

1 **[Motion to Support SB 691 – Universal Dyslexia Risk Screening]**

2

3 **Supplemental Information:**

4

5 See attached document [Letter of Support]

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24



May 1st, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino  
California Senator, District 25  
1021 O Street, Suite 7630  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for SB 691 (Portantino) – Universal Dyslexia Risk Screening**

Dear Senator Portantino,

On behalf of the San Francisco Youth Commission, I am writing to express our support for SB 691 (Portantino). The bill would require the State Board of Education to adopt screening tools for dyslexia, provide that all students in California be screened for dyslexia in early elementary grades, and that the results be made available in a timely fashion to teachers and parents, as specified.

The Youth Commission is composed of seventeen youths, between the ages of 12 to 23, who represent the diverse communities of San Francisco. Created by the voters under a 1995 amendment to the City Charter, the Youth Commission advises the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor of San Francisco on policies and laws related to young people. The Youth Commission is also charged with providing comments and recommendations on all proposed laws that primarily affect youth before the Board takes final action.

The Youth Commission supports SB 691 because it would establish a statewide policy of early screening toward the goal of eliminating inequities of opportunity in California's public schools. Without universal screening in every school district, only those students with sufficient resources and advocacy on their behalf are identified as having dyslexia and receive the appropriate instruction and support they need to reach their full potential.

Dyslexia is the most common learning disability, with nearly 15% of the general population having the condition. Sadly, students with dyslexia and struggling with reading and other academic content often go undiagnosed. Without identification and support, students with dyslexia are less likely to graduate high school and attend college and face a greater risk of incarceration. In some prisons today, nearly 80% of the inmates are illiterate, and almost one-half of these are on the dyslexia spectrum.

Specifically, SB 691 would require all local educational agencies serving students in any of the grades Kindergarten to Grade 2, inclusive, to use a screening tool approved by the State Board of Education to screen students for dyslexia (unless objected to in writing from the parent or guardian). The bill provides for the results and state dyslexia program guidelines to be made available to parents and teachers in a timely manner so they are aware of the



findings and strategies that can be used to support the student in the general education program, and so that parents understand their rights.

SB 691's provisions to make screening results available to teachers in a timely fashion will help educators better understand their students' challenges and provide needed help. The bill also ensures that parents have the results of screening in a timely fashion, so they are also made aware of their child's challenges and how they can help too.

Identifying students at risk of dyslexia early as a statewide priority is a low-cost investment for the state to help ensure every child has equitable access to a basic education guaranteed as a fundamental right in the California Constitution. Targeting instructional support early for identified students will also significantly reduce costs to schools and families for later academic remediation and support services.

Hundreds of thousands of California students struggle every day with dyslexia and reading at grade-level, often without the proper identification and support to achieve their full potential. By screening all students for dyslexia early, California can help families and teachers achieve the best learning and life outcomes for all students, close academic achievement gaps, and help end the school-to-prison pipeline. Thank you for your continued leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

---

Emily Nguyen, Chair  
Adopted on 05/01/2023  
2022-2023 San Francisco Youth Commission