

OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL No. 2602

Testimony Provided February 7, 2018 by
Bert Moore, Superintendent/Director of Special Education
West Elk, USD#282
1201 S. Highway 99
P.O. Box 607
Howard, KS 67349

The Directors of Special Education believe the Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators are making great progress in assuring that all struggling readers, including those with Dyslexia, are learning to read utilizing researched based instruction and materials.

It must be noted that identifying a child as dyslexic, learning disabled, intellectually disabled, emotionally disturbed etc. etc., is not of paramount importance. Meeting the needs of the child regardless of label is the major concern. Researchers and practitioners have found that merely labeling a child dyslexic is “considered to be an obsolete diagnosis with no prognosis.”

The critical question to answer is how children learn to read. Current research {Schawitz, Lyon} indicates that no one methodology which incorporates the essential components of reading rises significantly above the others. The work of the National Reading Panel has had a major influence on reorienting how we merge science into practice (2004). The Panel summarizes decades of reading research that summarizes key reading skills that need to be taught and learned to decrease the prevalence of reading difficulties including:

- Phonemic awareness: Understanding that spoken words are composed of sound parts called phonemes and understanding the sound structure of words without letters or written words present
- Phonics: The ability to link sound (phonemes) with letters
- Fluency: The ability to read a text accurately and quickly.
- Vocabulary: Refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively, including oral, speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary.
- Comprehension: The ability to understand what is read, and to remember what was read and communicate this with others.

All Kansas Schools must have policies and procedures to ensure that all children with exceptionalities are located, evaluated and identified. This includes children who attend public or private schools, which are home-schooled, are highly mobile, homeless or are wards of the state. The child find requirements apply to children ages birth through 21

- We begin screening children at birth and continue conduct child find screenings through age 5. Children are routinely screened K-12 should they struggle academically.
- Schools are accountable with respect to student achievement through the Kansas State Assessment process that currently reflects the performance of 99.8% of the students in Kansas
- Dyslexia is recognized under IDEA as a disability and all struggling readers have access to a full range of services, including special education if needed.
- School districts in the State of Kansas have choices in addition to MTSS. Children diagnosed with dyslexia are referred to the appropriate the building team (MTSS, SIT, Problem Solving Team, 504 team, IDEA team)
- General education interventions and special education services are no longer mutually exclusive. **Children with dyslexia may be served without being identified as eligible for special education services.**
- Accommodations and Modifications are Developed with a minimum of monitoring academic progress to a maximum of IDEA placement in special education
- The standard for all students is: Know how to read, providing a solid and rigorous foundation; and how to comprehend and understand the conceptual aspects of reading.

Please allow KSDE and KASEA to continue our work and not be limited by mandated methodologies and additional regulations. I strongly encourage you to not move forward with HB 2602.

Thank you,
Bert Moore