

Good Morning,

I am writing as a parent and as a teacher with the urgency of implementing help into our public school systems in Kansas for dyslexic children . As a teacher, I see kids struggling every day with reading and writing. Then they hate school and they are dumb, according to them. When an 8th grader still writes “bog” for “dog”, even without training, I know that the child is dyslexic. Without getting trained on my own, I cannot give these kids the help they need. That is a true travesty because one in five students has a language based learning disability. Dyslexia is the most common of the language based learning disabilities. School is the logical place to identify and help these students, and the teachers trying to educate them.

As a parent of a dyslexic child, I experience every day the other side of the issue. My son had behavior issues in Kindergarten last year which, after testing, it was determined they stemmed from dyslexia and ADHD (it is very common for the 2 to go hand-in-hand). Dyslexic children are often times very smart which then leads to low self-esteem issues, they see everyone moving ahead of them and that builds great frustration. Also as a parent, I have encountered the hardship of how I will get my son the help he needs on my own. The specialist said he will have to have 1 hour therapy sessions 3 days a week after school! When my 7 year old, who has ADHD, has sat in school all day, asking him to have an additional hour of academics after school is not what he needs, he needs to be playing. On top of that, therapy sessions average at \$40-\$50/hr, that is a true financial commitment or hardship for some. I am watching children with dyslexia not get the help they need, and/or the parents cannot afford it and it goes untreated. The only reason my son was diagnosed was because I sought outside counseling and testing. Why in this day and age of technology and information are there children in Kansas undiagnosed and left without the help they need to succeed in school?! Implementing dyslexic help into our schools for these children will greatly benefit them socially, emotionally, and academically. These kids will flourish with this help and it will fill a gap that we are missing in Kansas to give our kids the best education that we can!

On a final note, speaking from a teacher’s standpoint again, I know that we strive to prepare our students to be “career ready”, but to achieve that, it’s pertinent that we reach our children, as I previously mentioned, socially and emotionally, as well as academically. Dyslexia is one facet in this broad spectrum that plays a key role in this sort of success for our children. What I struggle to understand is that according to “Dyslexic Advantage”, as of October 2017, Kansas is one of only 8 states in the U.S. without a Dyslexic Law, and some of those states have legislation pending. Why is this common place learning disability ignored in our schools? Why are these children left behind? Dyslexia is not a problem of intelligence, or vision, or laziness. It is a brain-based issue that makes it hard to learn to read accurately and fluently, these children will not outgrow it. However, they can be equipped with tools and skills to help them cope and go on to be successful in whatever field they choose.

I write to you to ask from a personal and professional standpoint, please help our children by passing a bill to implement dyslexia screenings and therapies into our Kansas public school systems.

Sincerely,
Kim Rinehart