

February 7, 2018

House Education Committee

Re: HB 2602

Committee,

I very much appreciate the chairman and committee's attention and that this issue of dyslexia screening has been brought to the the committee's attention. This is an important issue and addressing it could possibly help resolve some of the issues with the school funding formula as well.

My story is that we have a son who is dyslexic and was diagnosed as such at the very young age of 3. He simply saw shapes in a different way than most people do. To help committee members understand what this page might look like to a dyslexic person, just turn the page upside down and then read. That, obviously, makes it more difficult but is similar to how a dyslexic person sees the letters on the page.

While we were fortunate to get an early diagnosis for our son, that was only the beginning. Throughout his entire K-12 education the struggle was to simply make out the words, but then he was expected to also comprehend what he read. It took hours of work at home in addition to school to keep him with his cohort. Several times teachers were encouraging us to keep him back, which only made us work harder.

HB 2602 may be a good start in identifying dyslexia. However, the issue of how screening is done is left to the State Board of Education. While this bill may have some flaws, it brings attention to the issue of dyslexia. I know first-hand that persons with dyslexia learn differently than most. That is why protocols should be developed to address that learning style.

To finish my story, our son currently works at Siemens in Hutchinson driving heavy equipment. Driving trucks and heavy equipment has always been of interest to him. He is very good at it and has driven everything from mining trucks in a coal mine to semi-trucks to bulldozers and backhoes. He is very professional and is an excellent heavy equipment driver. Definitely he is a contributing member of our society. And, I might add, he is very polite and kind despite having been teased mercilessly in school.

I support this bill and urge you to pass it out of the Committee. This is an important issue that needs attention.

Thank you for your attention.

Don L. Schroeder