An act to add Sections 56025.5, 56031.5, 56049, 56337.6, and 56337.7 to, and to repeal and add Sections 44227.7 and 56245 of, the Education Code, relating to special education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1369, as introduced, Frazier. Special education: dyslexia.

(1) Existing law requires all children with disabilities residing in the state, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, to be identified, located, and assessed. Existing law provides that a pupil who is assessed as being dyslexic and meets certain eligibility criteria for the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act category of specific learning disabilities is entitled to special education and related services. Existing law defines a “specific learning disability” as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, and includes in that definition dyslexia and other specified conditions.

This bill would require local educational agencies to screen all pupils enrolled in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive, as provided, to identify dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions, and to notify a pupil’s parent or legal guardian of any identified dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunction, as specified. The bill would define “dyslexia” and “specific learning disability,” as specified. By imposing additional duties on local educational agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.
(2) Existing law encourages local in-service training programs for regular education teachers and special education teachers to include a component on, and institutions of higher education that provide teacher training programs to emphasize, the recognition of, and teaching strategies for, specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia and related disorders.

This bill would instead require local in-service training programs for school psychologists, regular education teachers, and special education teachers in local educational agencies to include a component on, and, commencing with the 2016–17 academic year, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to require institutions of higher education that provide teacher training programs to include instruction in, the recognition of, and appropriate evidence-based teaching methodologies for, dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions. By requiring local educational agencies to expand their local in-service training programs, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(3) This bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop, on or before January 1, 2017, program guidelines for dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions to be used to assist regular education teachers, special education teachers, and parents to identify, assess, plan, provide, evaluate, and improve educational services to pupils, as specified. The bill would require the Superintendent to adopt, on or before January 1, 2017, an evidence-based screening instrument to identify pupils, and an evidence-based, multisensory, direct, explicit, structured, and sequential approach to instructing pupils, who have dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions.

(4) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.


The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 44227.7 of the Education Code is repealed.
44227.7. The Legislature encourages institutions of higher education to provide, in teacher training programs, increased emphasis on the recognition of, and teaching strategies for, specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia and related disorders. Experts in the field of these disabilities should be utilized for that purpose.

SEC. 2. Section 44227.7 is added to the Education Code, to read:

44227.7. Commencing with the 2016–17 academic year, the commission shall require institutions of higher education that provide teacher training programs to include in those programs instruction in the recognition of, and appropriate evidence-based teaching methodologies for, dyslexia, as defined in Section 56025.5, or other reading and writing dysfunctions, including dyscalculia, dysgraphia, auditory and visual processing disabilities, and related disorders.

SEC. 3. Section 56025.5 is added to the Education Code, to read:

56025.5. “Dyslexia” means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. Other characteristics include, but are not limited to, difficulty in acquiring language skills; inability to comprehend oral or written language; difficulty in rhyming words; difficulty in naming letters, recognizing letters, matching letters to sounds, and blending sounds when speaking and reading words; difficulty recognizing and remembering sight words; consistent transposition of number sequences, and letter reversals, inversions, and substitutions; and difficulty in replication of content.

SEC. 4. Section 56031.5 is added to the Education Code, to read:

56031.5. “Specific learning disability” includes dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, auditory and visual processing disabilities, and related disorders.
SEC. 5. Section 56049 is added to the Education Code, to read:

56049. (a) On or before January 1, 2017, the Superintendent shall develop program guidelines for dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions to be used to assist regular education teachers, special education teachers, and parents to identify, assess, plan, provide, evaluate, and improve educational services to pupils.

(b) The program guidelines shall include characteristics typical of pupils with dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions, and evidence-based strategies for their remediation.

(c) The Superintendent shall consult with teachers, administrators, school psychologists, and other educational professionals involved in the identification and treatment of dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions.

(d) The Superintendent shall disseminate the program guidelines and provide technical assistance regarding their use and implementation to parents, teachers, administrators, other education professionals, and faculty members in teacher training programs of institutions of higher education.

SEC. 6. Section 56245 of the Education Code is repealed.

56245. The Legislature encourages the inclusion, in local in-service training programs for regular education teachers and special education teachers in local educational agencies, of a component on the recognition of, and teaching strategies for, specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia and related disorders.

SEC. 7. Section 56245 is added to the Education Code, to read:

56245. Local in-service training programs for school psychologists, regular education teachers, and special education teachers in local educational agencies shall include a component on the recognition of, and appropriate evidence-based teaching methodologies for, dyslexia, as defined in Section 56025.5, or other reading and writing dysfunctions, including dyscalculia, dysgraphia, auditory and visual processing disabilities, and related disorders.

SEC. 8. Section 56337.6 is added to the Education Code, to read:

56337.6. (a) On or before January 1, 2017, the Superintendent shall adopt both of the following:

(1) An evidence-based screening instrument to identify pupils who have dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions.
An evidence-based, multisensory, direct, explicit, structured, and sequential approach to instructing pupils who have dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions.

(b) Commencing with the 2017–18 academic year, a local educational agency shall use the screening instrument specified in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) to identify pupils who have dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions, and shall implement the evidence-based multisensory approach to instructing pupils who have dyslexia or other reading and writing dysfunctions specified in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a). A local educational agency shall ensure that teachers receive appropriate training on the screening instrument and the instruction approach.

SEC. 9. Section 56337.7 is added to the Education Code, to read:

56337.7. A local educational agency shall screen all pupils enrolled in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive, at least once during the period in which a pupil is enrolled in those grade levels, to identify dyslexia, as defined in Section 56025.5, or other reading and writing dysfunctions. If the screening identifies dyslexia, as defined in Section 56025.5, or other reading and writing dysfunctions in a pupil, the local educational agency that administered the screening shall notify the pupil’s parent or legal guardian of the finding in writing within 30 calendar days.

SEC. 10. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.