

2-18-2018
Lisa Madsen
Shawnee, KS 66216

RE: In support of House Bill 2602

The House Bill 2602 will soon come to the senate. I have a passionate plea for dyslexia to be screened for and addressed in our Kansas public schools. I am a physician who practices Internal Medicine. As a doctor, I have never had any training in the diagnosis and management of dyslexia. I am still at a loss of where this condition can be revealed and addressed for our children. It is certainly currently not in our schools nor primary care offices.

My oldest of 3 children is now 16 years old. She is a vibrant, active, caring young lady who's active in life and school activities. Unfortunately, she always has the strain of trying to get through her school work and consistently knowing that on each test she's lucky to get above a D and she scored a 13 on her pre ACT. She however carries a 3.27 GPA because she works so, so hard to participate and find ways to make up for her deficiencies in reading and comprehending the written word.

In kindergarten she was diagnosed with ADHD. Medication has been prescribed since then and she's never had any issues with behavior or effort. The diagnosis of ADHD is obvious and we've never doubted. But, it's clear to manage. Year after year, conference after conference, I would say to each teacher, but she can't read and her writing is terrible. Is this the ADHD? And they would all say, "I guess so," and shrug their shoulders. She was in the reading assistance program from kindergarten through 6th grade but still never broke through. Teachers throughout elementary school were always very open to providing accommodations for her ADHD. But, this wasn't the real problem of her learning.

During her freshman year of high school, we had an independent formal thorough psychological assessment so she could have accommodations in high school for the ADHD as they said they could not do accommodations without formal written out assessments and recommendations. The psychological assessment was shocking and eye opening for us. All over the assessment it stated that our daughter has dyslexia and finally it all made sense. Now I feel naive that I couldn't identify that this was indeed dyslexia other than continually stating, "my daughter can't read."

I was shocked that no one part of her educational experience could ever identify or recognize this. I have learned that it is so important to identify dyslexia early on in a child's career so that appropriate reading techniques can be used as the brain is developing.

I have met with our public high school's educational team on multiple occasions and my daughter has had formal assessment for an IEP. There is nothing they can offer her to address the dyslexia. All they can do is give her accommodations for longer test taking, quiet rooms, retesting. THIS DOES NOT ADDRESS HELPING THE DYSLEXIA. There is nothing available that I

am aware of in our school system to address dyslexia. We are missing out. We are not doing right by our children as there are evidence based programs that are known and used to help children learn how to read with dyslexia.

This is one of many, many stories of a child with dyslexia. I am sure there are much sadder stories of kids that may not have the solid support at home. It would be so easy to fall behind and fail.

There are solid services and help for dyslexia. Our school system need to catch up with the times and it starts with all of us! I plead for you to be an advocate for HB 2602!

Dr. Lisa Madsen, MD