



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Dyslexia Support

2017

Authorizing legislation: RCW 28A.300.530

(<http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.300.530>)

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Executive Summary

“Dyslexia, or a reading disability, occurs when an individual has significant difficulty with speed and accuracy of word decoding. Comprehension of text and spelling are also affected. ... The IQ score does not play a role in the identification of dyslexia. The cognitive difficulties of dyslexics include problems with speech perception, recognizing and manipulating the basic sounds in a language, language memory, and learning the sounds of letters.”¹

It is projected that 10 percent of the United States population have dyslexia; therefore 100,000 Washington students could be identified with the language-based learning disability. Washington students who receive appropriate identification and interventions can make strides in their educational development as they prepare for college, career, and life.

During the 2016-17 school year approximately 100 individuals participated in training offered by the educational service districts.

¹ NIH Perspectives on Dyslexia, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528651/>

Background

In 2011, the Washington Dyslexia Resource Guide was created as a capstone document highlighting the multiple professional learning resources used by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Educational Service Districts (ESDs). From 2005 to 2010, OSPI received funding from the WA State Legislature to work closely with school districts, ESDs, and the Washington Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (WABIDA) to develop resources for families and educators focused on the identification and support of students with dyslexia. The original state appropriation to support Senate Bill 6016 (2009) was \$145,000 per year. The 2010 supplemental budget (Senate Bill 6444), allocated \$75,000 to support the continuation of SB 6016 during the 2010–11 year; however, these funds were reduced to \$37,000 in the December 2010 Supplemental Budget (HB 3225). There have been no funds designated by the state to support professional development for educational staff serving students with dyslexia since that time.

In addition, the Legislature provided funding (\$632,500+) during the 2005 and 2007 biennium to support schools with research-based intervention for students with dyslexia. Participating schools were required to have a three-tiered structure for reading instruction in place, provide professional learning for their teachers, regularly assess students, and collect and maintain data on student progress.

Update Status

During the 2016-17 school year, the Regional Literacy Cadre (RLC) representing each of the nine ESDs reported the following:

- RLC members presented on dyslexia at state and regional conferences.
- OSPI staff attended conferences and events on dyslexia around the state.
- OSPI has started collaborating with researchers at the University of Washington.
- The ELA Office at OSPI and the RLC provided technical assistance (phone calls and email correspondence) to families and districts on dyslexia identification, legality and support.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Identification and support of students with dyslexia is at the forefront of the work for the 2017-18 school year. Districts, schools, and educators need to be furnished with resources that will increase their understanding of dyslexia, the legality of identification, and how to talk about the learning disability with student families and the larger community.

Over the 2017-18 school year, OSPI will:

- Recruit and hire a special education specialist who is knowledgeable of dyslexia with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds.
- Collaborate with internal and external partners to ensure the research and evidenced based resources are shared with WA educators and families.
- Update, refine, and edit the 2011 Dyslexia Guide.
- Meet with families and educators to determine best how to support Washington students at the state, regional, and school level.

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