

Testimony in support of House Bill of HB 2552

An Act Concerning Education;

Kansas Reading Readiness Act amending SA 79-32, 117

Given by: Kristin Rowley, *Parent*

E Pembroke Cir Wichita, KS

316-650-2180 Kristen.L.Rowley@gmail.com

My name is Kristen Rowley, a mother of 4 from Wichita Kansas. I am writing to ask you to support HB2552, The Kansas Reading Readiness Act.

According to KU Institute of Policy and Social Research there were 491,764 children enrolled in Kansas Public schools last year. (<https://ipsr.ku.edu/ksdata/ksah/education/6ed1b.pdf>). The International Dyslexia Association estimated that up to 20% (that's 1 in 5) students could have dyslexia. (<https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-basics-2/>) That works out to approximately 98, 352 students in Kansas struggling to read, write, and spell.

Today, I want to tell you about 2 of those dyslexic students, my daughter, Kati (age 11), and my son Quincy, (age 9). Kati was 10 when she underwent an evaluation at Fundamental Learning Center in Wichita, KS. They told us she had the hallmark signs of a dyslexic learner and that she needed evidence-based phonics instruction to help her learn to read, write, and spell effectively. By this time in her school career she was in 4th grade and had already fallen far behind her peers in her ability to read. She had become shy, withdrawn, and avoided situations that would require her to read aloud in a group. Worst of all, she had labeled herself. That label was: STUPID. She was discouraged, demoralized, and had no self confidence in any area of her life. That fall I took training (Also from the Fundamental Learning Center) to be able to teach her to read using evidence-based instruction. It was time consuming and expensive, but it was worth it to help Kati thrive. I am happy to say that in the last 18 months she has made tremendous progress! She has improved her reading level by more than 2 grade levels, and she is now a confident, outgoing young lady. She no longer labels herself as stupid, she labels herself SMART and STRONG. What an amazing turn around!

Quincy was 8 when he was evaluated for dyslexia. For him, tutoring with mom was not the best plan. His discouragement took the form of tantrums, melt downs, and severe relationship challenges between himself and the rest of us in the family. We are still working on repairing those relationships. He was also falling behind his peers and struggling to keep a positive image of himself. He became unwilling to even TRY and instead acted out. We made the decision to enroll him in Rolph Literacy Academy, the laboratory school at Fundamental Learning Center. There he is challenged, engaged, and is growing

HOPE K12
5-1

tremendously. He is now reading! His relationships within the family have improved with his confidence and growth at Rolph Literacy Academy. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to send him there. It is not without cost, however. The only way he can attend is with the help of scholarships and the generosity of family members.

Now what does this have to do with HB2552? This bill provides provision for private schooling for dyslexic learners. It provides several opportunities for Kansas' children. First for those whose families are not financially able to undergo training themselves or send them to an appropriate school they will have a chance at solid, evidenced based instruction. Second it is an opportunity for success for students that would otherwise get left behind their peers, struggling their entire lives to read, write, and spell fluently. Next it can provide a hopeful future for students that otherwise would label themselves as STUPID. Last it will provide the opportunity to thrive for children that are otherwise discouraged and demoralized. We can do right by the next generation of Kansas students. Kansas' children are Kansas' future. What is good for them, is good for all of us.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Kansas Students.

Kristen Rowley