects.
- Directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to study the effectiveness of the pilot program.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos, Shabro and Tom.

**Staff:** Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

**Background:**

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability, resulting in difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties in other language skills such as spelling, writing, and speaking. Dyslexia is referred to as a learning disability because it can have an adverse effect on student academic performance.

The International Dyslexia Association estimates 15 to 20 percent of the population has a reading disability, and 85 percent of those with a reading disability have dyslexia. Under state administrative rules, a student with dyslexia may qualify for special education services as a student with a specific learning disability. To qualify for special education services, it must be determined that the student's dyslexia adversely affects the student's

educational performance and cannot be addressed exclusively through the general education environment, with or without individual accommodations.

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**Summary of Bill:**

A pilot program for dyslexia reading instruction, known as The Lorraine Wojahn Dyslexia Pilot Reading Program, is created. The purpose of the pilot program is to improve reading instructional methods for students with dyslexia. Additional focus will be placed on writing and speaking skills and the early identification of students with dyslexia. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) will administer the program, to the extent funds are available, in up to five school districts selected from various regions of the state, including at a minimum, the northwest, southwest, and eastern regions. Participation in the pilot program must be based upon research-supported assessment and treatment. The SPI will evaluate the pilot projects and, based upon the evaluation, provide information to educators throughout the state on effective practices in helping students with dyslexia. The pilot program expires June 30, 2010.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, to the extent funds are available, will study the effectiveness of the program in identifying students with dyslexia and the effectiveness of the educational services provided. The study must be completed by June 30, 2010.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** (In support) Dyslexia reflects the disparity between one's ability to cognitively understand information and one's ability to read and visually process the information. Many parents go through heartfelt experiences trying to assist their children who have dyslexia and school districts have difficulty knowing what the state-of-the art instruction is for dyslexic students. In the area of dyslexia we may not be providing adequate educational delivery services. Schools need to have the necessary means to correct dyslexia.

With the proper instruction we can intervene early and correct dyslexia instead of just accommodating it. The teaching methods for dyslexic students can benefit the general student population as well. It is important to look at all the information and resources available to help all children. If we looked at dyslexia like we do a medical condition, it would be an epidemic. When treating someone with a chronic condition and expending resources to do it, if the treatment isn't working we should look at something different. We need to look at something different for both diagnosing dyslexia as well as for providing instruction to these students.

This is a measure intended to give hope to kids, to encourage them to think about college, and to alleviate what may be their greatest anxiety of being asked to read in school. This anxiety created in dyslexic children is not necessary.

(With concerns) The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) appreciates the focus and purpose of the bill and empathizes with the struggles of parents and families. The OSPI's summer institutes have provided teachers with the latest research on overcoming dyslexia. The agency also has two related pilot projects in their second year of operation. These pilots focus on early diagnosis and intervention with the goal of reducing referrals to special education.

Dyslexia diagnosis and instruction already is included in the K-12 reading model guide from the OSPI, but more resources are needed to disseminate the information to all school districts in the state.

The higher education community is where we need to focus. Teacher preparation programs should include the most up-to-date information and research for assessing and instructing dyslexic students. Accountability is the issue. We are lacking a policy to require teachers to come out of college with better skills to use the research surrounding reading difficulties and/or dyslexia.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Senator Kastama, prime sponsor; Enid Duncan; Edward Duncan; Joan Santucci; and Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.

(With concerns) Mickey Lahmann and N. Sue Geiger, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.