



**To: Senate Committee on Education**  
**From: The Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA), United School Administrators-Kansas (USA-Kansas), Kansas School Superintendent's Association (KSSA), and the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB)**

Honorable Senator Baumgardner and Committee Members,

My name is Terry Collins and I am the Legislative Chair for the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA). KASEA has consulted with United School Administrators-Kansas (USA-Kansas), Kansas School Superintendent's Association (KSSA), and the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) regarding this testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to represent these organizations with this testimony currently standing as neutral on Sub. for HB 2602.

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability in reading and as such is a disability covered under federal and state special education law. However, there are a great many myths surrounding the term which have created great confusion and harmful emotional responses for a number of years.
- As defined in K.A.R. 91-40-1 (mmm), "Specific learning disability" (SLD) means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
- The DSM-5 uses the term Specific Learning Disability, and then requires a second code to specify the nature of the disability. One of three options is to code "with impairment in reading." That is the preferred way to use the DSM-5, however, it specifically states in that same section: "Dyslexia is an alternative term used to refer to a pattern of learning difficulties characterized by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and poor spelling abilities." (p.67, DSM-5)
- Sub for HB 2602 establishes a task force that shall advise and make recommendations to the use of evidence-based practices for students with dyslexia i.e. Specific Learning Disability "with impairment in reading".
- While neutral on the bill, KASEA, USA, KSSA, and KASB support a task force which will;
  1. Research and recommend evidence-based reading practices to address dyslexia or characteristics of dyslexia for use by schools;
  2. Research and recommend high quality pre-service and in-service professional developmental activities to address reading difficulties like dyslexia, including identification of dyslexia and effective reading interventions to be used in schools and within degree programs, such as education, reading, special education, speech-language pathology, and psychology;
  3. Study and examine current state and federal law, rules and regulations, and the implementation of such laws and rules and regulations that affect students with dyslexia; and
  4. Identify valid and reliable screening and evaluations assessments and protocols that can be used, as well as the appropriate personnel to administer such assessments in order to identify

children with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia, or the characteristics of dyslexia, as a part of an ongoing reading progress monitoring system, multi-tiered system of supports, and Child Find special education eligibility for students.

- If this committee chooses to move forward with this bill we have the following concerns about the membership of the task force:
  - The current makeup of the task force leans heavily toward non-educators. It is critical that educators, with experience in implementing systems of early identification and evidence-based reading instruction in Kansas public schools be part of the task force.
  - Both federal and state law requires that each state have a state advisory panel focused on special education issues. In Kansas, that panel is the Special Education Advisory Council. If you choose not to have them address this issue, then we believe they should be represented on the task force.
  - One of the stated responsibilities of the task force is to, "study and examine current state and federal laws and rules and regulations including Section 504 and the implementation of such laws and rules and regulations that affect students with dyslexia." An attorney from the Kansas Association of School Board or the Kansas State Department of Education should be a required member of this task force.
  - Another responsibility of this task force is studying an ongoing reading progress monitoring system, multitier system of supports, and Child Find. Including a Technical Assistance System Network (TASN) trainer and the state director or assistant director of special services from KSDE would be important.
  - Paragraph (c)(6) states, "four members shall be the parents of children with a diagnosis of dyslexia appointed by keys for networking, inc., families together, inc. and decoding dyslexia Johnson county." We think it is problematic to have three entities appointing four members.
  - The Kansas Association of School Boards should have representation on the task force to represent local boards of education.
  - An amendment was added on the House floor to increase the task force membership to 19. However, the number of members needed for a quorum was left at 9. In our opinion the number of members needed for a quorum should increase to 11.
  - Finally, we think the bill needs to include this or similar language, "Staff of the office of the legislative research department shall provide assistance as may be requested by the dyslexia guideline development task force, subject to approval by the legislative coordinating council." Operating without staff would be very challenging to this task force.

The Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators, the United School Administrators-Kansas, Kansas School Superintendent's Association, and the Kansas Association of School Boards strongly encourages you to carefully consider these recommendations if you choose to move forward with Sub. for HB 2602. We would like you to know that if the changes we suggest are incorporated, then we will gladly support this bill.

**Terry Collins, Ed.S. 785-741-2202**  
**KASEA Legislative Committee**  
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