



February 17, 2026

Dear Wyoming Legislator,

We are writing on behalf of WYO Right to Read, a Wyoming-based nonprofit advocacy organization representing students with dyslexia and reading disabilities across our state. We urge you to vote YES on SF0059 — K-12 Language and Literacy Program — as written, without amendments.

A Bill Born from Unprecedented Collaboration

SF0059 is not a hastily drafted proposal or the product of any single perspective. This bill is the result of months of rigorous, deliberate collaboration among some of Wyoming's most knowledgeable education professionals and stakeholders, including the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), the WDE Superintendent's Literacy Cabinet comprising 40 elementary and secondary teachers from across Wyoming, the Wyoming Legislature's Joint Education Committee and its subcommittee, certified dyslexia specialists, members of the Rocky Mountain Dyslexia Association Board, WYO Right to Read, and University of Wyoming Literacy Education, College of Education Department leaders.

This bill passed out of the Joint Education Committee because it reflects the collective expertise of educators, literacy scientists, specialists, and advocates who understand what Wyoming's struggling readers need. It represents consensus — not compromise for the sake of institutional convenience, but genuine agreement grounded in over five decades of research and established case law.

The Single Most Important Word: "Shall"

We must speak plainly about proposed amendments seeking to replace "shall" with "may" throughout this bill. This is not a minor grammatical adjustment. It is the difference between a law and a suggestion.

"Shall" means districts are required to provide evidence-based structured literacy instruction by qualified teachers. It means accountability. It means Wyoming children with dyslexia have a guaranteed right to the intervention they need.

"May" means districts can choose whether to comply. It gives the State of Wyoming, individual school districts, and the Wyoming Department of Education a way out — removing all accountability and rendering this bill effectively unenforceable.

We must ask directly: Why are we afraid of accountability?

Federal and state statutes are not ambiguous. They are explicit in requiring evidence-based methodologies and programs delivered by qualified teachers for students with reading disabilities. Wyoming school districts have been violating these laws. SF0059 enforces compliance. Substituting "may" for "shall" simply allows those violations to continue — with legislative blessing.

Dyslexia is Not a Tier — It is a Distinct Instructional Need

We fully support broad literacy reform for all Wyoming students. AND we must be clear: dyslexia requires additional specificity that general literacy improvement efforts do not address.

Dyslexia is a neurological condition affecting approximately 1 in 5 Wyoming children. It does not respond to general reading improvement strategies. It requires explicit, systematic, structured literacy instruction delivered with fidelity by teachers trained in evidence-based methodology.

Proposed amendments that weaken the bill's specificity risk creating false compliance — the appearance of addressing dyslexia while replicating the exact failures already occurring across Wyoming school districts. Screening without intervention specificity is not compliance. Identifying a child with dyslexia and then failing to provide appropriate intervention solves nothing. "Evidence-based" must mean explicit structured literacy methodology with fidelity — not simply materials labeled as evidence-based, not PD hours without competency verification. Teacher competency must be verified, not assumed based on professional development attendance. Instructional methodology matters, not just materials selection.

Weakening this bill's language does not modernize it. It hollows it out.

Who We Are Actually Talking About

Some have suggested we measure success by the percentage of students meeting proficiency standards in a given district. This fundamentally misses the point.

SF0059 is not about the children who are already succeeding. It is about the children in every district across Wyoming who are not — the students who remain below basic, who score in the high-risk Tier 2 and Tier 3 ranges on state assessments, who struggle year after year without appropriate intervention. These are Wyoming's dyslexic learners. They exist in every district, in every corner of this state.

Proficiency rates tell us nothing about whether the children who need the most help are actually receiving it. We are talking about the children who are being left behind right now, in every Wyoming community, while institutions debate the cost of helping them.

On the "Burden and Cost" Argument

It has been argued that SF0059 places too great a burden on districts and that evidence-based materials are too expensive. We must be direct: this argument is being made by individuals whose expertise does not lie in dyslexia or the science of reading.

Research and proven methodology matter enormously. And the presentation of that methodology — the actual instructional materials through which structured literacy is delivered — is not separable from the methodology itself. You cannot implement evidence-based structured literacy instruction without evidence-based structured literacy materials. To call this a burden is to argue that teaching children to read is too expensive.

The true cost is what Wyoming is already paying: in remediation, in special education referrals, in students who reach middle and high school functionally unable to read, and in families forced to spend thousands on private tutoring to compensate for what public schools failed to provide. The cost of inaction is immeasurable — and it is being paid entirely by children.

The Equity Argument Wyoming Cannot Ignore

If SF0059 passes with amendments replacing "shall" with "may," reading will remain a privilege in Wyoming — available only to children whose families have the financial means to enforce compliance through private legal intervention or private tutoring.

Families with resources will hire attorneys, file due process complaints, and secure the structured literacy instruction their children need. Families without those resources will watch their children fall further behind, year after year, in schools that are legally permitted — under a weakened bill — to do nothing differently.

This is a civil rights issue. One in five Wyoming children have dyslexia. They are entitled under federal law to appropriate, evidence-based instruction. SF0059 as written guarantees that right. SF0059 with "may" language abandons them.

Local Control and Student Rights: A Balance

We understand concerns about local control. SF0059 does not eliminate district autonomy — it establishes parameters within which districts retain meaningful choice.

School districts will have choices. They can select which programs and presentation materials work best for their students and communities. What changes is that all available choices will be

from a list of approved programs that demonstrably adhere to structured literacy methodologies proven by research to be evidence-based.

This is not micromanagement — it is quality assurance. Districts choose the approach that fits their context. Students are guaranteed that whichever approach their district selects will actually work.

The alternative — allowing districts to choose programs with no evidence base, or to ignore dyslexia intervention entirely — is not local control. It is abandoning children to geography. A child's right to learn to read cannot depend on which Wyoming district they happen to live in.

Local control is important. But it cannot supersede federal law, and it cannot mean the freedom to violate children's civil rights.

Our Ask

The collaborative process that produced SF0059 was thorough, inclusive, and grounded in science and law. The institutions now seeking to weaken it are not offering improvements — they are seeking to avoid accountability for compliance with laws that already exist and have long been ignored.

Wyoming's children with dyslexia cannot afford another legislative session of delay, dilution, or false compromise.

We respectfully and urgently ask you to:

- Vote YES on SF0059 as currently written
- Oppose any amendments replacing "shall" with "may"
- Oppose any amendments removing specificity around structured literacy methodology, teacher competency, or intervention fidelity

Every Wyoming child deserves the right to learn to read. Please ensure that right is guaranteed — not merely suggested.

Sincerely,

WYO Right to Read Board of Directors