

Good morning,

I am reaching out to you today asking for you to support a dyslexia task force. My youngest child, Emma, was diagnosed with Dyslexia two years ago at Children's Mercy in Kansas City at the age of 8. According to current state law my local special education coop should have evaluated her, but they had no resources or testing method available. After multiple calls and letters my husband and I were left with no other options but to pay out of pocket for a private evaluation. Emma was found to be severely dyslexic, thankfully we were given lots of resources and information at Children's Mercy. With diagnosis in hand we expected to finally have resources provided by our school for our child – that was not the case. We first reached out to our school's reading specialist who told me she had no training or information available to help a dyslexic student, and not interested in providing resources. Our special education co-op determined Emma didn't qualify for services, dyslexia in itself does not qualify a student for services they must also test intellectually low. Dyslexia fact – most dyslexics are intelligent, which is why they rarely qualify for special education; Steve Jobs, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison all highly intelligent dyslexics.

I spoke to our superintendent, who had no funds available to purchase necessary resources, I personally wrote a grant application over the summer of 2015 to purchase the Barton Method, an Orton-Gillingham teaching method to use in our district. Dyslexia affects 1 in 5 student, thankfully I have been given the opportunity to advocate for some change within our district, but there are still so many children that are not receiving the necessary interventions. Our elementary teachers struggle as they want to reach these children but are not given the resources necessary or training. Then our junior and senior high teacher struggle with students reading at a third grade level – how are we to graduate successful students who will become productive members of society when we are denying them of the basic right to read?

The Kansas Department of Education Kansas CAN vision is that "Kansas leads the world in the success of each student" how can this be possible when Kansas is ignoring the needs of 1 in 5 dyslexic students. Currently 42 other states have dyslexia legislation, please allow this task force to research and report what is working in other states so that Kansas children can succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Miranda Dinkel
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