

Senate Bill 2219  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Date

For the record, I am Amanda Anstrom. I am providing testimony in support of Senate Bill 2219.

My daughter Piper is currently in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Wilton Public School. Piper is a typical, healthy student who loves school. However, there is one issue: Piper struggles with reading. Piper entered the second grade with very little reading skills and unable to comprehend the words she was reading. As a mom it was scary to see my child struggle with reading. She became extremely unmotivated, refused to practice reading in the evening, and her self-confidence began to drop. I felt completely helpless. We would read every evening together, but it would always end with her being frustrated due to her inability to read. At a point she wouldn't even try.

Piper's reading issues were first identified in the first grade, but no special interventions were made at that time. At the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Piper's reading issues were once again identified. She scored below average on her reading tests but above average on all other assessments. When I became aware of her low test scores, I pushed even harder at home, but this only made it worse. She hated reading and there was nothing I could do. Luckily, the school recognized that Piper needed some help. An interventionist from the school contacted me and asked if I was willing to allow Piper to participate in a reading program called ND Reading Corps. She told me the program would excuse Piper from class for a short-individualized tutoring session from a reading tutor. I loved the idea however I was apprehensive as I knew how Piper worked with me at home. Regardless, we planned to start the reading program immediately. On day 1, I picked Piper up from school and asked her if she got to participate in some extra reading during the day. She exclaimed "yes" and proceeded to tell me all about her special reading time with Ms. Breanna, her reading tutor. She absolutely loved it. Not once did Piper feel singled out or identified as having a reading problem. She just loved having her special reading time with her reading tutor. As the weeks went by, I started to see major improvements in Piper's reading abilities. She was able to read for longer periods of time, she was comprehending what she was reading, and she had more confidence in sounding out words. But most importantly, Piper was finally starting to find joy in reading. We had a bit of a hiccup in October as our entire family contracted the Covid-19 virus. Piper was out of school for almost an entire month. I was worried her reading progress would stall. But it did not. Piper's reading tutor met via Zoom with Piper every day during our month-long quarantine and continued to coach her in reading. Piper loved it and it motivated her to read while we were stuck at home.

We are now 6 months into the program and Piper still enjoys her special reading time with her Reading Corps tutor. Piper is now starting to read chapter books with minimal assistance from me. She enjoys reading children books to me out loud and has found a new love for the Harry Potter books. Her goal is to be able to read these books all by herself. We both know this will take time and hard work but it's wonderful to see Piper make reading goals.

If you would have told me at the beginning of the second grade that Piper would be reading Chapter books by the end of the school year, I would have never believed it. Her reading levels were just too low to support an idea like this. Piper had no passion or motivation to want to learn to read. But thanks to the Reading Corps program, I now have a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader who loves to read and is working hard every day to become a better reader. I strongly encourage you to continue to support the Reading Corps program. I know my daughter is not the only

student to benefit from this program. I am forever grateful to the Reading Corps program and for what it has done for my daughter.

Thank you for your time.