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Chairman Lehner, Senators of the Education Committee:

Thank you for having me here today and the opportunity to speak with you. I am here today to ask for your support on HB436.

I am the parent of a dyslexic, the co-founder of the Olentangy Dyslexia Network (ODN), ODN is a member of Ohio-Kid, a coalition of parent advocacy groups and I am the President of the Olentangy School District Board of Education. We are a district of just under 23,000 students. We screen and serve our dyslexic learners with a structured literacy curriculum.

Unlike other countries around the world, our country has made education a right. IDEA has made that right available to all children regardless if they have a disability. I have had the privilege of joining you previously so I won't repeat the story of my family's personal dyslexia journey. What I will share is that the journey was so much more difficult, costly and time consuming that anyone's should be. With the help from our family we paid for private evaluations, an educational advocate, a special education attorney, private tutoring and private school. So I rolled up my sleeves and made my mission my districts mission to assure that all kids in Olentangy would have the opportunity to be successful readers. If a large district like Olentangy can do this we can be a role model for others. Surely such opportunity should not be limited to select districts where parent groups form and demanded change.

I thought I would share a few facts about what one of the lowest state funded districts in Ohio was able to provide their dyslexic students:

Orton Gillingham or OG is a multisensory and systematic approach to teach struggling readers. It is prescriptive and diagnostic. The two most coveted Accredited OG Training Programs that require intense practicum are The Institute of Multisensory Education & the Academy of Orton Gillingham (AOGPE). Olentangy is the only Public School District in the United State to have be an **AOGPE accredited training facility**. The Academy has certification levels:

- Associate certified members – 56 in the state of Ohio and at Olentangy, we employ 25 of them.
- OG Classroom Educators - 30 in the state of Ohio and at Olentangy, we employ 17 of them.
- Fellows-in Training, a fellow is the highest certification level that facilitates and the training of educators, of the 3 in Ohio we have one (Becky Hall).
- Fellows -8 in the state of Ohio and we have one o. Holly Robbertz heads our training program.

We have additional certified staff in Wilson, CALP & ALTA. I think this demonstrates our commitment to our students.

With your permission I brought a writing sample to share with you. I read these letters and was taken instantly back to my son's personal journey.

I would like to introduce you to Knox Baker. Knox is very shy but he is really excited to see the state house and be with us today. Knox is a 4th grader at Darby Woods Elementary School in South-Western

City Schools. Knox has been on an IEP and received intervention since preschool. He has received intense intervention in reading. Yet his IEP is not for a Specific Learning Disability which Dyslexia falls under but rather a OHI (Other Health Impairment) IEP. His parents have asked for a re-evaluation because his intensive intervention still leaves him struggling and the gap widening. I asked mom about some of the strategies Knox has been taught. She described classic Whole Language strategies that promote guessing based on pictures and context instead of sounding out or decoding the words. The current approach is not working yet request for re-evaluation and a dyslexia screening have been denied. This is what parents are told when the schools don't have the tools or the training to address?

I am not an expert in diagnosis. But I know and have lived Knox' story, I know his struggles and I've witnessed the success of a Structured Literacy program delivered with fidelity. I think Knox deserves that opportunity of knowing that too.

Screening is the 1st step. Professional development in Structured Literacy must follow.

We fund testing, we fund literacy but are we funding them correctly? Are we maximizing our funding investment?

Thank you for time today.