

## Testimony HB440

Dear Chairwoman Manning and Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity for me to testify about the benefit that remote instruction has been for my children who are on the Jon Peterson Scholarship.

My name is Shannon Rainer and I have been homeschooling for 17 years and a practicing physical therapist on the weekends for 29 years.

Two of my five children require special education. I have a rising 7th grade daughter and a rising 12th grade son that receive remote special education instruction using the Jon Peterson Scholarship. My son John Paul began intervention in 2017 with in-person specialized reading instruction and speech therapy. His Jon Peterson providers worked with him to gain tools to decode and encode words so that he could begin to finally read by himself, start to understand what he was reading, and begin to write more easily.

When the pandemic hit and instruction went online, I was very worried about how John Paul would continue to progress with his reading and writing. His providers went above and beyond to transition him online and honestly, no time was lost because the tools that they could use online were superior to what they could do in person. I was so surprised. Annotation was easier, switching source texts was quicker, using multi-color reading tiles to build words was easier. All the features of online instruction were amazing and fun! Other benefits of the remote instruction were soon very evident: instruction could continue when John Paul was sick; instruction could continue when an emergency arose with my elderly parents; and instruction could continue when a snow storm hit. With remote instruction, John Paul made more progress because there were less interruptions in his services and the online instruction was better than in-person.

My daughter Marie began remote instruction according to her IEP in 2021. It is all she has ever done and she is soaring! With the same instructor as John Paul, she has made more progress in a shorter amount of time. I am convinced that her progress is because her remote instruction is hardly ever interrupted and the technological tools, that are rapidly improving, make every minute of instruction more efficient. Both Marie and John Paul have also struggled with anxiety and attention issues and I have found that with remote instruction, there is peace and fewer distractions and that leads to more rapid learning.

I was so perplexed late last year when I learned that the new arbitrary policy would allow remote instruction for a physical therapist, but not a specialized reading instructor. As a physical therapist, I am hands on with my patients and cannot imagine how I would teach them how to get out of bed or walk remotely. Specialized reading instruction does not need to be in person at all. In fact, this service is better online as the technology tools are easier to use for both the student and the instructor simultaneously and resources are more readily available. It would make more sense for there to be limits on remote instruction for physical therapy than in specialized reading instruction.

As I have shared, remote instruction has been the best instruction for my children. Both John Paul and Marie, who are visual learners, have told me that they love their instruction online because they are able to utilize technological tools that help them retain the information. John Paul has found that more material is covered now in his online sessions and they are easier for him to follow. Additionally, since their instruction virtually has been seamless, their progress remains steady and their excitement for learning continues to grow. I need that to continue- it is vital to their development.

Please pass HB440 to continue to allow remote instruction so that John Paul and Marie can reach their academic goals and potential using their current providers with their Jon Peterson Scholarship.

Thank you for your time,

Shannon Rainer  
June 2, 2024