

Written Testimony In Opposition to Senate Bill No. 44 – Dyslexia
Senate Education Committee
February 7, 2013

Dyslexia is a term from the Greek language and translated means “*difficulty with reading*.” Both federal and state regulations require schools districts to assess and instruct their students in Reading and have established proficiently levels to assure all are making progress in this core academic area. Kansas requires teachers to be highly qualified to teach Reading and monitors this annually. When students have difficulty making progress in Reading, school districts are required to utilize research validated interventions and data based monitoring. If students do not respond to intensive Reading interventions they are referred to special education for an evaluation to determine if they have a learning disability and need individualized programming. Kansas schools already have an appropriate response for students who are not making adequate progress in Reading. There is no need for an unfunded, state mandated program, which would be a duplication of services under a new set of conflicting rules and regulations, increasing costs for school districts.

Opposition to Section 1.

- Educators already consider a medical diagnosis, provided by a physician, psychologist or psychiatrist, as relevant information in any assessment process. Special education law requires this.
- Section 504 expressly states a medical diagnosis cannot mandate an accommodation plan; a medical diagnosis is information to consider when determining need for an accommodation.
- Schools are currently mandated to provide a continuum of interventions, beginning with general education intervention. Kansas currently requires schools to determine if students are responding to intervention.
- A review of the literature on services, provided outside of the standards-based core curriculum, indicates students will make less progress on high state standards.
- Students with difficulty with Reading have those challenges for a variety of reasons and each student’s response to intervention will be based on their individual level of difficulty and need for a customized plan. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for a student diagnosed with Dyslexia.
- One of the intense focuses of school curriculum in the early grades is on language and literacy and students with significant deficits in either are already monitored with curriculum-based assessments.
- Teacher preparation programs currently require any teachers who teach Reading to successfully complete Reading and Language Arts preparation courses.
- Dyslexia is a learning disability and if there is need for services, school districts are currently mandated to provide appropriate programs, which are already heavily regulated.
- The evaluation, eligibility and intervention provisions in this section do not comply with K.S.A. 72—961 and would not be able to supplement the Exceptional Child Act; they are in direct conflict.

Opposition to Section 2.

- As a result of NCLB, school districts annually participate in state assessments to give the Kansas State Board of Education information about proficiency levels in Reading.
- Special education is required to annually report the incidence of learning disabilities.

Opposition to Section 3.

- A multisensory instructional approach has no research supporting its efficacy and is not an appropriate method for every student who has difficulty with Reading or with the diagnosis of Dyslexia.
- State and local funds must be allocated to research-based practices, delivered by highly qualified instructors; parents must not become responsible for determining the status of either nor finding third party instruction.

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