

To Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to strongly oppose SB221 which eliminates the need for university coursework to be aligned the Knowledge & Practice Standards of the International Dyslexia Assoc. Without the requirement of the adherence to these standards, there is no accountability and programs may not be effective at addressing the problem of dyslexia which impacts 1 in 5 students. According to SB 221, university programs could simply declare that they are already covering this course content.

I can assure you, they are not. In fact, in my experience, the teachers lack of understanding about the signs of dyslexia are in fact the problem that perpetuates the condition and leads to significant self-esteem issues in kids who experience this problem.

Throughout elementary school, I had teachers assure me that my son did not have dyslexia. I pointed out that we had a family history and he had trouble memorizing letter sounds and rhyming. Everyone said he was fine. In first grade, his teacher complained that he didn't try hard enough. His second grade teacher insisted that "reversals happen." The third grade teacher recommended developmental ophthalmology which we did at our own expense. While I brought up my concern at parent teacher meetings, they insisted it was ok - and I wanted to believe them so I did.

In 6th grade, when my son still misspelled his name, we went to a specialist for an evaluation - again at our own expense. The results clarified challenges consistent with people with dyslexia and dysgraphia. Finally, his teacher finally acknowledged there was a problem and asked for testing. Again, my son passed the "special ed" screening but not the special tests that Portland Public Schools gave him to screen for dyslexia. At the IEP meeting, the team from PPS told me that his results weren't "bad enough" to qualify for an IEP and that PPS didn't recognize dyslexia as a learning disability - mostly because they don't have a way to address it. Again, I was on my own to address my son's challenges.

Now, he is enrolled in the Blosser Center for Dyslexia Resources. For \$3,000 a year for three years, he is going through a formal training program to address his challenges. I will make an investment in over \$13,000 to teach my son how to read!

I am totally disappointed in the lack of training that our early elementary school teachers have to recognize such a condition. Had teachers been trained to recognize this, we could have addressed the problem early. It wouldn't have cost so much and he would not have suffered from "feeling dumb."

Please do your part to begin to address this problem. The K&P standards are foundational guidelines on how to teach reading - to all readers, not just dyslexics. Oppose SB 211 and ensure that the rules ensure Oregon teacher preparation programs offer their teacher candidate *accredited* coursework on dyslexia, the most common reason for reading

failure. Give students who cannot afford the private tutoring the opportunity to learn on their own terms.

Thank you for your consideration.

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