

Senate Education

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SB25-200 Dyslexia Screening and READ Act Requirements

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Eleanor Hazlett For themselves</p>	<p>Introduction:</p> <p>Hello my name is Eleanor Hazlett I am an 8th grader at Oberon middle school in Arvada, Colorado. I found out I was dyslexic when I was in 3rd grade.</p> <p>Why I think this bill is important:</p> <p>I am writing in support of SB25-200. I think it is important to get all kids screened for dyslexia at school because some families can not pay for a screening on their own.</p> <p>How I think this would have made my life easier or better:</p> <p>My life would have been 100 times easier if my family and I had known sooner about my dyslexia. I would have been set up with the right 504 plan. I would have been so much better at reading and I wouldn't have fallen behind so much in reading and writing.</p> <p>What it would mean for other kids:</p> <p>What this means for both parents and kids is that they don't have to spend a bunch of money on their kids' education. If kids get screened now at a young age they will have much better support from teachers, staff members, and family which would make their education much easier and smoother.</p> <p>I don't want kids to feel the way I did. I don't want them to be afraid to read in front of the class because they are slow readers or can't read the words on the page. I want them to feel confident and see dyslexia as their super power just as I do now.</p>
<p>Alex Frazier For themselves</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony regarding the proposed dyslexia bill. I write not only as a parent but also as a professional deeply committed to literacy and educational equity.</p>

	<p>I am here with my son, who was born in 2012—the same year the READ Act was passed. Despite the intent of the READ Act, my son was never identified as having dyslexia or as being at risk for dyslexia in our school system. His experience is not isolated; it reflects a broader systemic gap in our understanding of dyslexia—what it looks like, how to effectively screen for it, and how to intervene at an early stage.</p> <p>In full transparency, in addition to being a parent of a child with dyslexia, I am the founding president of the Reading League Colorado and work in literacy assessment as my day job. Prior to these roles, I spent six years at the CDE supporting READ Act implementation.</p> <p>A clear example of the impact of not explicitly mentioning dyslexia in the current READ Act legislation is seen in the mandated teacher training. The process did not include dyslexia knowledge-building because it was not written into the law. As a result, the most common profile for a child struggling with reading—those with dyslexia—is frequently overlooked in teacher and leader preparation and not consistently supported across approved learning options. Knowledge is power—it’s why my son was eventually identified, through my own expertise, when no professional in his public education suspected dyslexia, as his strong verbal skills led to him being overlooked. Moreover, he was never provided with the literacy interventions he needed.</p> <p>Furthermore, the assessments approved in our state vary widely. This variability often leads to children like mine being overlooked or misidentified, with the prevailing response being that “they just need more time.” However, the evidence is clear: early, evidence-based identification and intervention are critical to supporting children with dyslexia.</p> <p>This proposed bill represents an important opportunity to bridge the gap between our current practices and the best available research on dyslexia. Its inclusion may also encourage the department to consider ways to flag or label approved resources—both training and screening tools (in Colorado, these screeners are referenced as interim assessments)—that explicitly incorporate dyslexia knowledge and risk indicators into their design.</p> <p>It is vital that we ensure all children at risk are identified and provided with the interventions they need to succeed. We are not there yet, and much of this shortfall is related to a lack of knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of this vital issue. I look forward to the opportunity to see meaningful change that will benefit countless students across our state.</p>
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	<p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Alex Frazier Dyslexic Parent Founding President, Reading League Colorado alexfrazier5280@gmail.com alex@cothereadingleague.org</p>
<p>Clare Maeda For themself</p>	<p>Good Afternoon,</p> <p>My name is Clare Maeda and I am a parent of a child with dyslexia and I am an educator in Aurora Public Schools. I have been an educator for almost 20 years. I am writing in support of SB25-200 because our kids deserve this. 1 in 5 children are dyslexic and most go unidentified. Which leads to lifelong reading struggles. My own son was not identified until the summer before his 2nd-grade year. He was only identified because his father, also an Aurora Public Schools educator, and I noticed that he was struggling. Because he was well-behaved and was able to memorize and fake it, he was not seen as a struggling student. Thank goodness we saw the signs and recognized them. Thank goodness we had the means to pay to get him assessed and pay for tutoring - and ultimately pay for me to get trained so I could work with him at home.</p> <p>As an educator, I see the fallout of this. I teach 3rd grade. I have several students who come to me unable to read, write, or access literacy curriculum. The MTSS process is laborious and lengthy. These children do NOT have time to waste, imagine if there was a way that we as a school could have screened them sooner so they could have some intervention. Screenings should happen more than once, but as of right now, they aren't even happening once. We use iReady to screen for struggles, but this is not the best tool. SB25-200 would mean schools use a dyslexia screening tool, which would catch students sooner. Seeing a student in the 3rd grade struggling to read is heartbreaking. Not all upper elementary teachers are trained in phonics or dyslexia traits, so often these students just continue to struggle and get passed along to the next grade.</p> <p>Dyslexic children need a VERY specific type of education, one that would actually benefit all students, but one that is not consistently used in classrooms, due to a myriad of reasons. If my son's school had implemented a dyslexia screener, he would have been seen sooner. He would have had help sooner and he would not have had to struggle as much as he did. Our schools failed him, how many other children will go unseen? How many other children struggle silently who do not have the fortune of having parents who understand the signs of dyslexia? Help us help them, pass this bill.</p>

<p>Elisa Sodja For themselves</p>	<p>Dear, Chair, and members of the committee, my name is Elisa Sodja- I'm a co-founder of JeffcoKID (Kids Identified with Dyslexia), an Orton Gillingham (OG) Dyslexia tutor, a Jeffco Public Schools Dyslexia Advisory Committee partner, and most importantly a mom of a dyslexic 4th year college student.</p> <p>My son was at the end of 8th grade, going into high school, when I found information about Dyslexia on Understood.org. I was then able to get my son formally diagnosed with dyslexia and get OG tutoring for him. This instruction was different than any of his other ineffective instruction-tutoring approaches for the previous 5 years. On the 1st day of his OG based tutoring- as soon as his tutor left - my son turned to me and asked, "Why wasn't I taught this way from the start?!?" Meaning, since kindergarten. At that time, none of my son's preschool, elementary, middle or high school teachers ~ talked about, understood, or knew how to remediate presenting dyslexia with Science of Reading, OG, and multi-sensory modalities like teacher training available and offered today.</p> <p>I'm here to support SB25-200 and Universal Dyslexia Screening for all K-3 Colorado students. This would remove the confusing presentation associated with smart kids who often stay in the "yellow" (below grade level) on District Assessments like today's MAP, DIBELS, etc. progress monitoring. As of today, kids still struggle with reading comprehension, reading fluency, writing, and/or spelling but are not below benchmarks enough ("red") to qualify for a READ Plan. Universal screening would allow for the clarifying lens teachers need to then appropriately remediate dyslexia with science based, systematic, multisensory support through para pull outs, small groups, or special education support personnel ~ as early as possible. This approach is much more cost effective than waiting until kids ultimately fail. This clarifying lens, early on, would also allow parents to get appropriate science based tutoring for the many repetitions, which are typically 40-200 for dyslexics, required to master a concept, rule, or "red"/"sight"/"learned" word. For example, - "magic e" (like cake and cute); vowel teams "oa, oe" (like boat and toe); diphthongs "eigh" (like eight and sleigh); and memorizing common red/rule breakers like "friends," "science," "was," "love".</p> <p>Strong, clear, Legislation impacts the culture shift required to move our educational system towards science based multisensory literacy success in Colorado. Literacy success in language arts, science, math, are all impacted by how teachers teach their students to decode/read and encode/write from kindergarten on. Universal Dyslexia Screening would be a win win for teachers, schools, & students.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and advocacy for your vulnerable 1 in 5 dyslexic future constituents.</p> <p>Additionally, please consider attending a JeffcoKID event like our Dyslexically Successful Panel, JeffcoKID Dyslexia Simulation, or teacher professional development</p>
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	<p>day training for you to further understand how important universal screening legislation is and how it will lead to the path of success for teachers and students alike. Please call if you have any questions.</p>
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Testimony in Support of the Dyslexia Bill 25-200

Good Afternoon, distinguished members of the committee. My name is Mollie Gilligan, I'm a local business owner, an involved member of our community and as a passionate mother advocating for my 10 year old daughter, who has struggled with dyslexia. I stand before you to urge you to pass bill **Senate Bill 25-200** because, as a family, we have lived through the heartache of watching my daughter struggle without the support she needed—and it's a journey I never want another child or family to experience. Nor should they have to.

When my daughter entered school, we never imagined that she would face the challenges of dyslexia. Like any parent, we expected her to thrive, to develop a love for learning, and to succeed in the classroom. But year after year, I watched her fall behind her peers, unable to grasp reading and writing as easily as the other children. The frustration, the tears, the self-doubt—every day felt like an uphill battle. It became painfully clear that something was wrong, but we couldn't quite figure out what it was. She seemed so bright, and had an amazing vocabulary, what were we missing.

My daughter's struggles were not identified early. The system didn't recognize the signs of dyslexia until **second grade**—a full two plus years after she started school. It was almost as if the school wouldn't say she had dyslexia and they told us they could not diagnose it, that we would have to do that on our own. Two years of watching her fight to keep up, feeling discouraged, and falling further and further behind. By the time we finally got the diagnosis, my daughter had already begun to internalize feelings of inadequacy and failure. As a family, we felt completely powerless, unable to help her navigate a world that seemed to leave her behind at every turn.

But even after we finally had an answer, the road to getting help was anything but clear. The special education teacher gave me a single website with a list of tutors in our area—no guidance, no recommendations, just a list. I called **10 different tutors**, hoping for some clarity, and only **three** responded. Of those three, we interviewed just one, the other 2 had no openings. We signed up for her services, but it felt like we were in the dark—completely unsure of whether this was the right fit or what exactly my daughter needed.

We had no roadmap. We were left to figure it out ourselves, with no clear direction or support from the educational system. The resources available to us felt scattered and inaccessible, and we were left wondering how many other families were facing the same confusion and frustration. If 1 and 5 children have some degree of dyslexia, why are there no answers? We felt like we were failing as parents and knew we would not give up.

What if there had been early identification and a coordinated plan in place? What if my daughter had received the right kind of help from the start, so she wouldn't have had to

endure two years of confusion, frustration, and self-doubt? What if we had been given the proper tools and resources to support her from the beginning?

What is even more devastating is knowing that **if dyslexia had been identified earlier**, my daughter wouldn't have had to endure those years of struggle and pain. Early intervention could have made all the difference in her academic journey—and in her emotional well-being. **Our family could have been spared the years of confusion and frustration that we faced.**

This bill is not just about providing resources for children with dyslexia—it's about **ensuring that no other child has to endure what my daughter went through.** It's about early identification, support, and resources that can make all the difference. It's about preventing families from feeling lost, from having to navigate a confusing maze of unhelpful websites and scattered resources.

But, in order for children like my daughter to succeed, we need a system that recognizes dyslexia early and provides **timely, targeted support.** We need teachers who are trained to spot the signs of dyslexia and families who are equipped with the knowledge and resources to help their children. My daughter deserves to reach her full potential, and every child struggling with dyslexia deserves the same opportunity.

This bill will make sure that no other family has to struggle like we did. It will ensure that children with dyslexia are identified and supported early—before they are left feeling broken, before their self-esteem is damaged, and before they start to believe they are not enough.

I ask you to pass this bill—not just for my daughter, but for all the children who are suffering in silence right now. **Let's make sure that no child has to wait until second grade—or any later—to receive the help they need.**

Thank you,

Mollie Gilligan