

Comment Report

HF 2030

A bill for an act establishing the advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement competitive grant program within the department of education and making appropriations.(See HF 2377, HF 2643.)

Subcommittee Members: Osmundson-CH, Ingels, Staed

Date: 02/06/2024

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: RM 304.1

Name: Katie Greving

Comment: I support this bill because the Dyslexia Specialist endorsement is crucial training for Iowa teachers. This 18 credit hour credential trains teachers in the science of reading, and this approach is the standard of care for ALL kids, not just those who have learning disabilities. The Dyslexia Specialist endorsement was created as a result of the 2019 Dyslexia Task Force. That group of a variety of stakeholders studied dyslexia and literacy in Iowa for over a year and unanimously recommended that this new credential be developed and offered in our state. The teachers who have gotten this endorsement so far describe it as life changing! Many educators want to pursue it, but cost is a big barrier. Please invest in this so that all Iowa kids can become proficient readers. Remember that the legislature funds a number of other tuition grant/scholarship programs, so this type of funding is not unique.

Name: Bambi Boggs

Comment: In regards to bill HF 2030, I would like to discuss that teachers would have great difficulty accessing current professional development funds for the endorsement. I asked for my district's support when I accepted the Dyslexia specialist position. My application for the endorsement had already been sent and accepted in March. Courses had not started yet when I was hired in March for the Dyslexia Specialist position. I transitioned into my position in August of that school year. I was told I could use my \$5,000 signon stipend towards the costs of the courses. However, after taxes, the remaining balance of the stipend was \$2,000. While funds for Professional Development are allotted to the districts, the accessibility and about of negotiations that have to happen to get districts to support teachers collegelevel courses vs. filling out a PD requisition for attending a conference or AEA professional development training is significant. When I asked my Curriculum Director about the statement on how funds are used she provided a very detailed explanation. I will provide a summary here. Some of the Professional Development funds can be shifted to other needs like the possibility of hiring an additional Special Education teacher. There is not an abundance of unused funds just sitting around. When districts report Professional Development costs to the State it does not show that some of that money was moved to cover more significant needs. Thus, Not all the funds must go to Professional Development. We discussed allocating funds vs. one lump sum understanding the difference and the need could support understanding of the funds. The school districts need an explicit knowledge and understanding of how these funds support staff. One way to do this is to allocate funds directly to the Professional Development. Districts need more guidelines on the allocation of resources.

Name: Megan Hunemuller

Comment: I am in support of HF 2030. Dyslexics in Iowa are at a huge disadvantage, as are our educators, at no fault of their own. Our higher ed schools have dropped the ball when

it comes to educating our upcoming teachers about dyslexia. When students graduate from college and are ready to take on a role in educating our students, they should not only understand what dyslexia and how it affects students, but they also should be able to recognize the signs and be prepared to help accommodate these students. Dyslexia affects 1 in 5, the more educators we can get through this Dyslexia Specialist endorsement, the better!! As with everything, cost is a huge factor and I hate that it holds some of our best educators back from being able to further their education while helping all Iowa students succeed. Please consider passing this bill.

Name: Nicole Pizzini

Comment: I support HF 2030 competitive grant program for the dyslexia specialist endorsement. This bill will reduce the financial barrier to obtaining this endorsement. Unfortunately, too many of Iowa teachers have not been trained in the science of reading and even fewer have an expertise in dyslexia. The dyslexia specialist endorsement was created as a result of a lack of dyslexia experts in our state. We need these experts to fill this void. The cost of this endorsement for teachers wanting to completing it is a barrier for teachers. It is well beyond what most teachers are able to access through their schools professional development funds. This bill will reduce the financial barrier facing teachers who want to complete this endorsement.

Name: Carrie Johnsen

Comment: I support the dyslexia endorsement scholarship bill. Parents have to seek outside support in order for their children to learn how to read. This is very limiting for those who can afford such services. There are many teachers who would like to have this opportunity but the cost is preventing them to do so. School districts are not able to help financially. One of the ways we can reach all dyslexics students who come from different financial backgrounds is to put teachers in schools with this knowledge.

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Name: Angela Snyder

Comment: I would like to express my support for HF 2030. As the mom of a spunky little 10 year old girl, who also happens to be dyslexic, I know what a difference proper instruction in the science of reading can make in a child's life. When I realized that most teachers are not trained in this way, and that kids are not receiving this instruction in public schools, I had to begin homeschooling her in order to provide the instruction she needed. My hope for the future is that children can be given this instruction in school. Much research indicates that it's the best way to teach reading, whether a child has dyslexia or not. This bill will make it possible for teachers to be trained and understand how helpful it will be to their students. Please support this bill. I know it will make a world of difference for all kids in Iowa.

Name: Randy Califf

Comment: I am in favor of this bill because the Dyslexia Specialist endorsement is a key element to supporting an environment that best equips our teachers to help all children reach their reading potential. This endorsement trains teachers in the science of reading, which is a gold standard all children, including both those with and without dyslexia or other learning disabilities. Further, the Dyslexia Specialist endorsement was created as direct outcome and recommendation of the Dyslexia Task Force which was created by the 2019 Legislature. Our organization has received feedback from teachers that the training is outstanding. Teachers should not

have to invest their own money in receiving this essential training. This funding can have a tremendous impact on the lives of thousands of Iowa students every year.

Name: Kirsten LaBlanc

Comment: I am an ELA teacher in Iowa's public schools. I am also the single parent of a dyslexic child. I would like to add my support for HF 2030. I came to teaching later in life following my own 4th grader's diagnosis of Dyslexia. My child is now a 9th grader with severe academic trauma. My K8 Reading Endorsement and teacher prep program were not enough to support the 20% of students in each of my classrooms who have Dyslexia. I would love to add a Dyslexia Endorsement to my own licence but cannot afford to take on more student loans. Many of the teachers in my building want more education to support students with Dyslexia but are in the same situation that I find myself in. This bill will help our teachers support each and every student. I ask you to support our teachers and students by supporting this bill.

Name: Renee Saarloos

Comment: I am writing in support of HF 2030. As a parent of a dyslexic son, my journey proved that Iowa educators have not been properly trained in how to identify dyslexic students in their classrooms each year. This is through no fault of their own. We need to come alongside those staying in the educational field and support their desire to deepen their knowledge of how to support their struggling students. Providing an opportunity to offset the cost of tuition is imperative. Ultimately, this knowledge will benefit all students across Iowa.