

Parent Voices in Support of SB 612

From Decoding Dyslexia Oregon website. "Our first hearing is March 17th with the Senate Committee on Education. If you cannot make the hearing but want your testimony included, please fill out the form below. Please tell in your own words why you support [Senate Bill 612](#)."

Jennifer Rossetti

Newberg School District

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Representative's Name: Representative Bill Post, Senator's Name: Senator Kim Thatcher

Zip Code: 97132

We are excited that a dyslexia bill has finally made it! As the parents of a child who was identified with Dyslexia we cannot express to you how much this bill is needed! We appreciate the time and work you have done on this bill.

In sharing our story we hope it provides information as to why this Dyslexia bill is needed. To share with you what our family and other families are going through with the schools and teachers.

If the teachers had the Dyslexia education, if the teachers had the resources, if the teachers were allowed to suggest Dyslexia testing. Maybe it wouldn't of taken 8 years for our son to be identified with Dyslexia.

Our story:

Our son started having difficulty in school in Kindergarten. He had some school testing and the school said he would benefit from speech therapy. We worked with the school for accommodations and goal setting and we write up the first IEP.

First grade, his teacher writes in a progress report "He needs to learn to read as the words are printed". He even attends summer school for reading between first and second grade. Between Kindergarten and 3rd grade he is still in speech therapy at school. He is obtaining small and steady growths with the school therapist but the therapist feels he should be further along so at the school's suggestion we seek a speech therapist after school as well.

Our son's 4th grade school year we are pushed by the school for a Neuropsychological evaluation. The school's special education teacher just returned from an Autism conference and tells us "I am 100% convinced your son is on the spectrum". The reason for her diagnosis is 'because after years of speech therapy he should be further along, SMART program hasn't advanced his reading, he can't copy from board to paper in class, and he struggles with vocabulary and spelling". We are outraged with the school and take our son to OHSU for the Neuropsychological Evaluation. The evaluation determines he is not on the Asperger's Spectrum and does not have Autism. It is recommended he has vision testing and auditory processing testing.

Between 4th grade and 6th grade our son has more speech therapy, auditory processing testing, occupational therapy, and vision therapy. We even change his eyeglass prescription to bifocals so he can see printed words easier.

Now brings 7th grade, his private speech therapist leaves the practice right before Christmas. Our son sees a new speech therapist who is in our local town of Newberg. I give Jamie all of the files, reports, testing, etc., she asks for a few days to read everything and we make a follow up appointment. At the follow up appointment she does some testing of her own. At the first speech therapy appointment Jamie asks for us to come into her office. She gives us a paper that has no header, her verbal instructions are to check off what we see as our son. Simple enough until we are checking almost every box! With excitement, I asked Jamie "What is this?" I am teary eyed as I cannot believe this paper is describing our son! And Jamie's reply was simple and heartfelt "Your son should to be tested for Dyslexia". She provided us information for testing and the different types of Dyslexia programs available so we can research the best one for our son.

During the summer of his ending 7th grade year, he receives Dyslexia testing from Better Learning Solutions. We meet with Mrs. Arnold two weeks later for the testing results and she tells us your son has been identified with Dyslexia. She said there were many "red flags" from the notes his teachers wrote in his progress reports and report cards. She said the special education teacher told us specific major signs that suggest to have Dyslexia testing and they are not the signs for Asperger's or Autism.

We were and still are excited that we had an answer and that it made sense. And at the same time are so very angry that we spent 8 years, countless therapy appointments as well as the expenses for all of those therapies. If the teachers from Kindergarten to 7th grade had any sort of Dyslexia awareness our son could of been identified years prior and it could of possibly changed his elementary years. Thankfully we are strong parent advocates and did not listen to the special education teacher during his 4th grade year.

Through Better Learning Solutions we found an amazing Dyslexia Specialist. Our son has Dyslexia tutoring appointments after school, twice a week with Tamera Boring. He has been in the Barton System since August 2013 and is currently on level 7 (there are 10 levels to complete).

Our son is now a freshman in high school. He has grown so much since August 2013 both academically and emotionally. It is amazing to see how much he has grown! He has more self-confidence, better self-esteem, more outgoing, has a bigger group of friends and he talks and shares so much more. He is succeeding and enjoying school. His favorite classes are Pre-Engineering and German. And one of the best things he has shared, "one of my favorite things to do is to read".

If you take anything away from our story please take note that not one teacher from Kindergarten to 7th grade even mentioned Dyslexia. The special education teacher in 4th grade said specific major Dyslexia signs but never mentioned Dyslexia. If teachers can attend Autism/Asperger's conference; why not Dyslexia? We need to stop treating Dyslexia as an incurable, contagious disease that we shouldn't talk about or acknowledge. It's a learning disability.

PLEASE this dyslexia bill MUST pass and MUST get funding! Please do not let another family go through what we have in identifying Dyslexia.

Thank you for taking the time to read our story.

Debbie Nichols

Email: dnichols515@yahoo.com

Representative's Name: Brad Witt. Senator's Name: Betsy Johnson

Zip Code: 97229

As a mother, you know when your kid is struggling and something is \"wrong\". From the start of kindergarten, it was clear to me, that my son was much more intelligent than was being reflected in his school work. He was enrolled in RTI for kindergarten and 1st grade and during his first grade year, I started to inquire about evaluation. I knew something wasn't right; he was so intelligent, yet not reading. At the meeting to discuss the evaluation that was done in his school, I was told that I needed to \"relax and enjoy my son\", nothing was wrong. We decided to move, switch schools, and have our son privately evaluated; the cost was incurred by our family. The results of the evaluation revealed that our son was Dyslexic and wildly intelligent. I couldn't believe that I had begun to doubt myself, to be led to believe that what I was seeing wasn't there. The diagnosis was made a year and half ago, and currently, my son continues to struggle. He is again in RTI, receiving intervention that is not appropriate for his needs. He is a year and a half behind in his reading and yet he is not qualified to receive and IEP or specialized instruction that is appropriate for his needs. The gap continues to widen, the instruction continues to remain the same, and we are constantly battling to find ways to keep our son confident, engaged and understood. If only the education system in Oregon would acknowledge the 1 in 5 kids who are suffering as a result of a lack of identification, appropriate instruction, and training for our educators.

Jennifer Sprinkle

Email: rjmssprink@gmail.com

Representative's Name: Cedric Hayden, Senator's Name: Floyd Prozanski

Zip Code: 97435

My daughter is currently in the 6th grade with an IEP. She has had an IEP since second grade. After taking her to a developmental pediatrician in third grade she was diagnosed with dyslexia. The evaluation from the school doesn't tell us effectively how to teach her to read. Her teachers have the best of intentions but have no idea how her brain works and how best to teach her. She is stressed and frustrated every day from school. She gets especially aggravated when she can see other kids who she understands probably also have some degree of dyslexia but do not receive any accommodations or flexibility. The teachers can't identify these students and their needs even like my 6th grader can. They don't understand that the behaviors students exhibit are because of difficulties they're having. These teachers need more training and flexibility to treat students individually to support their ability to learn. Please pass this bill for our kids & future.

Anonymous from Portland

Representative's Name: Barbara Smith Warner, Senator's Name: Senator Michael Dembrow

Zip Code: 97212

Our daughter was not diagnosed with mild dyslexia until the spring of FOURTH GRADE. This is very late in the game for something like this, which should have been diagnosed years earlier. We were never alerted by any of her teachers because she continually tested at or above average. They all said she was reading at level and I couldn't figure out why on earth reading at home was such a struggle. She COULD read, but she didn't want to read. I'm quite certain that if it weren't for several serendipitous events, she would still not be diagnosed. That part is a long story. I just want to write to you to say this: PLEASE support Senate Bill 612. Teachers need to be taught to recognize signs of dyslexia, especially in children where it is not obvious. PPS needs to recognize that their teachers need training and children need screening. The process to get diagnosed is extremely hard on a child (we opted out of that and did our own private testing to avoid this), and it is extremely expensive and time intensive. I hope PPS will also reevaluate how the process works to get a child diagnosed. Thank you.

Laura Hancock

Portland, PPS School district

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Representative's Name: Barbara Smith Warner, Senator's Name: Senator Michael Dembrow

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