

# ELGIN/NEW LEIPZIG PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #49

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Daniel R Ludvigson, Superintendent, Ele. Principal



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## HB 1131 Testimony

Chairman Owens and members of the committee, for the record my name is Daniel Ludvigson, Superintendent, Elementary Principal, MTSS Coordinator, and 504 Coordinator of Elgin/New Leipzig Public School and Southwest Special Education Unit President. I am writing this letter in regard to house bill 1131.

I have been an MTSS and 504 Coordinator for 9 years in addition to administrative duties. I have implanted Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (interventions for all students) both in my former school of Munich and now at Elgin/New Leipzig. The Elgin/New Leipzig Public School ranked second in the state for growth scores in ND between 2017 and 2019. I also serve as president of the Southwest Special Education Unit's board. I share this information to give you an idea as to my expertise and background.

The intent of this bill is honorable, and I applaud the people who want to help struggling readers. There are a few issues I do need to bring up. The first is that Dyslexia in and of itself does not qualify a student for an Individual Education Plan as its not in and of itself a learning disability. I know this because these students would qualify for a 504 plan and certainly do need assistance. School's do not diagnosis Dyslexia at this time as Dyslexia is a medical diagnosis that means the individual struggles with reading. In special education if the individual has a learning disability impeding learning we call this a Reading Disability.

Our school is a title-wide school and we have already have a reading specialist that serves our general education students. Adding a requirement to have a dyslexia specialist would be a duplication of specializations for our general education supports. Without additional funding tied to this requirement, it simply asks us to stretch our already limited resources. This means we need to invest lest time in counseling, mathematics specialists, or even a reading specialist. I say this because at the end of the day we still have to balance our budgets. We presently periodically screen all students for our MTSS system. Students who have difficulties in reading show up and we provide intervention. This process is reflected in our success in helping students to learn to read.

I do support teachers having training related to reading in the primary grades as this is a critical phase in their development as readers. A skilled teacher can make a huge difference but to do this schools need to be provided the resources. This includes people to provide the training and the time to provide that training. Teachers are already asked to be counselors, disciplinarians, distance educators, and school nurses on a regular basis. They are stretched thin and simply asking them to do more with less with exacerbate the teacher shortage, as people will eventually walk away.

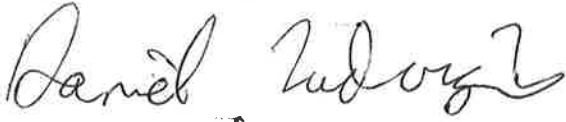
*The mission of the Elgin/New Leipzig Public School District is to provide a positive and safe environment that promotes lifelong learning to all individuals.*

I do support school-wide screenings and intervention systems. I have devoted much of my career to this. Detecting learning difficulties in reading, language arts, and mathematics early is critical. At these developmental stages in a child's life you have the most capacity to make a difference. This helps with all the areas I cited. I do support having school-wide screenings and a plan in place to address those students who are not at grade level. The benefits of doing so are highly researched and show a considerable impact on student learning.

I ask you to take this in consideration as you work on this bill. If anyone has questions they can contact me at [Daniel.ludvigson@k12.nd.us](mailto:Daniel.ludvigson@k12.nd.us) or 701-584-2374. I am more than happy to share any additional information you may find useful.

For your consideration,

Daniel Ludvigson  
Superintendent  
Elgin/New Leipzig Public School

  
3-16-2021