



Senate Committee on Education
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator

As the director of the only nationally accredited program in Oregon specifically focused on teaching students with dyslexia, I have been asked to write you in support of SB 612. I and my organization definitely support this bill.

However, there is one very major problem that I hope you will be able to fix in the final bill.

Section 1 (2) The Department of Education shall designate a dyslexia specialist to provide school districts with resources and support...

The term "dyslexia specialist" is wholly inadequate to describe the knowledge, skills and certifications necessary for the holder of such a pivotal, supervisory position. "Dyslexia specialist" could mean someone who took an on-line commercial overview of dyslexia and got a "certificate" calling them a "dyslexia specialist". To protect the students of Oregon, this bill needs to require that the person in the Department of Education providing "resources and support" have some high level qualifications.

At minimum, such a person would need not just a degree in Special Education, but an additional professional certification to insure mastery of the evidence-based knowledge and skills necessary to oversee instruction for this vulnerable population. This kind of certification is common in many fields: Speech pathologists are certified through ASHA.

There are five non-profit, national certifying bodies setting high standards for professionals working with students with reading disabilities/dyslexia. They are: The Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators; Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA); The International Dyslexia Association; The Slingerland Institute and The International Multisensory Language Education Council (IMSLEC).

Please add the qualification that the "dyslexia specialist" needs to have earned national certification from one of these national, non-profit accrediting groups. Oregon students with dyslexia will succeed only when they are guaranteed instruction from highly qualified teachers overseen by highly qualified administrators.

Thank you for taking time to hear me on this issue. I would be more than happy to discuss this with you at greater length or provide you with any additional information you request.

Sincerely,

Catherine Wood Wyrick MS
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Director, The Blosser Center for Dyslexia Resources.

Everyone deserves the power of literacy

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