

Submitter: John Gibson  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure: HB3198

I just wanted to reach out and share our story and how we would have been impacted by two new HB's approaching votes. 7 years ago our son was privately tested and found to have Dyslexia. We had felt for sometime that something was preventing his beautiful mind from accepting literacy. Our school while well intentioned, missed the mark because they lacked the appropriate knowledge. My wife and I went to work educating ourselves about Dyslexia and literacy instruction. The IEP we possessed wasn't worth the paper it was written on because no one in our county had been educated on remediation and instruction. We met with multiple private specialists all suggesting we pull him from his school and homeschool him. The problem with the suggestion was simple, our son is a social being and already understood himself to be something short of his peers. In second grade he asked me if we were going to give him our house because, " I am never going to figure this reading thing out". We owed it to him ( and many of his peers ) to figure out a solution allowing him to remain amongst his peers and receive the explicit instruction he needed to thrive. I was already on the school board in multiple capacities and went to work helping them understand why changes to the way we taught literacy were needed. My wife pursued multiple certifications on instruction and remediation to fill the much needed gap in tier 3 instruction. We spoke with everyone we could find who was doing research, crafting systems or programs and making gains in public school instruction. We attended national conferences and spoke with everyone that would listen. The list of names who pointed us, took the time to educate us and supported our search to find an explicit, systematic and sequential way to teach literacy to everyone in a public classroom . We knew fairly quickly how difficult it was going to be. Not because solutions didn't exist but because political sides had been drawn and the companies that were invested in the current "whole word" instruction we're fighting hard to retain their place and had scores of well meaning teachers and school administrators pushing against the science and change. So where are we now? Our son is in 9th grade at North Bend public school. He is reading at grade level and just made the honor roll. His teachers and his peers love him and he loves being in school. He possessed multiple super powers we discovered in the process of finding his most efficient way to learn. We have spent tens of thousands of dollars tutoring, sending him to Dyslexia summer camps in Colorado ( my wife and I went as well in hopes of someday creating a camp here in Oregon) and of course the untold hours of tough love supporting his success. To my knowledge there is no blueprint that supports and educates parents ( the likelihood is someone in their household also experienced learning difficulties) at the same time introducing them to concepts likely foreign to them. The Lighthouse School a public charter where I am board chair, has a goal of 95% of third graders reading at or above grade level. We are

teaching the science of reading and seeing the types of improvements we had hoped for many years ago. We still struggle with teacher mindsets because college instruction is still desperately behind the science. Of course the longer it takes to fix teacher education the longer the implementation in schools. On the places where change is needed to support schools and educators, We desperately need LETRs training for all our teachers. It takes time to complete ( of course negotiation with unions and money are not in the budget of small schools) and then they need to season the knowledge in all aspects of their lesson planning. These bills are great beginnings but need to include all k-3 teachers and support personnel. All kids, not just traditionally undeserved, need to be taught the science of reading. Sadly, our school might not be eligible for this training.