

# Alaska Legislative Task Force on Reading Proficiency and Dyslexia

## AGENDA

Monday, November 19, 2018

Anchorage LIO Denali Conference Room, 1500 W. Benson Blvd.

Internet Stream: <http://akleg.gov/index.php#tab5>

1:00 p.m.	Call to Order
	Opening/Introductions
1:05 p.m.	Skit by Decoding Dyslexia Kids
1:10 p.m.	Nancy Duggan, Decoding Dyslexia, Massachusetts
2:10 p.m.	Break
2:25 p.m.	Q & A with Nancy Duggan
2:45 p.m.	Audie Alumbaugh, Decoding Dyslexia, Arkansas
3:45 p.m.	Break
4:00 p.m.	Q & A with Audie Alumbaugh

## HOMEWORK

Please listen to the first 2 of this four part NPR series on dyslexia broadcasted in 2016.

Part 1:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/11/28/502601662/millions-have-dyslexia-few-understand-it>

Part 2:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/11/29/503693391/researchers-study-what-makes-dyslexic-brains-different>

Please watch this important debate that demonstrates the divide amongst reading professors in Australia, and which shows that the silos in reading instruction is a problem globally:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snUNsYfrxjY>

Attached, and on BASIS for meeting three, please read the Youman and Mather 2018 update on dyslexia laws in the USA.

Attached and on BASIS please read *By Focusing on Dyslexia, We Address the Needs of All Children*, By Rick Smith, CEO, and Jennifer Topple, Board Chair, International Dyslexia Association.

Attached, and on BASIS, please read the “Overview of State Reading Screening Requirements, Practices and Research.”

Finally, please watch the video linked below, in which Dr. Vinnie Alfonso, Dean the School of Education at Gonzaga University, speaks to the need for Universal Screening for reading that is critical to helping struggling readers, and the cost savings in our schools when it is done well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64eCpKc03P0&feature=youtu.be>

# **Alaska Legislative Task Force on Reading Proficiency and Dyslexia**

## **OFFICIAL ROSTER**

### **Representing the Alaska Legislature:**

Representative Harriet Drummond, Chair

Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair

Senator Tom Begich

Senator Cathy Giessel

Representative Ivy Spohnholz

Representative Colleen Sullivan Leonard

### **Representing Teachers**

Diane B. Orr

### **Representing the Alaska Association of School Boards**

Norm Wooten

### **Representing the Alaska Council of School Administrators or Association of Elementary School Principals**

Kim Bautista

### **Representing Nonprofit Organizations**

Camille Booth

### **Representing Parents**

Marta Lastufka

### **Representing Students**

Ambrose Bucy

**List of tasks for the task force according to HB 64**

1. Examine effects of current statutes and regulations on reading proficiency outcomes
2. Examine the effects of Dyslexia on reading proficiency in the state and other jurisdictions
3. Examine dyslexia education instructional practices and laws in other jurisdictions
4. Examine educational reforms related to reading that have been implemented in the state and the reasons for the success or failure of those reforms at the local level
5. Evaluate and make recommendations regarding reading instructional practices for all public school students in the state
6. Evaluate and make recommendations regarding the diagnosis, treatment, and education of children affected by dyslexia
7. Evaluate and make recommendations regarding methods to improve reading proficiency and reading instruction for all public school students in the state
8. Evaluate and make recommendations regarding possible legislation or other policy recommendations to improve reading proficiency outcomes
9. Evaluate and make recommendations regarding methods to mitigate the effects of dyslexia on reading proficiency including, early screening (preschool -grade 3) etc., regular screening (grade 3-12), etc., and training of relevant staff
10. Identify evidence-based, multi-sensory, direct, explicit, structured, and sequential approaches to students affected by dyslexia.

# Nancy Duggan

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## EXPERIENCE

### DECODING DYSLEXIA MASSACHUSETTS, COFOUNDER

2013 –  
PRESENT

Co-Founder and Executive Director of a grassroots movement to bring the neuroscience of how the brain learns to read and the importance of structured literacy, especially for dyslexic and other struggling readers, to the forefront for educators, policy makers and parents. The organization coordinates parents and students, legislators, policy makers, researchers and other experts in neuroscience, reading science, literacy and psychology to work together for improved outcomes for struggling readers. Providing workshops and awareness activities including expert panel discussions and presentations about dyslexia, including expert speakers and basic introductory workshops for local Special Education Parent Advisory Committees, or other local groups like the Children's Dyslexia Centers.

### LEARNING ALLY, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINER

2014 – 2016

Provided professional development to teachers, specialist, paraprofessionals, administrators and policy makers on behalf of Learning Ally. Workshops vary in intensity from half-day to three-day presentations. All workshops include a dyslexia simulation, the neuroscience of dyslexia, and learning (incl. the stages of reading), screening and assessing, effective learning environments, knowledge language, multi-sensory structured literacy, accommodations, and assistive technology. This included training provided by Learning Ally and Dr. Gordon Sherman, Ph.D. (Prev. Director of the Dyslexia Research Laboratory, and faculty at Harvard Medical School and NJ Reading Disability Task Force) and Dee Rosenberg, M.A. LDT/C.

I have conducted workshops in New Mexico, Connecticut, New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, and participants include all levels of district personal, reading specialists, speech and language, special and general educators K-12. The NJ Department of Education had a three-day workshop and I conducted the full day initial training on the neuroscience of dyslexia.

### MISCOE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

2010 – 2013

A licensed school counseling professional with training and experience that includes compliance with regular and special education regulations, student academic and behavioral assessment, research-based interventions for both academic and social skills, effective communication and collaboration skills, ability to implement effective Response to Intervention (RtI) and a demonstrated commitment to education and social development for all students. My initial practicum evolved into a temporary, full-time and then part time position as needed by the school district, including administration of 504 Plans and IEP meetings.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Global Dyslexia Summit, U.S. Decoding Dyslexia Representative

2018

New England Research on Dyslexia Society Conference (Selected List)

2015-2017

- *Dyslexia: From Neurophysiology to Intervention*, John Gabrieli, Ph.D. [SEP]
- *The structure of working memory in children with dyslexia*, Tiffany P. Hogan, Ph.D. [SEP]
- *Pennsylvania Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program: Year 2 report*, Dave Braze [SEP]
- *Investigating contextual facilitation effects on phonetic processing in young children with dyslexia*, Ola Ozernov-Palchik [SEP]

### The Dyslexia Foundation Conference, hosted by Harvard Medical School

2013-2017

- *Dyslexia and Literacy: Differences Within Differences*, 2017
- *Dyslexia and Literacy: Early Identification in Education Programming*, 2016
- *Dyslexia and Literacy in High-Risk Populations*, 2015
- *Dyslexia and Dyscalculia: Current Research and Teaching Practices*, 2014

### Research to Practice: AIM Symposium

2015

*Dr. Laurie Cutting, Director of Education & Brain Research Lab, Vanderbilt University:* The neurobiological and behavioral correlates of word recognition and comprehension aspects of reading, including the complex relationship between these two categories of learning.

*Dr. Ken Pugh, Neuroimaging studies of language development, reading and reading disabilities*

2014

## IDA Annual Literacy & Learning Conference:

- Comprehensive Literacy Intervention: Beyond Phoneme Awareness and Decoding (*Jane Fell Greene, Ed and Nancy Chapel Eberhardt 11/7/2013*)
- New Directions in Cognitive Neuroscience Research on Dyslexia *11/6/2013 (Full Day)*
- An Update from developmental research on the functional organization of the brain in one or more languages (*Dr. Kenneth Pugh - Yale*)
- Examining the Typical and Atypical Reading Brain Prior to Reading Onset (*Dr. Nadine Gaab - Boston Children's Hospital*)
- The Brain Basis of Dyslexia Through Discrepancy (*Dr. Fumiko Hoeft - U. Cal*)
- Common Genetic Variants Contribute to Reading and Reading Disability: Associations with COMT & BDNF (*Nicole Landi Yale & U Conn.*)
- Reading & Dyslexia: A Challenge for Educational Neuroscience (*Dr. Ken Pugh - Yale*)
- A Qualified Teacher for Every Student With Dyslexia: What Will it Take? (*Louisa Moats, Ed.D.*) *11/7/2013*

2013, 2014,  
2015 and  
2017, 2018

## PRESENTATIONS

International Dyslexia Conference: <i>Reading Goal Workshop - A Clear and Structured Process for Effective Reading Goals in an IEP</i> <small>[SEP]</small>	October 2018
Federation for Children with Special Needs Visions of Community: <i>Reading Goals Workshop for Parents and Professionals</i>	March 2018 & 2016
Bridgewater State University Center for Educational Neuroscience Applications: <i>CENA Professional Development for the Neuroscience of Reading for Early Screening and Instruction</i>	April 2017
Wasatch Reading Summit, Salt Lake City, Utah: <i>Early Screening for Dyslexia</i>	October 2016
Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville, IL, Key West PS, Key West FL, and New Jersey PS, Patterson NJ.	January 2015
Dodge Endowment- NEAT Center, Hartford CT	February 2015
New Jersey Department of Education Learning Resource Centers	April 2015
Atlantic County SS, and Pennsville SS, and Learning Community Charter School New Jersey	October 2014
Stafford Public Schools, Stafford CT	November 2014
Santa Fe Public Schools, Santa Fe, New Mexico	December 2014

## RELEVANT WORKSHOPS AND ACADEMIC COURSEWORK

Assumption College: Behavioral Assessment & Intervention; Intervention Strategies: Academic & Learning; Advanced	2011
Clinical Practicum and Seminar: School Counselor, Guidance (5-12); Legal Issues Pertaining to Student Records and Confidentiality, (Matthew W. Mac Avoy Esq.); Preventing and Responding to Bullying in Schools (Matthew W. Mac Avoy Esq.) (Assumption College)	
Assumption College: Counseling Theories, Principles, & Practices, Psychology of Learning & Motivation, Group Counseling & Leadership, Introduction to Research & Program Evaluation Neuropsychology of Learning & Behavior, Developmental Psychopathology, Intervention Strategies: Social & Emotional, Consultation & Collaboration: School/Home/Family, Advanced Clinical Practicum and Seminar: School 3 Counselor, Guidance (5-12)	2010
Assumption College: Vocational, Career and College Counseling, Multi Cultural Family Counseling and Collaboration, Professional Orientation to Counseling, Human Growth & Development through the Life Span, Psychological and Educational Assessment, Fundamentals of School Counseling	2009
RTI Response to Intervention, State Training	2008

## BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

National Center on Improving Literacy, Family Engagement Advisory Board  
Advisory Group for the International Foundation for Effective Reading Instruction;  
Coalition for Reading for Excellence;  
Framingham State University Committee to Establish the Chris Walsh Educator and Family Resource Center of MetroWest;  
Open Door Theater

## EDUCATION

Boston College, BA	1984
Assumption College, MA School Counseling, GPA 4.0	2011
Orton-Gillingham Program, Knox-Raymond Institute, Reading Therapy Certificate	2005-2007



**Packet space reserved  
for Nancy Duggan  
Presentation**

## **Ms. Audie Alumbaugh**

Master Teacher  
University of Central Arkansas  
Department of Teaching and Learning

Audie Alumbaugh is a native of McCrory, Arkansas. A graduate of UCA for both BSE and MSE. She is a master teacher in the UCA STEMteach program and cofounder of the Arkansas Dyslexia Support Group where she serves as a volunteer advocate for children across the state.

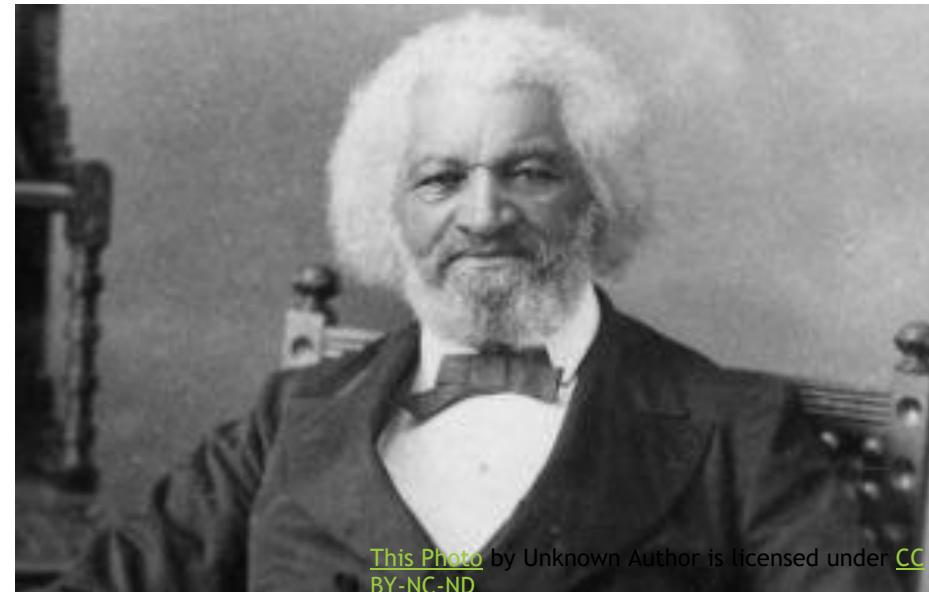


# Arkansas

Journey to Literacy

# Fredrick Douglas said

Once you learn to read you will be  
forever free.



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And he was spot on.

# Recognizing the Problem: The NAEP Report and Your Phone

Arkansas	% of 4 <sup>th</sup> graders Reading At or Above Grade Level	% of 4 <sup>th</sup> graders Reading Below Grade Level
2013	32%	68%
2015	31%	69%
2017	32%	68%

# Not a spending issue.... But stepping over a quarter to pick up a penny issue

## Per Pupil Spending

- ▶ US (average) \$11,762
- ▶ New York (Highest of the United States) \$22,366
- ▶ Utah (Lowest of the United States) \$6,953
- ▶ Arkansas \$9,846
- ▶ Alaska \$17,510
- ▶ Spending more money is not the answer. Spending our money better is the answer.

# Dyslexia Laws for Arkansas #1

Act 1294 of 2013

Senators Elliott and Key

- Defined Initial Screening and Assessments
- Defined Roles
- Dyslexia Awareness for all Teachers
- Defined Curriculums to Ensure Appropriate RTI
- Set a Timeline
- State Dyslexia Specialist
- Reporting

# Dyslexia Laws for Arkansas #2

Act 1268 of 2015

Senator Elliott

- Redefined Roles
- Set up a Resource Guide
- Outside Evaluations

# Dyslexia Laws for Arkansas #3

Act 1268 of 2017

Senator Elliott

- Clarified Screening and timeliness of intervention
- Additional Reporting
  - Program(s), number in intervention, number identified
- Standards for Accreditation
- Probationary status

# RISE ARKANSAS in 2017

**READING  
INITIATIVE for  
STUDENT  
EXCELLENCE**

A movement into the Science of Reading  
in Arkansas.

# 2017 Legislative Session

- ▶ Governors press conference #RISEarkansas
- ▶ Senator Alan Clark- **Science of Reading Bill for Higher Education Act 416 of 2017**
  - ▶ This bill reworks colleges of education methods for teaching future teachers. Requires a standalone science of reading test for preservice teachers before they can get their initial certification.
- ▶ Senator Alan Clark- **Grade Level Reading Reporting Act 940 of 2017**
  - ▶ Requires every school in Arkansas to report reading level equivalent of students in k-8 twice a year to teachers and parents. Parents should look for growth... if there is no growth parents should ask why. Teachers need to be more aware of reading levels because often times problems in the classroom occur when the students can't do the work due to a literacy levels.
- ▶ Senator Joyce Elliott- **The Right to Read Law Act 1063 of 2017**
  - ▶ THE RIGHT TO READ BILL. While colleges of education are retooling so that preservice teachers learn the science of reading (see SB328 now act 416) and the Arkansas department of education is having to retrain current teachers in the science of reading we have a number of teachers who are still not familiar with the universal design of the science of reading. This bill bridges that gap. It requires reporting of colleges of ed that they are not used to, and appropriate professional development for teachers who are already in the field teaching reading.
- ▶ Senator Joyce Elliott- **Dyslexia Enforcement Act 1268 of 2017**

**Arkansas Dyslexia**



**Support Group**



## By Focusing on Dyslexia, We Address the Needs of All Children

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**By Rick Smith, CEO, and Jennifer Topple, Board Chair, International Dyslexia Association**

**Do you have a moment to talk about the “D word,” also known as *dyslexia*?**

We hoped we were past needing to have this conversation—but if you read a recent Huffington Post opinion piece about a “supposed dyslexic subgroup,” or saw any of the social media commentaries, you know that we still need to have difficult conversations about dyslexia. The meaning of the “D word” may be unclear to some, but not to us. We know what the word means and what dyslexia is.

The International Dyslexia Association has been working at this for a long time (nearly 70 years!), and we have done so in collaboration with dyslexia’s many stakeholders—families and people struggling with dyslexia, educators, researchers, advocates, policymakers, and policy shapers. Each has played a vital

role in helping us advance a clear, concise, research-informed understanding of dyslexia and promote quality reading instruction for *all* children.

Some critics argue that since scientists use varying definitions to characterize dyslexia, we should doubt its existence. Some argue that since scientists cannot point to the exact underlying cause of dyslexia, we should question whether it is real. Some say that dyslexia is a “white-privilege disability” for lazy children whose parents refuse to take responsibility for their offspring’s shortcomings. Some discount dyslexia’s significance, acknowledging that while it may be real, far too many kids struggle to read for various reasons (e.g., poor quality reading instruction) and that’s all that counts.

### Let's examine these arguments

Yes, scientists have used different criteria for defining dyslexia. So what? The vast majority of scientists use the same characteristics when defining dyslexia. Children with dyslexia struggle to accurately read and spell words. What differs among scientists is how profound and persistent the deficits must be before they label a child with dyslexia. Even with these differences, the findings still demonstrate that for no apparent reason, some children struggle to learn to read print despite the most favorable circumstances life offers. These children may have the opportunities that money affords. They may have the love that comes from a devoted caregiver. They may have a teacher providing them with quality reading instruction. In short, they may seem capable and advantaged in every way, but still these children struggle to read.

Yes, we still do not know precisely what causes dyslexia. Yet, we have made great advances in understanding a set of candidate causal factors. Differences in a child’s ability to process language are linked to dyslexia. We have also identified a clear genetic link, as well as differences in brain structure, function, and chemistry that are associated with dyslexia.

But even with that said, so what if we have not found the exact causes? We do not know what causes cancer either, in spite of knowing a considerable amount about risk factors and biological differences associated with it. That does not make the death of a loved one from cancer any less painfully real. Not knowing dyslexia’s cause(s) does not make the pain felt by a parent whose child struggles to read any less real. These parents watch their children work harder than their peers simply to keep from falling farther behind. It can be heartbreakingly real. No wonder the driving force behind efforts to provide educational support for these children comes from concerned parents and teachers.

Yes, one of the great challenges inherent in dyslexia’s construct is that —like other neurodevelopmental conditions (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autism spectrum disorder)—dyslexia is *less* a distinct syndrome with clear diagnostic biomarkers and obvious demarcations and *more* a developmental spectrum condition.

Dyslexia’s various hallmark characteristics fall along continuums of severity that can change developmentally across a lifespan and improve with environmental influence, such as sustained and intensive, comprehensive, evidence-based literacy instruction. But this does not

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Dyslexia’s various hallmark characteristics fall along continuums of severity that can change developmentally across a lifespan and improve with environmental influence, such as sustained and intensive, comprehensive, evidence-based literacy instruction.

mean that the dyslexia construct is not valid or that children with dyslexic traits do not exist.

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Whatever their ethnic background or economic status, any child may struggle to learn to read. And, let's be clear—a child who is not white or from privilege can also struggle to learn to read due to dyslexia. For these children, their circumstances (often their postal code) and lack of access to appropriate reading instruction usually exacerbates dyslexia's effects. Unfortunately, we live in a society in which wealth is still disproportionately linked to race, ethnicity, and opportunity.

Logic tells us that far too many children struggle to read for dyslexia to be the only explanation. Most of these kids do not have a brain-based difference in how they process language. Rather, their problems with reading stem from poor early literacy experiences and a lack of quality reading instruction. But, acknowledging this reality does not invalidate dyslexia. Nor does it negate the very real toll dyslexia has on the wellbeing of far too many children—of all ethnicities and at all socio-economic levels—or the need to redouble our efforts to promote a better understanding of the “D word.”

### **Let's focus on what's most important**

The question is not why some people continue to marginalize dyslexia or deny its existence. That is a distraction. The burning question is why do so many children struggle to develop what arguably is the most foundational skill of a citizen of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—print literacy? The answer? We have not implemented quality, research-validated reading instruction for *all* children.

The International Dyslexia Association is deeply concerned with this question and with overcoming barriers to providing this reading instruction to every child in every classroom. We are concerned because while this instruction is important for all children, it is absolutely vital for those with dyslexia. We also are concerned because when this reading instruction is fully implemented, we are better able to find and help those children who struggle with reading due to dyslexia.

In addition to early risk factors linked to future reading success, the most reliable predictor of dyslexia is a failure to make gains in reading when provided with quality, comprehensive, evidence-based literacy instruction in the general education classroom. That fact compels us to ensure that all children have access to this instruction, which allows us to identify the children with dyslexia who will require far more intensive and sustained comprehensive evidence-based literacy instruction to become proficient readers. We are also compelled to raise awareness of the emerging means for identifying children at risk for reading failure and for implementing research-informed, comprehensive universal screenings as early as possible. These realities drive our commitment to helping to establish the prevention models necessary to reduce the prevalence of reading failure.

In short, when we focus on the needs of children with dyslexia, we implement robust educational systems that benefit *all* children—until everyone can read. This is the aim of the International Dyslexia Association.

To learn more about dyslexia and our work to ensure that comprehensive evidence-based literacy instruction is provided to all children, please visit our website [DyslexiaIDA.org](http://dyslexiaida.org). (<http://dyslexiaida.org>) For in-depth information about this instruction (AKA, Structured Literacy), click [here](#)

(<https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/>) and [here](https://dyslexiaida.org/teachers/) (<https://dyslexiaida.org/teachers/>). For excellent articles about the value of the dyslexia construct, and the term *dyslexia*, see these links:

- [Marcus Aurelius and the Continuing Dyslexia Debate](https://dyslexiaida.org/marcus-aurelius-and-the-continuing-dyslexia-debate/) (<https://dyslexiaida.org/marcus-aurelius-and-the-continuing-dyslexia-debate/>)
- [Defending the “D Word … Dyslexia](http://www.voyagersopris.com/blog/edview360/2017/10/05/defending-the-d-word-dyslexia) (<http://www.voyagersopris.com/blog/edview360/2017/10/05/defending-the-d-word-dyslexia>)
- [Demystifying the “D Word:” Why and How the Term Dyslexia Should be Used](https://app.box.com/s/pb1t66oqdffumg2jd6em071peoh9rto1) (<https://app.box.com/s/pb1t66oqdffumg2jd6em071peoh9rto1>)



### **Rick Smith, Chief Executive Officer**

Rick Smith joined IDA in January 2015 as CEO. Under his leadership, the organization has designed the IDA Destiny, implemented IDA's first global brand advancement and development initiative, TeamQuest, and integrated planning and performance management. As CEO, Rick is responsible for the strategic advancement of the International Dyslexia Association, its brand, and all IDA programs nationally and globally. Rick has 35 years of experience in organizational management and is nationally recognized as a top organizational strategist and visionary having managed large organizations generating over \$400,000,000 during his tenure. He has been President and CEO of the American Liver Foundation, President of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in Arizona and Maryland, CEO of the American Diabetes Association in California and New Mexico and Executive Director of the American Cancer Society in Maryland.



### **Jennifer Topple, M.S., CCC/SLP, Chair**

Jennifer Topple, M.S., CCC/SLP, has been elected by the Delegate Assembly as the new Chair of the IDA Board of Directors. Ms. Topple has been on the Board of Directors and has served as Chair of the Branch Council Executive Committee (BCEC) and as President of the Georgia Branch. She is the Director of Assistive and Instructional Technology at The Howard School, a K-12 school for students with language-based learning differences in Atlanta, Georgia. Ms. Topple has been a speech-language pathologist in both hospital and school settings for more than sixteen years with a focus on language-learning disabilities and

assistive technology. She has presented and held workshops on the topic of assistive technology both locally and internationally. Ms. Topple holds an M.S. in Speech and Hearing Sciences from the University of New Mexico and a B.A. in Public Relations from Auburn University.

#### **IDA's Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to create a future for all individuals who struggle with dyslexia and other related reading differences so that they may have richer, more robust lives and access to the tools and resources they need.

**The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)** provides the opportunity for all people who struggle with dyslexia and other related reading differences to have richer, more robust lives by providing access to the tools and resources they need. IDA's home office, 42 branches in the United States and Canada, and 31 Global Partners provide educator training, publications information, and support to help struggling readers around the world. IDA is the authoritative voice of current and reliable research and information to educate families and professionals about dyslexia and to inform the practice and policy changes needed to provide effective instruction for all people to learn to read. IDA has been serving individuals with dyslexia, their families, and professionals in the field for more than sixty-six years. Its membership is composed of a global network of people with dyslexia, their families, educators, diagnosticians, physicians, researchers, and other professionals in the field. IDA provides publications and information and referral services to thousands of people each year, and its annual conference attracts thousands of researchers, clinicians, parents, teachers, psychologists, educational therapists, and people with dyslexia. Visit IDA at [dyslexia.org](https://dyslexiaida.org) to learn more.

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**Guiding Questions for Evaluating a Screener**  
**Yaacov Petscher**  
**Created on: October 31, 2018 | Last edited: October 31, 2018**

**Population of Interest**

1. How is the population defined?
  - a. What is the intended age range for the assessment?
  - b. How is the outcome (e.g., dyslexia, learning disability) defined?
2. When the screener was normed, is the sample reflective of the intended population?
  - a. How similar is the norming sample to your local environment?
  - b. Is the sample size for validating the screener sufficient for the analyses?
  - c. Were multiple sites, states, or regions used to validate the screener?

**Scope of Assessment**

3. How is the outcome from question 1b operationally defined?
  - a. What is the outcome by which students are judged to have a skill deficiency (e.g., standardized word reading test)?
  - b. What cut-point is used on the outcome from question 3a to define “failure”?
  - c. Is the cut-point from 3b reasonable for your local environment?
  - d. Is the content on the screener reflective of what should be measured?
  - e. Is the screener a measure of accuracy or automaticity?
    - i. If the screener is computer adaptive, is the content developmentally appropriate for your local environment?
- f. Does the screener use more than one assessment?
  - i. If yes, does the assessment provide guidance on how to use the scores in combination with each other?
  - ii. If yes or no, does there appear to be good conceptual alignment between the screener and the outcome?

**Statistical Considerations – Reliability**

4. What type(s) of reliability are reported?
  - a. If the screener is item-based, is internal consistency reported?
  - b. If test-retest is reported, what is the spacing between testing occasions?
  - c. If alternate-form or split-form reliability is reported, is another form of reliability reported?
  - d. Are at least two forms of reliability reported?
    - i. What level of reliability is reported?
  - e. If the screener is not computer adaptive, is the reliability
    - i. At least .80 (important for research decisions)?
    - ii. At least .90 (important for clinical decisions)?
  - f. If the screener is computer adaptive
    - i. Is only marginal reliability reported (i.e., overall)?
    - ii. Is reliability across a range of ability reported?
    - iii. What is the level of reported reliability?

## Statistical Considerations - Validity

5. Content Validity
  - a. Has the domain been well defined (see question 1)?
  - b. Is the domain relevant as defined
  - c. Is the content appropriate for the local environment (see question 3.e.i)?
6. Substantive Validity
  - a. Is there a reporting of how the test design matches the construct?
7. Structural Validity
  - a. Are there tests of the factor structure/dimensionality reported (e.g., exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis)?
8. Generalizability
  - a. For Bias, has one of the following types of analyses been used to test that the screener is not biased against subgroups (e.g., sex, race, poverty, students with disabilities, dual language learnings)
    - i. Item-level bias analysis (e.g., differential item functioning)
    - ii. Test-level bias analysis (e.g., differential classification accuracy)
9. External
  - a. Convergent Validity
    - i. Are correlations reported between the screener score and scores from an assessment on a related construct?
    - ii. Are the correlations at least .60?
  - b. Discriminant Validity
    - i. Are correlations reported between the screener score and scores from an assessment on an unrelated construct?
    - ii. Are the correlations no greater than .20?
  - c. Predictive Validity
    - i. Are correlations reported between the screener score at one time point and scores on an assessment at a later time point?
    - ii. Are the correlations at least .20?
10. Consequential Validity
  - a. Does the report document any intended or unintended side effects for those who are identified or misidentified based on the selected cut-points?

## Statistical Considerations - Classification Accuracy

11. Is Sensitivity reported?
  - a. Is it at least .80?
  - b. Is a confidence interval reported and is the lower bound of the confidence interval at least .80?
12. Is Specificity reported?
  - a. Is it at least .80?
  - b. Is a confidence interval reported and is the lower bound of the confidence interval at least .80?
13. What is the Area under the curve?
  - a. Is it at least .80?
  - b. Is a confidence interval reported and is the lower bound of the confidence interval at least .80?

14. What is the False Positive rate?
15. What is the False Negative rate?

DOI: [10.31234/osf.io/vukt2](https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/vukt2)

URL

<https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/vukt2>

## Abstract

The plethora of considerations when creating, evaluating, choosing, or using a screener for dyslexia can be overwhelming. This checklist is intended to provide initial guidance and questions to be thoughtful about pertaining to screener assessments. When reviewing a screener technical report, tool chart, or summary of the assessment, we have created a list of 15 questions related to a hierarchy of core considerations of screeners to help facilitate discussion amongst administrators, advocates, data teams, parents, and others invested in what screeners are used in schools for early screening.

See less

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### Chicago

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## Alaska Reading Coalition

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**From:** Yaacov Petscher <ypetscher@fcrr.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 14, 2018 9:37 AM  
**To:** Alaska Reading Coalition  
**Cc:** Jennifer Hall Jones; Mike Bronson  
**Subject:** RE: Guiding Questions for Evaluating a Screener, Created on: October 31, 2018 | Last edited: October 31, 2018

Feel free to use and widely distribute as much as possible! I would also be happy to provide any additional guidance or support in the area of screening and assessment for Alaska.

Yaacov Petscher, Ph.D.  
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Director, Quantitative Methodology and Innovation Division  
Associate Director, Florida Center for Reading Research  
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**From:** Alaska Reading Coalition [mailto:[alaskareadingcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:alaskareadingcoalition@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 14, 2018 12:26 PM  
**To:** Yaacov Petscher  
**Cc:** Jennifer Hall Jones; Mike Bronson  
**Subject:** Guiding Questions for Evaluating a Screener, Created on: October 31, 2018 | Last edited: October 31, 2018

Dear Dr. Petscher,

An Alaska Reading Coalition member shared this document with us.

Thank you so much for all of the work you are doing to improve reading outcomes for all children.

We would like to share this document with Alaska's first Reading Proficiency and Dyslexia Task Force members formed via HB64.

The legislative website is here. [http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Committee/Details/30?code=HRPD#tab2\\_7](http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Committee/Details/30?code=HRPD#tab2_7)

Alaska has only sunk from terrible at 49<sup>th</sup>, to bottom of the NAEP barrel, 51<sup>st</sup> lowest in reading.

May we have permission to place this document on the November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting document list?

This would mean anyone with the link could download it. As it is in Word, I could convert it to a protected pdf if you desire.

Alternatively, perhaps we could have permission to just provide hard copy to our 12 members of the task force.

With sincere gratitude for your work,

Posie

Posie Boggs,

on behalf of the Alaska Reading Coalition: comprised of Literate Nation Alaska, The Alaska Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, Decoding Dyslexia Alaska, The Alaska Literacy Program, NAACP Anchorage, Connections that Work, LLC, Future Frontiers Tutoring, The Missing Links, Turning Leaf Literacy Center, ITV Education & Disability Support Services, and Read Write Alaska

# Dyslexia Laws in the USA: A 2018 Update

by Martha Youman and Nancy Mather

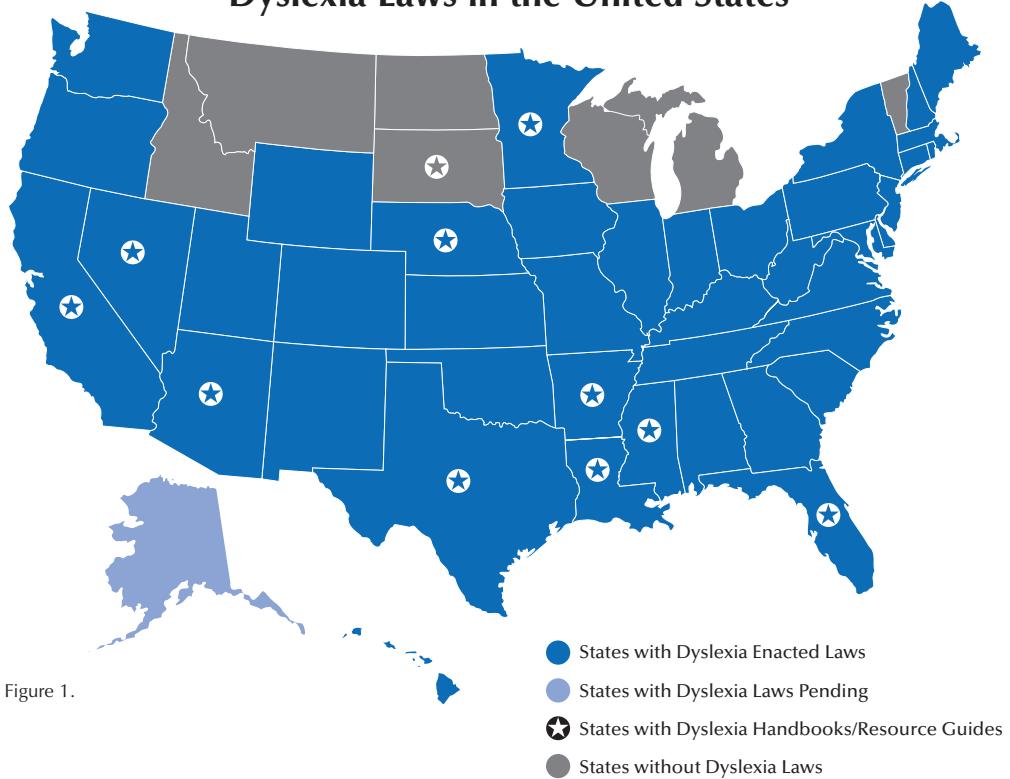
Across the United States, 33 legislative bills related to dyslexia were introduced between January and March of 2018. This rapid influx of proposals to initiate change at the state and federal levels signifies the ongoing sentiment that most states share today: dyslexia must be recognized and interventions must be provided early to children. This article summarizes the status of current dyslexia laws across the U.S., focusing on updates to legislation since our original article, *Dyslexia Laws in the USA*, which was published in the *Annals of Dyslexia* (Youman & Mather, 2013), and our update, which was published in *Perspectives* (Youman & Mather, 2015). It provides a current view of the dyslexia laws in each state, as well as how these laws are affecting school practice. Figure 1 summarizes the status of current laws as of March of 2018.

In our 2013 initial review, only 22 states had dyslexia laws. Furthermore, many of these states only hinted at dyslexia within their existing laws, but there was little guidance as to how to identify and help individuals with dyslexia. Today, as of March of 2018, 42 states have dyslexia-specific laws, and, among the

states that have passed laws, most have updated their education codes to clearly define dyslexia and provide guidelines to school districts on how to identify dyslexia and provide evidence-based interventions. Ten states now have a dyslexia handbook and one state has a resource guide, and the term dyslexia is now an integral part of parent-teacher conferences, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 plans, and the school community as a whole. The rapid expansion of dyslexia laws appears to be partially driven by group efforts, such as Decoding Dyslexia, as well as individuals who have been affected by dyslexia in some way, and have used the Internet and social media to spread awareness. Today, laws continue to focus primarily upon: a) dyslexia awareness, b) pilot programs for screening and intervention, c) teacher training, d) provision of interventions and accommodations, and e) the overall rights of individuals with dyslexia. A full listing of laws as of March 2018 is available on the International Dyslexia Association's website at <https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-laws-status-by-state/>.

*Continued on page 38*

## Dyslexia Laws in the United States



## Abbreviations

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act  
IEP: Individualized Education Plan  
NSF: National Science Foundation

READ Act: Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act  
SLD: Specific Learning Disability

### Dyslexia Awareness

Many states are now advocating for dyslexia awareness and, specifically, a more precise definition of dyslexia based on the guidelines of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). One example is the Massachusetts House Bill 330 (2017). The sponsors of this bill cite the National Institutes of Health's definition of dyslexia as a "Neurological Learning Disability" and request that Massachusetts' educational laws reflect this definition. This increased focus on the neurobiology of the disorder is in contrast to the previous vague description of dyslexia as just one type of "Specific Learning Disability" under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), or as Specific Learning Disorder with Impairment in Reading in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In addition, by clearly defining and emphasizing dyslexia, school districts are becoming more comfortable with the term "dyslexia" and IEP meetings are now including discussions about dyslexia, as well as ensuring the provision of structured literacy interventions that specifically help these students.

Historically, it was common practice for districts to discourage or even prohibit teachers and school psychologists from using the term "dyslexia." The fear of using the term dyslexia was so prevalent that, in 2015, the federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services issued a letter to school districts stating that, "There is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents." Following this letter, districts issued memorandums and created documents that encouraged school personnel to talk explicitly about dyslexia. The California dyslexia guidance document (2017), for example, includes a section titled "Use of the Term Dyslexia in Documentation." This section emphasizes that talking about dyslexia and including it in education plans could help provide more information regarding specific learning needs, eligibility criteria, and the necessary interventions that can help individuals with dyslexia. In our 2013 article, awareness about dyslexia mostly focused on states passing laws that declared a dyslexia awareness day and/or month. Today, dyslexia awareness initiatives have evolved toward changing actual practices in schools. On the national front, October remains recognized as National Dyslexia Awareness Month, and all 42 states with dyslexia laws are encouraging the use of the term "dyslexia."

### Pilot Programs for Screening and Intervention

One of the most common key elements of dyslexia laws being passed across states targets universal screening and intervention. As an example, Oregon's Senate Bill 1003 (2017) specifies that all school districts must ensure that every student is screened for risk factors of dyslexia upon first enrolling at school in kindergarten or first grade. The screening procedure or program must be approved by the state's office of education and must include common correlates of dyslexia, including phonological awareness, rapid naming, knowledge of the

correspondences between sounds and letters, and a family history of difficulty in learning to read. In 2013, only two states had universal screening for dyslexia, and six other states had pilot programs to establish universal screening procedures. Presently, 18 states have implemented universal screening for dyslexia or are in the process of completing pilot programs to formalize universal screening procedures. Although many states appear to be proactively screening for dyslexia, several do not have specific guidelines on how to help students with dyslexia once they are identified. For example, several states, including California, implemented laws for universal screening in grades kindergarten through second grade. Districts have complied with this law by giving screening and progress monitoring tests to all students in areas related to early reading skills. This practice helps identify students who are at risk for dyslexia and may benefit from early interventions. However, there is currently no guidance on which programs districts should use for these interventions nor is there dyslexia-specific training for teachers and reading specialists who will work with these students. In contrast, Texas, for example has licensed dyslexia therapists and specific programs for students with dyslexia that these therapists can use.

Some states that have implemented universal screening have also emphasized progress monitoring and interventions for dyslexia. For example, the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide (2016) now provides a clear path for both screening and intervention. The guide, which is based on dyslexia laws (passed in 2014), specifies that students be screened in early grades and then classified as "Level 1 Dyslexia Screening" (i.e., at risk) or "Level 2 Dyslexia Screening" (meeting all characteristics for a formal dyslexia evaluation). From these classifications, students are provided with Response to Intervention for Level 1 or specific interventions that are added to the IEP for a Level 2. Arkansas law not only requires screening and interventions for dyslexia, but it also specifies that the provided interventions be delivered by a "Dyslexia Interventionist," who is defined as a person with specific training in interventions for dyslexia. Every district in Arkansas has to appoint at least one person who serves as a dyslexia interventionist and whose sole job is to work with Level 1 and Level 2 students. Other states with clear dyslexia intervention procedures include: Connecticut (2016), Florida (2017), Illinois (2014), Kansas (2011), Louisiana (2010), Maine (2015), Maryland (2012), Minnesota (2017), Missouri (2016), Nevada (2015), New Hampshire (2016), Ohio (2012), Texas (2014), Utah (2015), Virginia (2010), West Virginia (2012), and Wisconsin (2016).

### Teacher Training

Although many states are actively implementing dyslexia screening and interventions, they often fail to clarify who is responsible for monitoring screening and providing these interventions. For the purpose of ensuring appropriate screening and effective interventions, more and more states are focusing their efforts in training teachers to recognize dyslexia. At a broad level, a few states are requiring all special education

teachers to complete courses that focus on dyslexia. In Connecticut, for example, House Bill 7254 (2017) requires that teachers applying for professional certification complete a program of study in the “diagnosis” and “remediation” of reading and language arts difficulties, and specifically for students with dyslexia.

Beyond requirements for all special education teachers, at a more narrow level, a number of states have required that school districts appoint a person whose sole professional purpose is to work with students at risk for or have been identified with dyslexia. For example, following the lead of states like Texas and Mississippi, states like Minnesota (HB 668; 2017) have amended their laws to require that school districts include professionals trained in dyslexia. In the bill’s stipulations, districts must employ a dyslexia and literacy specialist who can provide “technical assistance for dyslexia” at multiple layers of the district. Thus, this specialist helps spread awareness and increases competencies for those who are working with students at risk of reading failure. The specialist also works with general education and special education teachers to help them address the educational needs of students with dyslexia. Although it is not necessary for districts to have a specific title for those working to identify and provide interventions for dyslexia, states that appoint a specific “dyslexia specialist,” “dyslexia therapist,” or “dyslexia interventionist” may be more likely to achieve the best outcomes for students. This is because, when it comes to dyslexia, access to specialized interventions delivered by knowledgeable and highly trained teachers is critical (Moats, 2009). In the future, it is likely that states will continue to implement higher requirements for those identifying and providing interventions for all students with dyslexia.

### Provision of Interventions and Accommodations

In the last few decades, research has established the most effective interventions for dyslexia. These interventions include explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency, and vocabulary (National Reading Panel, 2000). Although many reading programs target these areas, dyslexia legislation being passed is ensuring that these interventions are not optional, but legally mandated. If districts in states with laws related to interventions and accommodations do not provide these, they may be at risk for losing funding and parents may have legal recourse in the event that their child does not receive appropriate services. A few states are leading the way in terms of implementing the most effective interventions and creating a path for districts to follow when it comes to prescribed interventions. In Utah, for example, Senate Bill 117 (2015), created a pilot program to provide interventions for students at risk for, or experiencing, reading difficulties, including dyslexia. A number of schools were selected for the pilot program. These schools implemented reading programs, and were evaluated by a third party to establish results. Schools who participated in the pilot program experienced a decrease in the number of students who demonstrated below grade-level reading skills after a period of intervention. In contrast to Utah, however, most current state laws are not clear when it comes to which interventions must be used to help students with dyslexia and how and when these should be implemented.

Another area that continues to be addressed in the numerous dyslexia state laws relates to the provision of accommodations for students with dyslexia. Some of the first laws (e.g., Texas with its bundled accommodations for students with dyslexia) mostly focused on modifying existing requirements to meet the needs of students with dyslexia. In recent years, however, increased emphasis is being placed on the role of technology, not only for accommodations, but to enhance student reading and writing performance. Most dyslexia handbooks that were created as a result of laws that have passed include a section relating to the use of assistive technology to accommodate the needs of students with dyslexia. The Arizona Dyslexia Handbook (2017), for example, provides suggestions for assistive technology that can be used to help students with dyslexia. These accommodations include options, such as digital story telling, text-to-speech, live scribe, and e-books. Teachers are encouraged to help students learn these technologies and parents are encouraged to ask for these types of accommodations in the classroom and for high-stakes assessments.

### Overall Rights for Individuals with Dyslexia

The overall rights of individuals with dyslexia continue to be a principal emphasis of dyslexia laws. These laws continue to protect individuals with dyslexia and are applied in a variety of settings. Specific examples include not requiring students with dyslexia to take college entrance exams (Massachusetts General Law, Ch. 15A, §30, 1983), and preventing employers from discriminating against individuals with dyslexia in the workplace (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2011). In recent years, states have also implemented laws that prevent students from being retained or “held back” if they are identified with or are in the process of being evaluated for dyslexia. These laws come as a response to other laws (not related to dyslexia) that have been instituted to retain students in third grade who are at the bottom reading levels based on state testing performance. Both Arizona and South Carolina are states that have implemented laws that require the bottom readers to be retained in third grade, but Arizona recently revised legislation to specify that students with dyslexia may not be retained in third grade if the IEP team and the student’s parents agree that promotion is appropriate. This is important for students with dyslexia because most research indicates that retention has many negative outcomes, chief among which is the likelihood of dropping out of school prior to completing high school (Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple, 2002).

### Dyslexia Legislation at the Federal Level

A few months prior to our last update of dyslexia laws in 2015, the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act (READ Act) was introduced. The READ Act required that the president’s annual budget include \$5 million of National Science Foundation (NSF) funds to be allocated to dyslexia research. The act was passed into law in February of 2016. The final version of the act stipulated that the NSF “shall support multi-directorate, merit-reviewed, and competitively awarded research on the science of specific learning disability, including

*Continued on page 40*

**TABLE 1. Implementing Dyslexia State Laws and Initiatives**

LAW/INITIATIVE	Parents	Teachers/School Personnel
Screening for Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inquire at your school if there is a universal screening program for dyslexia. If so, at what grades or ages?</li> <li>2. Ask specifics about the universal screening program (e.g., name of program being used, how often students' progress is tracked, reliability of data being collected, etc.)</li> <li>3. If you suspect your child has dyslexia, request that common cognitive and linguistic skills associated with dyslexia are assessed (e.g., phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming).</li> <li>4. If you suspect your child has dyslexia, request that common reading and writing skills associated with dyslexia are assessed [e.g., basic reading skills (phonics and sight word identification), spelling, reading rate].</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become involved in implementing or improving universal screening program for dyslexia by reminding administrators about specific laws.</li> <li>2. Help your school share information with parents regarding dyslexia screening results.</li> <li>3. If you suspect a student has dyslexia, ensure that common cognitive and linguistic skills associated with dyslexia are assessed (e.g., phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming).</li> <li>4. If you suspect your student has dyslexia, request that common reading and writing skills associated with dyslexia are assessed [e.g., basic reading skills (phonics and sight word identification), spelling, reading rate].</li> </ol>
Dyslexia Training for Teachers and Reading Specialists	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine if the district has a dyslexia coordinator or person in charge of dyslexia training.</li> <li>2. Inquire about dyslexia teacher training and if structured literacy programs are available to teach students with dyslexia (e.g. explicit, systematic reading instruction, phonics instruction, etc.)</li> <li>3. Ask how dyslexia training relates to student services (e.g., who are students who are seen by the dyslexia specialist, how many teachers have knowledge of dyslexia interventions, does the school employ a structured literacy program, etc.)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advocate for the appointment of a specific person in charge of dyslexia training.</li> <li>2. Request specific teacher training (for all special education, reading teachers) that includes structured literacy programs (e.g., explicit, systematic reading instruction, phonics instruction, etc.) Request dyslexia awareness training for all K-12 teachers.</li> <li>3. Help the school develop a system for implementing daily, systematic instruction, delivered by teachers who have adequate training and experience.</li> </ol>
Eligibility for Accommodations and Services for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If your child is behind in reading, ask for further evaluation and a possible 504 or Individualized Education Plan.</li> <li>2. Become familiar with accommodations that help students with dyslexia.</li> <li>3. Meet with teachers and school staff periodically to evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations and services being provided.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become involved in the Response to Intervention or similar system at your school. Ensure that the accommodations and services that are provided are appropriate for students with dyslexia.</li> <li>2. Help colleagues become familiar with how to implement accommodations that help students with dyslexia.</li> <li>3. Collaborate with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations and services being provided to students with dyslexia.</li> </ol>
Classroom Instruction for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advocate for differentiated classroom instruction for students at all K-12 levels.</li> <li>2. Offer a list of approved programs for implementation in the instruction of students with dyslexia (e.g., Mississippi Dyslexia Handbook).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become familiar with differentiated instruction strategies (e.g., use of centers during instruction).</li> <li>2. Learn and help colleagues learn about specific reading programs designed to help students with dyslexia (e.g., structured literacy programs).</li> <li>3. Explain the characteristics of dyslexia to all students to help develop empathy and understanding of this problem.</li> </ol>
Dyslexia Handbook	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request that your state or district develop a dyslexia handbook to guide parents and teachers and offer other states' handbooks as reference.</li> <li>2. If your state has a dyslexia handbook, help schools follow its guidelines. If appropriate, develop shorter pamphlets for both parents and teachers that encapsulate the most important ideas.</li> </ol>	
Dyslexia Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask the educational professionals in your school to hold events and encourage discussions about dyslexia during October (National Dyslexia Month).</li> </ol>	

dyslexia, such as research on the early identification of children and students with dyslexia, professional development for teachers and administrators of students with dyslexia, curricula and educational tools needed for children with dyslexia, and implementation and scaling of successful models of dyslexia intervention." In addition, funding would be prioritized for research that demonstrates practical application. It is likely that many research projects are currently being funded under the READ Act. Although it will take years to see how the findings of these studies inform our knowledge and present practices, the appropriation of funds for the study of dyslexia reflects the importance of this topic and how it relates to the advancement and protection of individuals with dyslexia in our society.

### Going Forward

The number of states with laws specific to dyslexia has nearly doubled since the publication of our initial review of dyslexia legislation (Youman & Mather, 2013). Most likely in the next few years, all states will have dyslexia laws and provisions for screening, intervention, and accommodations will be well established in all school districts. Clear guidelines on how to implement universal screening for dyslexia, provide interventions and accommodations, and train and maintain professionals' knowledge related to dyslexia are now outlined in statewide handbooks and guidance documents. Our initial article, and its update in 2015, provided suggestions on how to take proactive actions to help draw attention to and increase universal understanding of dyslexia.

Today, it is safe to say that dyslexia has become a national concern, but the new laws that have been enacted are causing some level of confusion and uncertainty for school districts and parents and teachers who are unsure of how these laws translate into practice. Although the recent California handbook (2017) provides an excellent summary of the characteristics and complications of dyslexia, little guidance is provided

regarding how, when, and what interventions should be implemented. Table 1 provides suggestions on general steps that district personnel and parents can take to help their schools apply these laws to protect and provide appropriate services for all students with dyslexia.

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