

We are a KU BSW Social Welfare Students who are organizing a grassroots campaign to raise awareness of the need for identification and reading interventions for individuals with Dyslexia.

Dyslexia is common and the NIH estimates affects over 20% of the population while 80% of children with a learning disability have dyslexia, only 1 in 10 of those children will qualify for special education.

Passing this Bill will make it possible to provide screenings for reading disabilities from Pre-K to 2nd grade, and it will require schools to teach using Research-Based interventions, and no longer exclude Dyslexia. Currently, even the students labeled Reading Disabilities are not typically getting the intervention known to effectively address Dyslexia, which is a multi-sensory phonemic awareness approach. If these students were to be identified early and provided research-based interventions for this neurological condition, the majority of this population could go on to significant contributors to society. In fact it is often said this is the 'disability of the rich' because people with resources have the means to seek these private interventions so they can learn to compensate and become contributing members of society. In fact, Hollywood actors that have openly spoke about their own struggle with dyslexia in the media are Whoopi Goldberg, Tom Cruise, and Tracy Gold. Unfortunately, they are the exception to the rule because the majority of people can't afford the private treatment. Just to paint an accurate perspective, Applied Learning Processes, a center that has been successful at treating dyslexia over the last 15 years, typically sees a student the 3 hours per week for 100-300 hours total, so it can cost a parent over one thousand dollars per month (Billie Calvary, owner of Applied Learning Processes and speaker for the International Dyslexia Foundation, personal communication February 27, 2012).

The tragic consequence of this results in high numbers of:

1. Students who struggle with issues of self-esteem, anti-social and aggressive behaviors and eventually lead illiterate graduates (if they don't drop out beforehand),
2. An increasing numbers of juvenile delinquency and recidivism which often leads to populating our adult prisons
3. These individuals typically suffer a lifetime of under-employment and poverty
4. In turn, this results in greater reliance and strain on the social service system overall.

We support SB 410 because we believe learning to read is a basic human right that when denied the opportunity is a form of systemic oppression; and that passing SB 410 would be the first step to turn these social problems around and benefit everyone in Kansas.

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