



HIGH PLAINS EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE

321 E. Oklahoma

"High Plains Educational Cooperative will assist and support the member districts in providing educational services which will maximize opportunities for all children to live, learn, and work in society." *HPEC Mission Statement*

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Date: February 7, 2013

To: Honorable Senator Abrams and Members of the Senate Education Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding Senate Bill 44 on the topic of dyslexia. We in the area of education certainly recognize dyslexia as a specific reading difficulty that benefits from early intervention to improve student outcomes. The Kansas State Department of Education has provided a model program for early intervention through the use of Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS) that is already being implemented throughout our 17 member districts. Our goal through early intervention is to close the reading gap as quickly as possible for all children regardless of their ability to receive a diagnosis of dyslexia from a physician, psychiatrist or private psychologist. Access or knowledge of resources should not be a barrier to receiving early intervention to improve reading skills.

Multiple-Tier Systems of Support provides screening tools to identify those students most at risk for reading problems. Screening tools set a baseline or starting point so that student progress can be measured during intervention with adjustments made in specific instruction as well as the intensity of the instruction from data collection. I take issue that this bill would only require a written statement from physician, psychiatrist or psychologist without an evaluation and no baseline data. Teachers are evaluating their students every day to adjust instruction based on student's real time performance in the curricular standards adopted by the Kansas State Board of Education.

The Kansas MTSS system was evaluated for effective instructional practice by an independent organization in the spring of 2012. An executive summary of the evaluation report may be found on the Kansas MTSS website. The independent evaluation found that 90% of the schools reporting were implementing MTSS for reading. This includes a universal screening in the area of reading three times a year with more frequent data collection for students receiving additional interventions. High Plains Educational Cooperative member districts are implementing research based interventions such as Success for All, Read Naturally, and Spell Read. Each of these interventions has been reviewed through the Institute of Education Science for the effectiveness of programs intended to improve literacy skills. This data can be found at www.ies.gov for a review of all literacy programs meeting the criteria for evidence-based practice.

Section 3 of SB 44 states that "if a child diagnosed with dyslexia is not provided appropriate intensive multisensory instruction within six weeks from the date of notification, the school district shall pay for the appropriate intensive multisensory instruction provided by a third party, who shall be selected by the parent of the child, including the costs of transportation to and from the location where such instruction is

being provided". The Kansas State Board of Education and the state of Kansas should take pride in their efforts to have all teachers highly qualified through the rigorous standards set forth in obtaining a teaching license in the state of Kansas. Our public schools are measured annually by the high quality of teaching staff.

I ask that the committee not move forward with SB 44 and continue to support the work through the Kansas State Department of Education that is already in place for all students. Thank you for your time and effort on behalf of all students.

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