

Dear Representative Doherty,

I am writing to urge you to schedule SB1002 for a Work Session.

I am a retired reading specialist, who was a state licensed teacher. For three years I served on the board of the Oregon Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (ORBIDA). During that time, I volunteered to answer all inquires from people seeking help for children who were struggling to learn to read. They were desperately looking for help. They were looking for tutors. I want to assure you that this is an issue that impacts citizens and their children across the entire state of Oregon.

For nine years, as a volunteer, I ran a reading tutoring program at Hayhurst Elementary School in Portland. I trained and supported 16-20 volunteers in how to effectively help students that we would now label as having dyslexia. This school, in the heart of Southwest Portland, serves families of all income levels, including a large low income housing community. When I was no longer able to run that program, it ended. And with that support gone the next year the school dropped from a passing school to not. Trained tutors make a huge difference.

I also had a private practice tutoring children for over fifteen years. I understand the challenges and need for a quiet space in which to help children learn to read. In the beginning I tried to work in their homes, but siblings, messy homes, distracting pets, all got in the way. I tried the library but the study rooms were not predictably available and I needed access to a whiteboard for instruction. In the end I had to take out liability coverage and work out of my home, banishing my family from my living room and dining room after school, so I could help my students.

Reading tutors DON'T get rich. Individual tutors can't afford the overhead of an office space. Access to tutoring space in our public schools makes perfect sense as buildings are often open after school for other purposes. I suspect that many children who need tutoring are staying on campus anyway for after school care because their parents are working and thus unable to drive them to tutoring off campus.

Teaching a child with dyslexia to read is a time consuming labor of love. Classroom teachers just don't have the time to help students who need intense one-on-one training. The ability to decode words does not come easily for one out of five people in this country. Reading is CRITICAL to a successful life in our world.

While I fully realize the budgetary disaster facing the state and our schools, as a society, we need to support ALL efforts to help our students get the basic help they need. Allowing tutors to use rooms in schools across the state would support that effort. I know that people who can read well, will be able to be employed and become tax paying citizens to support our great state and country.

Please, schedule SB1002 for a Work Session.

Thank you for your efforts.

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