

Honorable Education Committee Members:

Palms sweating, heart pounding, a focused gaze on anything but her. The one who could change my playground status from artisan to jester with just a few words, “Kyla, it’s your turn to read.” This shook my seven year old core. There was no escape route, super hero, or invisibility cloak that could save me from this moment. Knees shaking, I stood up looking down at the paper that was now drenched in sweat from my palms. I tried not to make eye contact with my peers, but it didn’t stop them from staring at me. It was like they knew that once I stood up, no words would come out of my mouth. I saw no connection in how the symbols on the paper could create the words we speak. Reading out loud was painful, not just for me, but for the audience to sit through: my face as red as a tomato, I sounded out every letter, trying to make sense of what appeared to me as nonsense—to a natural reader, a sentence.

It didn’t hit me, that there was a problem, until those moments in class. However, others knew that I had a problem yet had no answers to what it was. So to try and figure it out, I was taken out of class every Friday and placed in a room with a woman who would ask me the same questions and show me the same cards and make me take the same tests and still there was no answer to why I was quickly falling behind my classmates. The problem with this was no teacher told me that I was doing things wrong. When I began working with a special ed teacher daily in the first grade I would take computerized spelling tests. I would get every single word wrong. I did not know at the time because the teacher did not tell me that I would get every word wrong, this was, she said, to “protect my self-esteem”.

My education persisted and I began to go from school to intensive tutoring because it was at that point where my reading and writing levels were so low that there was a chance of me staying back yet another year. I began to not care for school. My social skills decreased extensively while my acting skills improved to the level of academy award winning for best actress at faking sick. My brother on the other hand, who is also dyslexic, went through the same experiences as me except he turned to the “bad-boy” route making his home the principal’s office.

To cut it short, it was not the school system that taught me how to read. It was my persistent mother who pushed my brother and me to learn how to read, bringing us to clinics that focused mainly on kids like us, because the school system didn’t know how to do it. Thanks to the intensive support I received outside of school, I was one of the lucky ones; there was a point in time when college didn’t seem like an option, the goal was to just get through school.

However, with time, I went from the lowest level classes to landing butt first in an AP English class excelling greatly in writing and reading. I am graduating with the class of 2014 and am proud to say that I am in fact going to college on a scholarship. Thank you to all the tutors I had a chance of working with over the years.

Kyla Daley, Student

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