

Submitter: Heather Franklin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

I am here today in support of bill 3198

I speak before you today as a mother of 6, 2 of whom have reading disabilities and a current member of the David Douglas School Board.

I have learned to advocate and fight my children out of necessity.

My 4th child, Booker, was identified with a reading disability in Kindergarten. For years, I struggled and failed to get him proper reading supports in our district. In 3rd grade, after years of intervention, he was still reading at a kindergarten level and I finally understood that our district was missing all necessary components to meet his needs and there was absolutely NO CHANCE he'd catch up. At a great cost to my family, I moved him to a private school for students with dyslexia where he received: high-dosage tutoring, science of reading aligned curriculum and was taught in EVERY class by teachers who were highly trained and received continuous, research-aligned coaching. Additionally, Booker received tutoring over the summer to prevent learning loss and continue to catch up. After 3 ½ years, I was able to move Booker back to his district school.

My 5th child, Tuesday entered kindergarten the year Booker was transferred out. Seeing the same struggles, I immediately began fighting, to ensure that she received an appropriate education at her assigned public school. With her, I was committed to taking what I had learned from failures with my son, to fight for system-level changes at the district. Concurrently, I sought high-dosage and summer tutoring for her – again at a substantial cost.

I am proud to say, that in David Douglas, we have adopted science of reading aligned curriculum for K12 along with scaffolded supports for K2. We also have instructional literacy coaches in every building to support teachers and ensure fidelity. Additionally, we have obtained modest funding to provide some of our teachers with vital teacher training.

The gaps remain. We need ALL teachers to be trained and not out of their own pockets. We must own that expecting parents to privately fund tutoring to make up where we are failing is immoral and will continue to cause harm to populations most in need of support.

The difference for my two children, underscores the impact this bill can have. When a child is taught to read by teachers who have proper training and support, with materials aligned with the science of reading and where high-dosage tutoring and summer supports are in place to catch struggling readers up to grade-level – they will thrive. This is a crisis and we must all act immediately. Please fund House Bill 3198 and understand that it is a first step but a necessary step.