

Status Report on the: Educator Training Program to Improve Instruction of Students with Dyslexia



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Background

Dyslexia is a common, language-based learning disability that affects individuals throughout their lives.

In 2005, the Legislature provided funding for a pilot project to implement research-based, multisensory literacy intervention for students with dyslexia. The pilot was referred to as the Lorraine Wojahn Dyslexia Pilot Program.

In the pilot project, teachers and reading specialists from four school districts and thirteen schools participated in professional development, student assessment, data collection, and worked with students diagnosed with dyslexia. The students receiving services through the dyslexia project made substantial and steady academic gains.

During the 2009 legislative session, the Legislature adopted Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 6016 in large part because of the success of the pilot program. This legislation directs the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to develop an educator training program that incorporates research-based and multisensory literacy intervention to enhance the reading, writing, and spelling skills of students with dyslexia, and to develop a dyslexia handbook to be used as a reference for teachers and parents of students with dyslexia.

In completing this work, OSPI is to consult with the school districts that participated in the Lorraine Wojahn dyslexia pilot program and with an international non-profit organization specifically dedicated to supporting individuals with dyslexia. This organization also is to be invited to assist in providing the training, as are the nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs).

The bill also directed that beginning September 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, each ESD shall report to OSPI the number of individuals who participate in the training offered by the ESD. OSPI is then to report the information to the legislative education committees.

A total of \$145,000 was appropriated for the 2009-11 biennium to OSPI to support implementation of the bill.

Implementation Plan

There are two primary components for the implementation of SSB 6016 for the 2009-2011 biennium:

Dyslexia Professional Development:

During the 2009-2010 year, OSPI will design and lead a series of training sessions for fifty ESD literacy representatives. The professional development will focus on providing participants with the necessary information to deliver professional development in each of their regions. Professional development for the ESD literacy representatives is scheduled for November 17, 18, and 19 and December 8 and 9, 2009. *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills* (Birsh, 2005) will be used as the foundational text for the professional development, but additional materials and resources will be provided. Board members of The Washington Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (WABIDA) have agreed to contribute to the professional development. The calendar and tentative topics for professional development are addressed in Table 1.

Dyslexia Handbook:

During the 2009-2010 year, OSPI will develop a framework for a state dyslexia handbook. A draft of the handbook is scheduled for completion in December 2010. The draft will be reviewed by a committee of experts in the field of dyslexia, and the committee will provide feedback. The final version of the dyslexia handbook will be posted on the OSPI website in spring 2011.

Table 1 Dyslexia Professional Development Provided to Educational Service Districts 2009-2010 (Tentative Schedule)				
November 17, 2009	November 18, 2009	November 19, 2009	December 8, 2009	December 9, 2009
Overview of Dyslexia: History (Henry, 1999)	Assessment (Birsh, 2005)	Multisensory Instruction (Birsh, 2005)	Rights of individuals with dyslexia	Word learning and vocabulary (Birsh, 2005)
Simulation	Sound check	Dysgraphia	Accurate Decoding and Fluency	Comprehension (Birsh, 2005)
Research & Characteristics (Birsh, 2005; Moats & Dakin, 2008; Shaywitz, 2003)	6 syllable types (Birsh, 2005)	Handwriting instruction (Birsh, 2005)	Planning multisensory structured language lessons (Birsh, 2005)	Assistive technology-online (Birsh, 2005; 2009)
Phonemic Awareness & Reading (Birsh, 2005)	Video: Dyslexia: Characteristics and Effective Intervention (IDA)	Video: Beyond F.A.T. City (LaVoie)	Video: Misunderstood Minds (Levine)	Planning a training module
Alphabet knowledge: Letter recognition, naming and sequencing (Birsh, 2005)	Spelling (Birsh, 2005)	History and Structure of Written English (Birsh, 2005)	Advanced syllabication (Birsh, 2005)	

Next Steps

OSPI and the nine ESDs are currently in the process of creating a Consolidated Service Agreement (CSA) focusing on statewide literacy support for the 2009-2010 school year. Part of the CSA agreement will include a commitment from each ESD to attend dyslexia professional development and subsequently deliver professional development on dyslexia within their region in spring 2010.

In addition, ESDs will send a report to OSPI each June identifying the number of professional development sessions, the number of participants attending, and a summary of the specific content of the professional development session.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact Dr. Cheryl Young, OSPI Reading Specialist, at cheryl.young@k12.wa.us.

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