

# WELLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Wednesday February 7, at 3:30 546-S

To: House Committee on Education

Representative Aurand, Chair

Representative Dierks, Vice Chair

From: USD 353

Heath Peine

RE: HB2602 RELATING TO SCREENINGS FOR DYSLEXIA

Opposition

Chairs & Committee Members,

I am an Assistant Superintendent for USD 353 as well as the President-Elect for the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators. I would have preferred to submit this testimony in person, but with the short timeline of given for this hearing, I was unable to find childcare for my young children.

I oppose HB2602 as it creates unnecessary and redundant regulations. This bill calls for the state board of education to develop rules and regulations for the screening of dyslexia and related disorders. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability. Screenings are already in place through statutes and regulations that provide appropriate identification and evaluation of students with all disabilities equally, not just learning disabilities. The increased regulation by creating a law that applies to only one disability would not benefit students, it would create confusion.

Additionally, through the state's Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), all students will receive reading screening to identify those who are behind academically and match those that require more support with evidence-based instruction. This system will be fully implemented as the new accreditation system is phased in, but is currently taking place in many districts around the state including USD 353.

HB 2602 asks that once the screener identifies a student behind in reading, the school district should notify the parent or guardian and may include a recommendation that the student be evaluated by a licensed physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist. I'm concerned that this will lead to a very large number of parents seeking unnecessary evaluations. In Wellington, we currently screen all students using a screener that is frequently recommended for dyslexia to help us identify all students who are behind in reading. This is a process we began this school year as we worked with Kansas MTSS.

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During the first weeks of school, the screener identified the students in our district that needed additional supports in reading. These students were then provided evidence-based reading intervention instruction based on their identified needs. These students are now making adequate progress toward closing the achievement gap. We have found no evidence that most of these students have a specific learning disability and require an outside evaluation for dyslexia. They are making progress and learning to read based on the current system.

There are already regulations in place that allow for parents to request an evaluation for special education at anytime, without a dyslexia diagnosis, which makes subsection (c) redundant. Additionally there are regulations in place that guide schools to evaluating for special education services if the general education interventions described in the previous paragraph are not helping the student make progress.

I oppose this bill because I do not see any benefit for students in this bill. The majority of this bill is redundant and redundant legislation only leads to confusion. The suggestion that schools send letters home to parents with a recommendation for an outside evaluation will likely lead to parental expenses and frustration when they find the evaluation was unnecessary for their students to receive adequate support through the system that is already in place for all students with all disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,



Heath Peine  
Assistant Superintendent  
Wellington Public Schools

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