



HB 3880

*The following are the Texas State Teachers Association's
comments on HB 3880.*

The Texas State Teachers Association is respectfully submitting testimony on Representative Dutton's House Bill (HB) 3880, with the confident understanding that the coming substitute language will be something we can support. TSTA is in full support of the principles of the introduced legislation, namely that the confusion and ambiguity in Texas related to how best to identify and serve students with dyslexia be clarified. As filed, the legislation served as a placeholder while stakeholders, including teachers, were able to fully engage in discussions.

In 2018, the US Department of Education cited the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for failure to ensure that all children with disabilities are located, evaluated and identified for special education services and for failure to ensure that districts were complying with their Child Find responsibilities. The commissioner of education regularly reports an improvement in Child Find, and therefore an increase in the number of students identified as needing special education supports. However, the concerning and oft overlooked issue is that the *servicing* of these found students continues to lag in Texas, and this is especially true for dyslexic students. The state is still under the corrective action process required by the federal government, and this is due in large part to a lack of clarity in law related to identifying and serving students with dyslexia.

As it relates to educators in particular, current law obscures the ability of districts to both assign and fund personnel that specialize in the treatment of dyslexia and related disorders. This not only interferes in the ability of districts to hire and place educators most suited to serving dyslexic students, including Certified Academic Language Therapists (CALTs), it is also not in the best interest of students.

The committee substitute will clarify many aspects of law and move Texas towards compliance in several ways.

- It guides districts to follow the same process for the evaluation of dyslexia as they would for any other disability that might require special education services.
- It clarifies that a student who requires dyslexia interventions is to be served by the most qualified professional available to a student, adding specifically that dyslexia professionals such as CALTs or certified dyslexia interventionists do not also need to hold a special education teaching certificate.
- It adjusts the dyslexia allotment and how to prioritize the funds received from this allotment.

In Texas, we have had longstanding state laws related to the identification and treatment for students with dyslexia and related disorders, such as dysgraphia. We have laid the trail in many ways regarding the codified recognition of this category of disability. However, over time the landscape of identifying and treating students has changed nationwide, and it is time for Texas to catch up.