

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clay Aurand at 9:05 A.M. on February 14, 2008 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Marti Crow- excused
Valdenia Winn- excused

Committee staff present:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Dianne Rosell, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Kansas State Department of Education
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Janet Henning, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Dr. Alexa Posny, Commissioner, Kansas State Department of Education
Angie Schreiber, parent and educator, Emporia
Terry Sader, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Wichita
Jessica Harrouff, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Augusta
Jeanine Phillips, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Wichita
Dr. Brian Stone, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Wichita
Colton Hall, student (age 11), Wichita
David Hall, parent, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Wichita
Carol Mobley, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Wichita
Iris Davis, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Valley Center
Marie Masterson, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, El Dorado
Donna Brown, Kansas Coalition for Dyslexia Legislation, Wichita
Dr. Cynthia Jacobson, Dir., Hearing & Speech, Cleft Palate/Craniofacial Children's Mercy Hospital
Kay Shevling, USD 204 Bonner Springs
Ann Harts, parent, Manhattan
Dr. Erin Dugan, Director, Special Education, Olathe School District - written testimony
Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director Advocacy, Kansas Association of School Boards - written testimony

HB 2778: Screening and treatment for dyslexia and related disorders.

Dianne Rosell, Assistant Revisor, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, gave an explanation of HB 2778 to Committee members. Ms. Rosell advised this bill was patterned after two statutes in the Texas Education Code. Section 38.003, Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia and Related Disorders were enacted in 1995, and section 28.006 Reading Diagnosis was enacted in 1997.

Ms. Rosell stated this bill would require state accredited schools to test all students in kindergarten, first and second grades for dyslexia and related disorders. The district would then be required to provide a treatment program that has been approved by the state board for any student determined to have dyslexia or related disorder.

The State Board of Education would be required to adopt a list of testing instruments that schools may use. District-level communities may adopt additional instruments if they chose to do so. All of the reading instruments must be based on scientific research concerning reading skills development and reading comprehension.

Ms. Rosell further stated that each school district would be required to report results of the testing to the state board, its local board and in writing to the student's parents or guardians.

The State Board shall develop recommendations for the school districts regarding training and administration of the diagnostics tests and applying the results to the instructional program. The board

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Education Committee at 9:05 A.M. on February 14, 2008 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

would also be required to certify by July 1 of each year, whether sufficient funds have been appropriated for the statewide implementation of these programs. The board would also conduct evaluations of programs and expenses. No more than 15% of the funds appropriated can be used for indirect costs. (Attachment #1)

Dr. Alexa Posny, Commissioner, Kansas State Department of Education, spoke to Committee members the most widely accepted definition of dyslexia is “a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.” (*Adopted by the IDA Board, November 2002 and by the National Institutes of Health, 2002.*)

Dr. Posny stated Kansas has long been a state that does not over-regulate but does offer incentives to encourage effective practices. The focus in Kansas has been the development of processes, procedures, guidelines and effective practices.

Dr. Posny stated that current Kansas practices are based on the premise that all students can be effectively taught and it is the responsibility of school staff to identify and provide the most effective curricular and instructional practices and strategies to enable all students to learn. (Attachment #2)

Angie Schrieber, parent and educator, Emporia, spoke to Committee members in support of **HB 2778**. (Attachment #3)

Terry Sader spoke briefly to Committee members and told of the following individuals who were going to speak to the Committee regarding dyslexia. (Attachment #4)

Jessica Harrouff told Committee members she was an 18 year old high school student who was diagnosed with dyslexia. She spoke to Committee members of the difficulties and struggles she had encountered while in elementary, middle, and high school. She told Committee members she is currently the National Saddle Club Association Queen and upon graduation from high school will be enrolling in college to study veterinary medicine and in particular, work with horses. (Attachment #5)

Jeanine Phillips, Reading Specialist, told Committee members that dyslexia is a language disorder, it is inherited and passed on in the family by the known chromosomes 6th, 1st, and 15th. It cannot be cured but people with dyslexia can be taught to read, write, spell at or above grade level.

Dr. Brian Stone, Psychologist, told Committee members of the pattern of strengths and weaknesses of dyslexia. Dyslexia is a pattern, good high-level thinking strengths, often, especially in hands-on visual spatial non-language kinds of skills. Its high-level nonverbal thinking is often somewhat overlooked by schools as it is hard to work in to any curriculum, it doesn't learned itself well to written tests. And the high level strengths come at the expense of a processing weakness in things that are not high-level, that are rather automatic processes. Typically that means an auditory memory that can't hold as much.

Terry Sader told Committee members this legislation is literally about tens of thousands of Kansas children whose parents don't have the education, who don't have the resources to pursue the right diagnosis, and the need for proper diagnosis and intervention.

Colton Hall, a 6th grade student, spoke to Committee members and told of his struggles and difficulties in dealing with dyslexia. (Attachment #6)

David Hall, father of Colton, Drake, and Kamren Hall, gave testimony to Committee members on each of his three sons who have been diagnosed with dyslexia. (Attachments #7, 8, and 9)

Carol Mobley, parent of two children with dyslexia, spoke to Committee members of the frustrations and

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Education Committee at 9:05 A.M. on February 14, 2008 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

concerns encountered by her children and herself. (Attachment #10)

Iris Davis, parent, testified before Committee members and spoke of the concerns and frustrations in trying to determine if her son was dyslexic. (Attachment #11)

Marie Masterson, parent of child with dyslexia, spoke to Committee members and told of the struggles for her son and all other students currently enrolled at Flint Hills USD 492 who struggle with reading. She included written testimony from other parents of dyslexic children. (Attachments #12)

Donna Brown, parent, testified before Committee members and told of frustrations and concerns regarding her child. (Attachment #13)

Dr. Cynthia Jacobsen, speech-language pathologist and a Fellow of the American Speech Language Hearing Association, encouraged Committee members to consider passage of **HB 2778** which would provide for rapid implementation of testing and teacher training across Kansas districts and encourage consistency across our many Kansas districts. (Attachment #14)

Kay Shevling, member of USD 204 Board of Education , spoke to Committee members in support of passage of **HB 2778**. (Attachment #15)

Ann Harts, parent, spoke to Committee members and expressed concern regarding dyslexia. Mrs. Hart encouraged the passage of **HB 2778**. (Attachment #16)

Written testimony was also received from Benita Seliga, a parent of a child diagnoses with dyslexia. (Attachment #17)

Because of time constraints, written testimony was also received from the following opponents of HB 2778.

Dr. Erin Dugan, Director of Special Education, Olathe School District (Attachment #18)

Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive director/Advocacy, Kansas Association of School Boards (Attachment #19)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2008.