Your Name

Your Address

Your City, State

Date

Name of school official

Title

Address

Dear,

I am a parent in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School District of a student that has been diagnosed with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. According to a Yale study 1 out of 5 people suffer from dyslexia. It crosses racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines, and with proper instruction and accommodations, it can be remediated.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is an amazing school district and that is one of the main reasons we chose to live in this district. \_\_\_\_#\_\_\_\_\_ families and counting within our district have been meeting to discuss dyslexia. Many of these families have more than one child with learning disabilities. We represent students at all of the elementary schools, within the middle schools and at the high school level. We would like to partner with you to see an improvement in how intervention services are given to students with dyslexia and any other learning disabilities. This is a passion for us and an opportunity for you to uncover some valuable resources by using our experience and seeing the steps on our journey that we noticed could use some improvement.

Within our group an average family spends \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year on outside help to assist their child to understand what he or she has been taught in the classroom *in a way that makes sense for them*. Currently there isn’t a reading program available for kids with dyslexia in the district. I can’t imagine how many families don’t have the means to make this work and therefore that child suffers. It’s very important for us to level the playing field for these kids and give each and everyone of them the help that they deserve. Not just for families that can’t afford it, but for EVERYONE that needs it.

The US Department of Education recently made a statement to specifically recognize dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia as conditions that qualify a student as a child with a specific learning disability. We should no longer be reluctant to reference dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia in evaluations, eligibility determinations or in developing IEP and 504 documents.2

Here is a list of suggested actions we recommended the school district take to better support our kids:

1. Basic training for all elementary school teachers to identify dyslexia and/or any students who are struggling with phonics and a set of options for formal testing/early diagnosis.

* MN Dept of Education’s: Navigating the School System when a Child is Struggling with Reading or Dyslexia 7/20/15 <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/JustParent/SpecEdStu/index.html>

1. Access to *at least one* highly trained specialist in evidence based practices research-based reading and writing program in each Invention Specialist department of each school (such as Orton Gillingham for individual instruction or the Wilson Reading System for group instruction).

* Orton-Gillingham of MN; Teacher Training Courses available. <http://ogmn.org>
* Wilson Language Training - Ellen Engstrom, Director of Education: engstrome@grovesacademy.org or 952-915-4247

1. Reach out to a local specialist in dyslexia to make sure your plan will be effective. **And** include parents of students with dyslexia in early conversations to determine the best actions for change of how intervention services are given.

* Groves Academy - <http://www.grovesacademy.org/events/workshops/>
* The International Dyslexia Association – Upper Midwest Branch <http://www.ida-umb.org/home.html>

1. Develop a transparent process within the district for parents to access before an IEP or 504 meeting. So that all parties involved know what to expect, such as a menu of options given out before the scheduled meeting.
2. School licenses to assisted technology programs and digital books to use in the classroom and for the children to study/read at school AND at home.

* Learning Ally <http://learningally.org/educator>, 1-800-221-1098
* Simon Technology Center at PACER Center - <http://www.pacer.org/stc/>

1. Contact one of our advocates to set up a meeting to present your action plan and to hear our feedback.

* Name - email/phone

1. A list of resources available to parents on the district website for children who have been diagnosed with dyslexia, any other learning disabilities or children who would benefit from a direct, sequential, systematic, alphabetic code-based instruction (not just for students who are failing).

* MN Dept of Education’s: Navigating the School System when a Child is Struggling with Reading or Dyslexia 7/20/15 <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/JustParent/SpecEdStu/index.html>

Thank you for your time to hear us out. We have kids with high academic potential and we hope to work with you soon on improvements within the whole school district at every level to help all kids reach their greatest level of achievement. Please consider helping to make sure improvements are made for the kids with dyslexia.

Sincerely,

Name

Parent of a child with learning disabilities

1 <http://dyslexia.yale.edu/MDAI/>

2 <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>