

**Senate Committee on Education
Public Hearing
April 4, 2017**

**Monicah McGee
Parent of Dyslexic Student in Lake Oswego School District
Support for SB1002**

My name is Monicah McGee. I live in Lake Oswego, Oregon, and I support SB1002.

Our public school district (LOSD) recently revised its policy governing tutors-for-hire, resulting in a new policy that prohibits the use of school property for the purposes of private tutoring. Prior to the decision in fall 2016, private tutors were allowed to use LOSD buildings for a fee. Untrained parent/grandparent/community volunteers continue to work with students throughout our schools on a regular basis.

Parents of dyslexic children in our Lake Oswego community, myself included, requested in the months prior to the policy review that the building use fee be waived for dyslexic students. Dyslexic students, particularly those who have fallen behind their peers (often as a result of late identification) require intensive, explicit, systematic, evidence-based reading instruction that currently is provided only through private tutoring. LOSD schools do not provide one-on-one or foundational reading instruction that adequately bridges the learning gap for dyslexic students. Research shows that dyslexic students who are identified and receive appropriate intervention before second grade have the best chance to stay on grade level and avoid a permanent educational gap. The LOSD building-use fee, prior to the policy review, nearly doubled the cost of tutoring for dyslexic children in need of remediation.

My family's struggle to find an appropriate tutoring location, since our schools were not an option, began in 2016 with early morning rush hour drives on 217 twice a week before school. My daughter, who is not dyslexic, had to get up early and go with us, when sleep would have served her better. For a while, we met our tutor at the local Marylhurst University library, which doesn't open until 8:30 a.m. My son had to arrive at school late on tutoring days, which was not ideal.

This year we again were faced with where to tutor. The available options included driving before or after school to Portland or Beaverton, or finding a public location in Lake Oswego. We could not use school buildings, the Lake Oswego public library policy does not allow use by private tutors, and our tutoring center's policy does not allow tutors to work in students' homes. It is a mind-boggling, rock-and-a-hard-place tale.

I often ask myself how our schools can reconcile a school district policy that allows for a consistent stream of untrained community volunteers who assist teachers on-site, including individual and small group pull-out work, with a policy that doesn't allow for the specialized tutoring required by dyslexic students? Couldn't a contracted, independent

specialist hired by a school district to assist other types of special needs children be considered a type of “tutor”? In a country where one-third of our fourth graders read well and teachers are unprepared to assist struggling readers, why wouldn't a school district partner with tutors of dyslexic children, resulting in schools that are dyslexia-friendly and welcoming to all readers?

We know that struggling readers and dyslexic students exist in every class, in every grade, in every one of our schools. I look forward to the day when teachers are trained to understand and teach the components of structured literacy and parents do not have to pay for reading tutors—direct instruction would have been far more beneficial to my dyslexic child than “silent reading time” in first grade. The current reality, however, is that parents and tutors are providing the much-needed tools to help dyslexic learners.

Until the reality of reading instruction changes within our school walls, please support the families of dyslexic students by supporting SB 1002.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Monicah McGee