

- SUBJECT:** Requirements for dyslexia screening, testing, and teacher training
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Deshotel, Dutton, Gooden, K. King, Koop, Meyer, VanDeaver
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Allen, Bohac
- WITNESSES:** For —Amber Elenz, Austin ISD; Chris Masey, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Robin Cowsar; Alicia Joseph; Alice Marsel; Mary Yarus; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Steven Aleman, Disability Rights Texas; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: David Anderson, Arlington ISD Board of Trustees)
- On — Cherry Lee; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kara Belew and Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency)
- BACKGROUND:** Occupations Code, ch. 403 provides the requirements for an individual to become a licensed dyslexia therapist.
- Education Code, ch. 8 governs regional education service centers created to assist school districts in improving student performance in each of 20 regions in Texas. In addition, their purpose is to enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and to implement initiatives assigned by the Legislature or the Commissioner of Education.
- Currently, students in public schools must be tested for dyslexia but no specific time period is set for the testing, which leaves many with dyslexia undiagnosed until late in their education.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1886 would require each regional education service center to

employ a licensed dyslexia therapist as a dyslexia specialist to provide school districts served by the center with support and resources necessary to assist students with dyslexia and their families.

The bill would require students to be screened or tested, as appropriate, for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times in accordance with a program approved by the State Board of Education. The program would require screenings at the end of the school year in kindergarten and first grade.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) would be required to annually develop a list of training opportunities regarding dyslexia, including at least one available online, that satisfy continuing education requirements for educators who teach students with dyslexia. A training opportunity would have to comply with the knowledge and practice standards of an international organization on dyslexia and enable an educator to:

- understand and recognize dyslexia; and
- implement systematic, explicit, and evidence-based instruction to meet the educational needs of a student with dyslexia.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2017, and would apply beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.