

As a parent and an educator, I am writing in support of HB 2953. My students and my own child have dyslexia, so that is where I will focus my testimony, but I support this bill because all students deserve to get the help they need.

As a classroom teacher, when I found that it seemed a majority of my students had learning difficulties, and many struggled with reading and writing, I chose to go back and do my Orton Gillingham training and practicum to support their needs. Now I do extra reading intervention at a state charter school, where my work is only a drop in the bucket in trying to close the gap between the support needed, and the support the SPED team is able to provide with the few hours and resources they have. Students with dyslexia need a *minimum* of two 1-hour sessions a week of structured literacy support, and usually 1:1 tutoring is needed to address their individual needs. Some students need three to five sessions a week to make the progress they need to “catch up” to their peers.

I am also the parent of a child with ADHD and dyslexia. Before he got his dyslexia diagnosis this past fall, he felt shame and embarrassment when asked to read in class — not through any fault of his teacher, but simply because he sees the difference between his abilities, and those of his peers. Although he has an IEP at school, we have hired a private tutor to support him at our house. We know that he will not get the help he needs through Portland Public Schools. This private tutoring costs \$80/session, and I know another family that pays \$100/session for their dyslexic fourth grader. I have no doubt it’s worth it, because literacy is the foundation for so much other learning. But we can only pay it because we are financially privileged enough, which is disastrously unfair. Every child deserves the support they need to succeed, at their neighborhood school.

Reading difficulties are a marvelously solvable problem — when teachers and students are allowed to put in the time, students make great progress. We owe them that time. Please support HB2953 and take this step towards allowing school districts to fund quality education for all students.