

ASSEMBLY, No. 1292

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 216th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2014 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Diegnan

SYNOPSIS

Establishes pilot program in DOE to provide assistive technology to elementary and middle school students with dyslexia.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/10/2014)

1 AN ACT establishing an assistive technology pilot program in the
2 Department of Education.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

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7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological
9 in origin and is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent
10 word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities;

11 b. With 10% of the population in the United States suffering
12 from dyslexia, dyslexia is the most common learning disability in
13 children, and it persists throughout life;

14 c. The difficulties that typically result from dyslexia result
15 from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is
16 often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the
17 provision of effective classroom instruction; and

18 d. Since individuals with dyslexia typically do not have
19 difficulty with comprehension, but rather with the task of reading
20 itself, assistive technology that can scan and read the material aloud
21 while the students read along on a laptop is an invaluable tool
22 which can help students with dyslexia to read at grade-level and
23 will greatly increase their academic success and self-esteem.

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25 2. a. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
26 Office of Information Technology, shall establish a three-year
27 assistive technology pilot program. The purpose of the program
28 shall be to provide elementary and middle school students who have
29 dyslexia with access to assistive technology in the classroom. The
30 assistive technology shall scan and read written material aloud in
31 order to supplement the phonological component that is often
32 deficient in students with dyslexia to assist these students to read at
33 grade-level. Under the pilot program, the commissioner shall
34 provide a grant to each of the pilot districts to finance the costs
35 associated with the acquisition of the assistive technology and the
36 training of teachers in the use of the technology.

37 b. A school district that wants to participate in the pilot
38 program shall submit an application to the commissioner. The
39 application shall provide information on the number of students in
40 the district who have dyslexia, the grade-levels of those students,
41 the grade-level reading ability of those students, the assistive
42 technology to be acquired under the program, and plans for the
43 training of teachers in the use of the assistive technology. The
44 application shall detail how the use of the assistive technology will
45 serve to advance the academic achievement of students with
46 dyslexia.

1 c. The commissioner shall select three districts in each of the
2 northern, central, and southern regions of the State to participate in
3 the pilot program and shall seek a cross section of school districts
4 from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State.

5 d. At the conclusion of the pilot program, the commissioner
6 shall submit a report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of
7 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature. The report shall
8 include: the number of students who participated in the pilot
9 program; the grade-levels of those students; the grade-level reading
10 ability of those students prior to participation in the pilot program;
11 the impact of the pilot program on increasing the grade-level
12 reading ability of those students; the number of teachers trained in
13 the use of the assistive technology; and the commissioner's
14 recommendation on the feasibility of implementing the program on
15 a Statewide basis.

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17 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
18 the 2014-2015 school year.

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STATEMENT

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23 This bill establishes a three-year assistive technology pilot
24 program in the Department of Education. The purpose of the
25 program is to provide assistive technology to elementary and
26 middle school students with dyslexia. The assistive technology will
27 scan and read written material aloud in order to supplement the
28 phonological component that is often deficient in students with
29 dyslexia to assist these students to read at grade-level. Under the
30 pilot program, the Commissioner of Education will provide a grant
31 to each of the pilot districts to finance the costs associated with the
32 acquisition of the assistive technology and the training of teachers
33 in the use of the technology.

34 Under the bill, a school district that wants to participate in the
35 pilot program will submit an application to the commissioner. The
36 application must provide information on the number of students in
37 the district who have dyslexia, the grade-levels of those students,
38 the grade-level reading ability of those students, the assistive
39 technology to be acquired under the program, and plans for the
40 training of teachers in the use of the assistive technology. The
41 application is required to detail how the use of the assistive
42 technology will serve to advance the academic achievement of
43 students with dyslexia.

44 The commissioner will select three districts in each of the
45 northern, central, and southern regions of the State to participate in
46 the pilot program, and is required to seek a cross section of school
47 districts from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State.

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1 Under the bill, the commissioner will submit a report to the
2 Governor and the Legislature at the conclusion of the pilot program.
3 The report is required to include: the number of students who
4 participated in the pilot program; the grade-levels of those students;
5 the grade-level reading ability of those students prior to
6 participation in the pilot program; the impact of the pilot program
7 on increasing the grade-level reading ability of those students; the
8 number of teachers trained in the use of the assistive technology;
9 and the commissioner's recommendation on the feasibility of
10 implementing the program on a Statewide basis.