**Parent Statement & Request for Prior Written Notice (PWN)**

**Re: (student’s name)– \_th Grade IEP Meeting Preparation**

Dear (Director of Special Services, Principal),

This letter is to document concerns regarding the educational programming currently provided to my child, (student’s name) and to formally request a **Prior Written Notice (PWN)** in accordance with **34 CFR §300.503**.

(Student’s name) has demonstrated a high probability of **dyslexia**, supported by her performance on state assessments, where she scored in the **18th percentile**, and consistent data indicating she is **below average in all areas of reading and math**. Her current educational program has not resulted in meaningful academic progress. Despite this, the district has:

1. **Refused to implement an evidence-based, explicit, systematic, structured literacy intervention**—such as the **Wilson Reading System**, which is available within the district and can be delivered by a certified dyslexia specialist.
2. **Refused to consider Extended School Year (ESY) services**, asserting that (student’s name) has not demonstrated regression over school breaks.

This reasoning fails to consider that **(student’s name) has not demonstrated progress during the school year** under the district’s current instructional approaches. The absence of progress suggests that **a different method of instruction is urgently needed**—one backed by evidence for teaching students with dyslexia.

We respectfully request that the district provide a **Prior Written Notice (PWN)** that clearly states:

* **Why the district is refusing to implement an evidence-based structured literacy program**, such as Wilson, which is supported by the National Reading Panel and other research bodies as appropriate for students with characteristics of dyslexia.
* **Why the district is refusing to utilize a certified dyslexia instructor** currently available to deliver the program with fidelity.
* **Why the district continues to use instructional methods that have not resulted in academic progress**, despite documented lack of effectiveness.
* **Why the district is refusing to provide ESY services** in light of (student’s name) lack of progress and the severity of his/her suspected disability, which strongly indicates the need for consistency and continuity in effective instruction.
* An explanation of **each evaluation, assessment, report, or data point** used in making these decisions.
* A list of **alternative options that were considered and why they were rejected.**

Please note that under **IDEA**, educational decisions must be individualized, based on the unique needs of the child, and not based on pre-determined policies, service availability, or administrative convenience. (Student’s name) is entitled to **FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)**, and it must be delivered through methods that are effective and appropriate for his/her needs—not simply what is typically offered to all students.

We are requesting that this PWN be delivered in writing prior to the upcoming IEP meeting. If the district fails to provide a sufficient response, we will have no choice but to consider the appropriate legal avenues, including filing a state complaint or due process hearing.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Contact Info]
Parent/Guardian of (student’s name)

Remember to prepare your **“talking points”**— here are **clear, assertive talking points** you can bring to your child’s IEP meeting. These will help you stay focused, calm, and legally grounded while advocating for what your son/daughter needs.

**IEP Meeting Talking Points**

**1. Opening Statement**

“Student’s name) has been struggling academically in both reading and math, and his/her performance—currently at the 18th percentile on state testing—confirms that she is significantly below grade level. The instruction she’s receiving is not working. We’re here to ensure he/she receives an appropriate education using methods proven to work for students like him/her.”

**2. Dyslexia & Need for Structured Literacy**

“Student’s name) demonstrates classic characteristics of dyslexia. Structured Literacy, such as the Wilson Reading System, is research-based, designed for students with dyslexia, and available through a number of certified instructors in our state and neighboring states, many of whom provide the program online. Why is the district refusing to implement a program designed to meet her unique needs?”

**Follow-up:**

“IDEA requires individualized instruction—not one-size-fits-all programming. Continuing with methods that haven't worked for him/her violates his/her right to FAPE.”

**3. Lack of Progress = Justification for Change**

“The district claims he/she hasn’t regressed, but there’s been little to no improvement either. Lack of progress, especially after consistent instruction, *is* a red flag and calls for a change in methodology.”

**Reinforce with:**

“(Student’s name) IEP must be reasonably calculated to enable him/her to make progress appropriate in the light of his/her dyslexia. He/she is entitled to more than a “de minimis” standard. If he’s/she’s not demonstrating more than de minimis progress over a period of \_\_\_\_ years in the district, means the current interventions are not effective. How long will the district continue with ineffective strategies before acknowledging a change is needed?”

**4. Extended School Year (ESY)**

“The refusal to consider ESY is concerning. Students with significant learning disabilities—especially those who need intensive intervention—often require year-round instruction to maintain skills.”

**Add this if needed:**

“You’re basing your ESY denial on a lack of regression, but (student’s name) isn’t improving during the school year either. The issue isn't just regression—it’s his/her inability to retain or make meaningful gains.”

**5. Request for Prior Written Notice (PWN)**

“As required by law, I am formally requesting a Prior Written Notice. I expect the district to explain in writing why it refuses to provide:

* A structured literacy program like Wilson
* A certified dyslexia instructor
* ESY services
* Any alternate program that would meet his/her unique learning needs.”

**6. Closing Statement**

“We are not here to accept what is ‘typically’ done. We’re here to build a program tailored to (student’s name)’s needs, with effective tools and trained professionals. If the district continues to deny him/her access to appropriate services, we will explore all legal remedies to ensure her right to FAPE is honored.”

Here’s a **formal cover letter** you can pair with the talking points one-pager. You can print it, email it, or attach it to the IEP documents you submit.

**[Your Full Name]**
[Your Street Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]

**Date:** [Insert Date]

**To:**
[Name of Special Education Director,]
[School Name / District Office]
[District Address]

**Re: IEP Meeting for (Student’s name)– Request for Prior Written Notice**

Dear [Name or “IEP Team”],

I am writing as the parent and educational advocate for my son/daughter, **(student’s name)**, a \_\_\_\_ grade student currently receiving special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**IDEA**). This letter is intended to accompany my prepared **parent advocacy statement and talking points**, which I am submitting in advance of the upcoming IEP meeting to ensure transparency and to support productive team discussion.

(Student’s name) continues to perform **significantly below grade level in both reading and math**, scoring in the **18th percentile** on state assessments. He/she presents strong indicators of **dyslexia**, yet the district has thus far **refused to implement a structured literacy program**, such as the **Wilson Reading System**, despite its alignment with her needs and its availability through a certified dyslexia specialist already employed by the district.

Furthermore, I am concerned by the district's refusal to provide **Extended School Year (ESY)** services, based on the argument that (student’s name) has not demonstrated regression. However, **she has also not demonstrated progress**, which is equally concerning and calls into question the effectiveness of her current instructional program.

**As such, I am formally requesting a Prior Written Notice (PWN), as required under 34 CFR §300.503, that addresses the following:**

1. The specific reasons for refusing to implement a research-based, structured literacy program appropriate for students with dyslexia.
2. The rationale for not utilizing a certified dyslexia instructor currently available in the district.
3. The justification for denying ESY services, despite (student’s name) lack of academic progress over a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years and the severity of his/her suspected disability.
4. The evidence and data the team used to support these refusals, as well as what alternatives were considered and rejected.

All educational decisions made under IDEA must be **individualized**, based on the **student’s unique needs**, and must provide access to a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**. (Student’s name) deserves an instructional plan that is designed to address her learning profile and to give him/her a real opportunity to grow and succeed.

Please ensure that this letter and the attached one-page advocacy statement are included in her IEP file. I look forward to reviewing the district’s written response and collaborating to develop an appropriate and effective educational plan for (student’s name).

Sincerely,
**[Your Name]**
Parent/Guardian of (student’s name)

The legal foundation for your points stems from key Supreme Court rulings and federal special education law. Here’s a version of what you're expressing that may be useful in an advocacy letter, IEP meeting, or legal documentation:

A student with dyslexia is entitled to an educational program that is *reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances*, as established by the Supreme Court in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* (2017). This standard explicitly rejects the notion that merely offering de minimis (minimal or trivial) educational benefit is sufficient under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

When a student with dyslexia is not making more than de minimis progress over time, despite years of implementation of a particular methodology, it is evident that the current approach is ineffective. In such cases, the school district has an obligation to revise the methodology, based on data and the individual needs of the child. Continuing with an ineffective approach violates the requirements of IDEA and fails to provide the student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Furthermore, if a particular methodology or intervention is critical for the student’s ability to access the curriculum and learn foundational skills—such as reading—it must be clearly and explicitly included in the student’s IEP. This includes specifying the program, frequency, duration, and provider qualifications. Omitting such essential components undermines the student’s right to individualized and effective educational planning and services.

Here's a sample letter you can customize and bring to an IEP meeting or send to the school district. This is written from a parent or advocate’s perspective.

**[Your Name]**
[Your Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]

**[Date]**

**To:**
[Name of Special Education Director or Case Manager]
[School District Name]
[School Name or District Office Address]

**Re: [Student’s Name] – IEP Concerns Related to Progress and Appropriate Methodology for Dyslexia**

Dear [Name of Case Manager/Special Education Director],

I am writing regarding the educational progress and programming for my child, [Student's Name], who has a diagnosis of dyslexia and is currently receiving special education services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

As you are aware, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students with disabilities are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The Supreme Court, in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* (2017), made clear that a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s unique circumstances—not just minimal or de minimis progress.

Unfortunately, [Student’s Name] has not demonstrated more than minimal progress over the course of [X months/years], despite receiving services based on the same instructional methodology. This indicates that the current approach is not adequately addressing his/her needs. Continued use of an ineffective strategy does not meet the legal standard of FAPE. The IEP team must revise the methodology based on evidence-based practices shown to be effective for students with dyslexia.

Additionally, if a specific methodology or intervention is critical to [Student’s Name]’s ability to learn to read and access the general education curriculum, it must be clearly and explicitly stated in the IEP. This includes naming the program, frequency, intensity, and qualifications of the provider. Omitting these details compromises the integrity of the IEP and the quality of services provided.

I am requesting that the IEP team reconvene to discuss:

1. A review of current progress data in light of appropriate standards.
2. Consideration of alternative, research-based methodologies specific to dyslexia.
3. Inclusion of specific methodologies in the IEP that are critical to [Student's Name]’s success.
4. A plan for progress monitoring and accountability.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and your ongoing commitment to ensuring that [Student’s Name] receives the education she is entitled to. Please let me know a time and date when we can meet to discuss these important concerns.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Relationship to Student]

**Another example of letter to district regarding lack of progress and**

**need for Structured Literacy**

**[Your Name]**
[Your Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]

**[Date]**

**To:**
[Special Education Director or Case Manager’s Name]
Platte County School District 1
[School/District Office Address]

**Re: (Student’s name) – IEP Concerns Regarding Progress and Wilson Structured Literacy**

Dear [Case Manager or Director’s Name],

I am writing regarding the current educational program and progress of my child, (student’s name), who has been identified with dyslexia and is receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County School District 1.

As outlined in the *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* Supreme Court ruling, the IDEA requires that schools provide an IEP that is reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s individual circumstances—not merely minimal or de minimis progress.

At this time, (student’s name) has not demonstrated meaningful progress beyond a minimal level, despite receiving years of instruction under the school’s same chosen methodology. This lack of sufficient improvement suggests that the implementation of a non-evidence-based program or its delivery, is not effectively meeting his/her needs. Continuing to rely on a methodology that has not yielded adequate results contradicts both the spirit and letter of the IDEA and must be reevaluated.

Furthermore, Wilson Structured Literacy reading program is not just beneficial—it is essential for (student’s name)’s ability to learn to read and access her education. For that reason, it is imperative that this methodology be explicitly included in her IEP. This should include detailed information about the frequency, duration, and setting of instruction, as well as the training and qualifications of the instructor delivering the program.

To ensure (student’s name) receives a truly individualized and effective education, I am formally requesting an IEP meeting to:

1. Review (student’s name)’s progress data in light of the standards set forth in *Endrew F.*
2. Evaluate the current implementation of the district’s approach and determine how the district will begin to provide an alternative evidence-based methodology aligned with dyslexia
3. Explicitly include Wilson Structured Literacy in the IEP as a critical component of (student’s name)’s reading instruction.
4. Establish a plan for regular, objective progress monitoring to ensure she is on a path toward meaningful growth.

We appreciate your time, your collaboration, and your commitment to supporting (student’s name). Please let us/me know the earliest available date to schedule this IEP meeting.

Sincerely,
[Your Name(s)]
[Your Relationship to student’s name]

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