



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: SB 681		DATE: 4/19/2022	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AMANDA SCHWENT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: amandajschwent@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/19/2022 9:01 AM
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My oldest daughter Lily was diagnosed with Dyslexia in 2018 after many years of struggling and never achieving grade level in reading. Lily was retained in Kindergarten because she was unable to recognize letters and sounds and was not reading. She spent countless hours in reading interventions that ultimately did not close the gap for her. Present day Lily is a 13-year-old, 7th grade student who has had an IEP since 2019. In the years since becoming eligible for special education services, she has yet to make more than a year's growth in basic reading skills. She is currently reading at a fourth-grade level. I have been asking my school district for a structured reading program that explicitly teaches her the foundational skills for decoding words. It has been a fight every step of the way and we are paying out of pocket for Barton Tutoring to fill the gap now. This year we had an Independent Evaluation by a neuropsychologist who noted that Lily is not maintaining all of her intellectual faculties from previous evaluations and has lost ground in her broad cognitive development, which he said was a common pattern in students with learning and language disorders. His suggestion was a structured literacy plan to build her basic reading skills so her inability to read efficiently will not continue to get in the way of healthy cognitive and academic development. I'm here before this committee today to a plead with you to pass Senate Bill 681 – Reading Success Plan for all students in Missouri. I believe that if there had been legislation like this in place when my daughter was in elementary school, she would be reading much closer to or on grade level and could have avoided the many years of struggle and heartache that she and our family have endured. I want this for my child and for the many children behind her whose parents may not have the knowledge or resources to advocate and provide outside instruction as we have been able to provide for our child. Being able to read efficiently is the foundational piece for success in every area of life. Reading efficiently should not be reserved for those that can afford outside resources.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: BRANDT SHIELDS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-638-7501	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 2100 I-70 DRIVE SOUTHWEST			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/19/2022 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JENNIFER EDWARDS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: jenx.edwards@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/19/2022 10:14 AM
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Members of the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee, I am submitting written testimony as a Member of Decoding Dyslexia Missouri to offer my support and that of our membership to Senate Bill 681 sponsored by Senator Cindy O'Laughlin. Specifically, we want to see schools provide evidenced based structured literacy instruction to students that have been identified with dyslexia. It has been established for more than two decades that we have the ability to reduce the percentage of children reading below basic level in fourth grade from the current national average of 38% to less than 6%, via early identification, coupled with comprehensive early reading interventions (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development NICHD, 2001). Although we have the ability, we are not implementing these strategies. What you need to know: Missouri's current rate of non-proficient readers is more than 65%, and this has changed very little over the last two decades. Dyslexia is the #1 reading disability. It affects 20% of the population and is 80-90% of all learning disabilities. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH) research, reading failure is the most commonly shared characteristic of juvenile justice offenders and dyslexia is the leading cause of reading failure and school drop outs in our nation. Research indicates that more than half of prison inmates are dyslexic not able to read above a 4th grade level. We support SB681 because the bill requires schools to identify struggling readers. Dyslexia is identifiable with 92% accuracy at age 5 1/2. Schools are already required to provide dyslexia screenings and therefore this will create no fiscal burden for screening. It take the next logical step of providing appropriate interventions for these identified students, which will include progress monitoring and parent involvement to ensure the highest level of possible success for children who struggle with literacy. These Evidenced-based are not only best practice, they are required by the US Department of Education within special education and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). They are also recommended in the final report by Missouri's Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia, on which I had the privilege to serve. The International Dyslexia Association has concluded the following from its extensive research: "What does work is Structured Literacy, which prepares students to decode words in an explicit and systematic manner. This approach not only helps students with dyslexia, but there is substantial evidence that it is more effective for all readers." When considering the cost for schools to provide this to students who desperately need this intervention, perhaps you should also consider the costs to families when they don't. My daughter was privately identified/diagnosed by a pediatric neuro-psychologist, that cost my family nearly \$2500 in testing. She then began a remediation program that required her to attend tutoring 3-4 times per week which cost my family another \$6000 per year, for three years. I am fortunate that my husband and I could provide this for our daughter, but I'm not sure that is typical for the 1 in 5 Missouri students who struggle with dyslexia and reading deficiencies. Missouri has an obligation to provide an appropriate education to all students in Missouri. SB681 is a large step in the right direction. We urge to vote in support of SB681. Jennifer Edwards President, Co-

FounderDecoding Dyslexia MO



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LINDA D BATTEN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: ldbatten1@aol.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/17/2022 6:07 PM
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HB 681 is on the calendar for Tuesday, April 19, 2022. This bill is critical to ensuring school children in Missouri are receiving research and evidenced based reading instruction if they are in the 40-60% that fail to reach reading proficiency in elementary school. This is the 3rd year the bill has almost made it to the final vote. Please don't let this drop through the cracks again. If you do not have first hand experience with what dyslexic children endure when the school fails them, I ask you to try this simple activity. Turn on a TV show (I use Channel 13 news, KRCG). Mute the sound and turn on subtitles. Watch the program using subtitles. Subtitles are notorious for making spelling and substitution errors. This is very close to what a 3rd-5th grade dyslexic child experiences when told to read independently. Right now, schools are using the same reading program that failed my dyslexic daughter 25 years ago. They are currently refusing to provide research/evidence based instruction for my granddaughter who is dyslexic. We have had her independently tested at the end of kindergarten and the end of first grade. In spite of testing below grade level in the screening programs used by the schools, no change in her instruction has been provided. The schools are not using the screening programs to prevent reading failure. They are still clinging to the idea that unless a child is severely behind, instruction continues as normal. Severely behind is defined at 1.5 grade levels behind in K-2 and 2 grade levels in grades 3 and up. How far behind can a 1st grade student with average to above average intelligence be? Children in grades K-2 are reliant on spoken vocabulary that is common to most kids. This enables them to successfully guess the words using pictures, context clues and maybe one or two letters from the word in question (3 Que method). No one is addressing deficiencies in phonemic awareness and phonological mastery to decide when intervention is critical. The current program concentrates on comprehension and fluency which in K-2 can be achieved without having mastered the fundamental reading skills. These kids then "hit the wall" in 3rd grade when the number of new vocabulary words increases dramatically. Please expedite the passing of HB681 for all our children who are left believing they are stupid and unsuccessful because of a lack of appropriate reading instruction in our schools. Sincerely, Linda Batten



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MATTHEW MICHELSON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-499-5407	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 458			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65205
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/19/2022 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: OTTO FAJEN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-3202	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1810 EAST ELM STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/19/2022 12:00 AM	

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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: STACEY PREIS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-864-2817	
REPRESENTING: ALIGNED		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1436 COACHLAMP CT			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL: stacey@preisconsulting.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person		SUBMIT DATE: 4/18/2022 11:16 AM

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SB 681 addresses student success in reading, beginning with the way that teacher candidates are prepared for reading instruction. Reading is the cornerstone for all learning. Without strong reading skills, learning in any content area is compromised. The bill outlines details of support structures and requires the development of reading success plans for students identified as having reading deficiencies. This bill will improve the opportunity for student success in reading. SB 681 supports the need for identification and early intervention to remediate any deficiencies in reading.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com		ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/19/2022 11:40 PM

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I am Opposed to this Bill and Legislation. This Bill is Complicated with Hidden Agendas. This Bill is NOT Ready for Prime-Time and Needs Much Needed Debate, Discussion, Amendments and Sections Striped-Out of this Bill.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: SCOTT KIMBLE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-638-4825	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS		TITLE: DIRECTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY	
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CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: scott.kimble@mcsa.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/18/2022 9:21 PM
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on SB 681. The Missouri Association of School Administrators would like to go on record for informational purposes only. While the "Perfected" version of SB 681 is a vast improvement over the original iteration of the bill, there are a few issues that our association believes must be addressed before moving forward. First, the implementation date for a majority of the bill, Section 167.645, is January 1, 2023. As the bill requires a number of significant modifications for school districts to implement in terms of reading instruction and services that must be provided to students, providing only four (4) months to plan and execute will be quite difficult, if not totally unattainable, for many school districts. We suggest that the effective date for Section 167.645 be July 1, 2023 (providing, essentially, one full year for implementation) as opposed to January 1, 2023. Second, the "Perfected" version of the bill only permits school districts to utilize "state-approved reading assessments." For years, districts have been allowed to utilize state assessments AND/OR local assessments when evaluating a student's reading ability. Allowing school districts to utilize local reading assessments allows for local control and, frankly, will likely result in the utilization of better assessment tools. By reinserting a district's ability to use local reading assessments, the state will preserve local control and will likely ensure that better assessment tools are utilized. Lastly, Section 170.014 should be modified slightly to state as follows: "This section shall be known as the 'Reading Instruction Act' and is enacted to ensure that all public and charter schools establish reading programs in kindergarten through grade [three] five that align with the Missouri Learning Standards and support high quality, evidence-based reading instruction for all students. 'Evidence-based reading instruction' includes a collection of practices grounded in research and professional wisdom that have proven effective through evaluation of the outcomes for groups of students and are highly likely to be effective in improving reading if implemented with fidelity. Such programs shall include the essential components of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. All new teachers who teach reading in kindergarten through grade three shall receive adequate training in these areas. Every public and charter school in the state shall offer a reading program as described in subsection 1 of this section for kindergarten through grade five." We believe that with these changes, school districts will be able to implement the provisions contained within SB 681 and provide quality reading programs to their students.