NVASP Position Statement: AB341

While NVASP supports the funding of more staff members for academic screenings and interventions, we do not support screening specifically for dyslexia for this too narrowly looks for issues impacting students’ academic progress.  By contrast, we recommend that a problem-solving model that emphasizes universal screening and intervention supports for students struggling to progress academically be promoted. A more contemporary approach that is rooted in evidenced-based practice utilizes a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which includes methods such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Supports. MTSS is an empirically driven approach that responds to the needs of all students.  Through MTSS students are screened for academic (reading, math, written language) and/or behavior difficulties and receive research-based instruction on a school-wide basis, and when necessary, additional targeted or intensive instruction and interventions specifically designed to address the areas of concern. This method utilizes data-based decision making and carefully monitors student progress and response to interventions over time so that comprehensive and coordinated supports might be available in a timely fashion.

Overall, we do not recommend support of AB341 as currently stated because it is not consistent with best practice procedures, but we do support the underlying intent of the bill, which is to improve support for struggling learners. We strongly recommend that the language of this bill be amended in the Senate to incorporate more contemporary language and evidenced based methodologies for supporting students with academic or behavioral issues.

For more information on best practice procedures, please refer to the position statement from the National Association of School Psychologists, which supports the use of Response to Intervention to meet the needs of all students:

<http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/positionpapers/AppropriateAcademicSupport.pdf>