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Re: SB 126: State Department of Education – Early Literacy and Dyslexia Practices

Statement of Support with Amendment

I am an education analyst and advocate, particularly on issues involving struggling readers, and was a member of the Kirwan Commission. I authored a nationally recognized report in 2003: *The Invisible Dyslexics: How Public School Systems in Baltimore and Elsewhere Discriminate Against Poor Children in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Early Reading Difficulties*.

From this perspective, I strongly support this bill. Yet, even if enacted, it is unlikely to accomplish its intent unless MSDE's capacity for implementation is greatly strengthened. Members of this Committee and many other members of the General Assembly have been sharply critical of MSDE's general lack of management capacity and transparency. To address this severe threat, the bill should include a provision that holds MSDE accountable for effective implementation.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

On or before September 1, 2022, the Department shall report to the General Assembly a plan to ensure that it has the management capacity to implement the requirements of this Bill, including the management capacity to support the work of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and complete the reading and dyslexia handbook so that is available to the public on or before June 1, 2022. The Department shall also submit quarterly reports to the General Assembly on the progress of implementation.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony and proposed amendment. I am glad to discuss further.