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April 16, 2015

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell
Chair, Assembly Committee on Education
The State Capitol, Room 4166
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 1369 (Frazier), as amended on April 14, 2015
POSTION: OPPOSE

Dear Assemblymember O'Donnell:

The California Teachers Association (CTA) opposes AB 1369 by Assemblymember Frazier. AB 1369 requires school districts to screen pupils enrolled in grades K-3 to identify dyslexia and to notify a pupil's parent or legal guardian of any identified dyslexia; defines "dyslexia" and "specific learning disability"; requires a dyslexia component in local in-service training programs for school psychologists and teachers; requires the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to require teacher preparation programs to include instruction in dyslexia by 2016-17 and requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop by January 1, 2017, program guidelines for dyslexia for educators and parents, and requires the SPI to adopt by January 1, 2017, an evidence-based screening instrument to identify pupils who have dyslexia.

CTA believes preschool to grade three students should have access to a curriculum that prepares them for further elementary education and leads them to a secondary and post-secondary education. This curriculum should be developmentally appropriate and allow time to master appropriate grade-level skills. CTA believes testing of students should not detract from time allocated for the delivery of required curriculum or cause negative impact on students' academic performance.

Mass testing of all students in early grades will result in over-identifying dyslexia, other specific learning disabilities, or other related disorders. Many young children display behaviors that can be misidentified as learning issues, when those behaviors are developmentally appropriate and will not be manifested as lifelong learning disabilities. New mandated screening/testing of all students in grades K-3 lessens the instructional time available for learning required curriculum; and adversely affects students' ability to learn the curriculum in a timely manner to master grade level skills and academic state standards. Local educational agencies have adequate systems in place for identifying students who may need special education services.

AB 1369 while well-intended is unnecessary, leads to over-identifying dyslexia in young students, mandates more testing and jeopardizes the limited instructional learning time for students in grades K-3 to meet state academic standards. Education professionals are committed to meeting the needs of students with dyslexia to succeed academically, however, this bill creates unintended harmful consequences for all students in the early grades.

For these reasons, the California Teachers Association respectfully asks for your "No" vote on AB 1369 (Frazier), when it is heard in the Assembly Education Committee on Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

Sincerely,



Isabelle Garcia
Legislative Advocate

C: Assemblymember Jim Frazier

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