

Senate Education Committee Hearing

March 30, 2015

Good Afternoon Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Education Comm. My name is Lisa Lyon. I am a parent and a Decoding Dyslexia Board member.

I am here to voice my strong opposition to SB221 because it would remove any instructional accountability from HB2412, which was passed unanimously just two years ago. As you know, 2412 required university programs to include coursework on dyslexia that aligns with the Knowledge & Practice Standards of the International Dyslexia Association. These standards include foundational knowledge about the building blocks of how to teach reading. For all children. Not just for those with dyslexia.

Since the passage of 2412, I believe the legislature has come to realize that dyslexia IS real and that more than 100,000 Oregon students are affected to some extent. Today's testimony is not to convince you about the academic and emotional difficulties of life with dyslexia. Today I am here to ask you NOT to second guess yourselves, nor allow the passage or forward movement of SB 221.

If all sides can agree that dyslexia is real and that Oregon students are not currently being served in schools, the pertinent question is, what is the solution? What are Oregon's universities going to do to adequately prepare their teachers to help these struggling students – up to 20% of all students? If the universities are not required to align with any standards, where is the accountability? What would prevent universities from saying that they are already addressing the gaps which we know exist in teacher training?

In addition to the debate over content, SB221 requests that universities have more time to implement coursework changes. Three additional years have been added to the timeline, in addition to the two years that have already been squandered since 2015. When will change come for Oregon's teachers and students?

In 1999, NIH issued the National Reading Panel report detailing recommendations for teacher training. Since that time, universities have resisted the implementation of these higher standards, to the detriment of both children who need direct, explicit instruction to attain literacy and their teachers who were not trained to deliver this type of instruction. Teacher preparation programs have had almost twenty years to make these recommended changes, but they have not.

One reason University professors have given for their opposition to HB2412 is because it concedes authority from the State of Oregon to an external agency. The concept of using guidelines and standards from various associations to inform instruction is not foreign. Associations such as the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)* provide standards for different areas of university coursework such as Autism Spectrum Disorder and the National Association of Sport and Physical Education provides standards and benchmarks to regulate P.E. We believe that it is smarter and more efficient to implement standards that have already been developed by nationally recognized experts than to waste precious time and money recreating the wheel.

I encourage you to set an example for our nation, and hold Oregon's professors accountable by requiring them to educate new teachers by using the IDA standards as a guideline for instruction.

Thank you.

Lisa Lyon
Decoding Dyslexia Oregon
Portland, OR
97232