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Dyslexia Policies in SREB States:

Addressing the Needs of Struggling Young Readers

Overview

Dyslexia is a neurologically-based, lifelong condition that affects a person's ability to process language, which in turn can make reading and writing more difficult. Between 10 and 20 percent of all people are dyslexic. Children with dyslexia likely make up a significant portion of students who perform below the Basic level on NAEP reading in fourth grade, so early identification is critical. Providing appropriate reading instruction and intervention for young children by second grade could reduce the percentage of students at risk for continuing reading difficulties to less than 5 percent.

This brief lays out what researchers know about the learning differences associated with dyslexia, which reading interventions are effective for individuals with dyslexia, and what good state policies can mean for children and their families. State policymakers can impact the lives of thousands of children who struggle to read by supporting them with strong policies on dyslexia, including systematic identification, training for educators, and the use of proven interventions. Such policies can help states reduce the proportion of fourth graders who are not reading proficiently and ensure that more students are prepared to be academically successful.

What is dyslexia and how common is it?

Dyslexia, as defined by the International Dyslexia Association, is a learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by differences in the way some people's brains process language. These differences result in difficulties with many skills that relate to reading and writing. Dyslexia is a lifelong condition, but individuals with dyslexia can learn strategies that help them overcome the unique challenges it presents.

People with dyslexia have trouble with **phonological processing**, which involves recognizing the distinct sounds in spoken words and correctly associating letters with their respective sounds. They also have trouble with **phonemic awareness**, the process of identifying and manipulating the smallest units of sound in spoken language. They might confuse, for example, each of the two sounds associated with the letter "g"— the hard sound in "glove" and the soft sound in "giant."



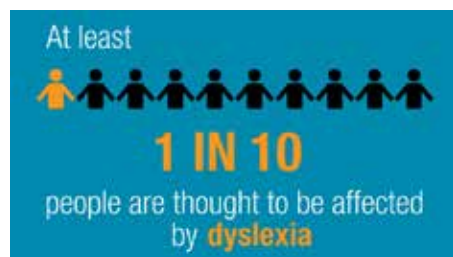
Individuals with dyslexia struggle with these aspects of spoken language, and young children may experience delayed speech or struggle to say certain sounds or rhymes before they enter school. But dyslexia often first reveals itself in elementary school when children experience persistent difficulties with specific literacy skills. These could include learning letter-sound relationships, sounding out unfamiliar words, copying text, or spelling. Noted Canadian researcher Linda Siegel explains that learning to associate spoken sounds with their printed forms is hard for those with dyslexia, which makes learning to read much more challenging. The extent of the difficulty varies from person to person and from mild to severe. Despite the additional academic challenges individuals with dyslexia face, it is important to note that dyslexia is not related to intelligence.

This brief is a companion to SREB's *Ready to Read Ready to Succeed: State Policies that Support Fourth-Grade Reading Success*, 2017.

Researchers estimate that **dyslexia affects at least one in 10 people**. According to the International Dyslexia Association, the true rate could be as high as one in five. Children with dyslexia make up a significant proportion of students found eligible for special education services. The Yale University Center for Dyslexia & Creativity reports that 80 to 90 percent of all individuals with a learning disability are impacted by dyslexia.

These figures mean that an elementary school of 1,000 children probably serves between 100 and 200 students who struggle with dyslexia. Every teacher likely has one or two in her classroom. Of the 19.6 million students enrolled in pre-K through twelfth grades in SREB states in 2015, more than two million may have had trouble reading due to dyslexia.

Despite its prevalence, the Dyslexia Research Institute estimates that **only one of every twenty people with dyslexia has been identified**. The others may have a hard time with reading, writing and spelling but never know why these subjects are so difficult for them. Because they are not identified, they may never receive the specialized instruction that would help them become more successful readers and writers.



What support should schools be prepared to offer children with dyslexia?

As with many other disabilities, dyslexia's impacts can be relatively mild or severe enough to impair a child's ability to learn effectively in the general education environment. Such cases require evaluation to determine a child's eligibility for special education services and an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This eligibility entitles students to specialized instruction from teachers who are trained to serve students with learning differences.

Students who have a milder form of dyslexia may progress through school without an IEP, receiving sufficient assistance from accommodations available to them through a 504 plan (see box below). School officials should be prepared to identify these students and the accommodations they need. But states should be aware that, unlike IEPs, 504 plans do not come with any additional funds for the school. Adhering to a 504 plan requires extra time and effort from teachers, and sometimes resources for which the school must pay. Schools in financial hardship might therefore be reluctant to develop a 504 plan that includes *all* the accommodations that would benefit a dyslexic student.

What is a 504 plan?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires school districts to provide a "free appropriate public education" to all qualifying individuals with a disability, regardless of the "nature or severity" of an individual's disability. Students who are found eligible for special education services based on one or more of the disability categories in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are entitled to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that addresses their specific learning needs. Students who do not qualify for an IEP may still be eligible for accommodations under Section 504.

Section 504 does not define or limit the types of accommodations a school can provide. These accommodations should address any barriers to learning or access to the school environment caused by the student's disability. For example, students with chronic conditions — like Type I diabetes, arthritis or severe asthma — might not be able to participate in physical education classes to the same extent as other students, or might need to take medication at regular intervals during the school day. A 504 plan can provide them with the flexibility required to address their unique needs.

Students with dyslexia who are not eligible for an IEP may benefit from a 504 plan that entitles them to accommodations such as extended time on assessments, audio recordings of textbooks, or text-to-speech software to aid in reading comprehension.

Source: U.S. Department of Education

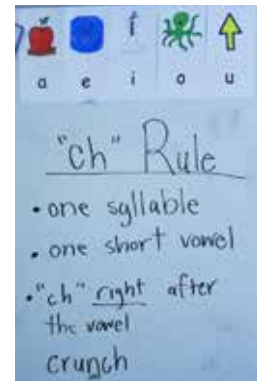
Children with dyslexia often fall behind in literacy skills early in their school careers. In its 2017 report *The State of Learning Disabilities*, the National Center for Learning Disabilities cited research by Ferrer et al. that found a clear achievement gap between typical readers and readers with dyslexia as early as first grade. Identifying and supporting students with dyslexia as early as possible makes it more likely that they will be able to reach and sustain grade-level skills in reading. Dyslexia cannot be “cured,” but students can be taught the phonological and phonemic skills they need to improve their reading abilities. The International Dyslexia Association’s *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading* advises that with early identification and appropriate instruction, students with dyslexia can learn successfully.

What methods work best for helping students with dyslexia learn to read well?

Because the brains of dyslexic individuals process language differently, teaching students with dyslexia to read requires specialized strategies. Teachers need to help students build the language skills non-dyslexic children typically acquire on their own. One of the oldest and most widely-used strategies is the Orton-Gillingham Approach. This instructional technique has been practiced in various forms since the 1930s and was the first systematic, multisensory method designed specifically for individuals with dyslexia. It teaches the basic elements of English and the relationship of oral language to the writing system. The Florida Center for Reading Research notes that many other popular programs and strategies for children with reading difficulties — including the Wilson Reading System, some aspects of Lindamood-Bell instruction, and Alphabetic Phonics — are influenced by Orton-Gillingham principles.

Basic certification in Orton-Gillingham for classroom educators requires at least 30 hours of training and an additional 50 hours of supervised practice. Training in other approaches, such as those listed above, is also extensive. As a result, too few public schools have any teachers — even special education teachers — who are trained in any of these methods. This leads some families with dyslexic children to seek out learning environments other than their assigned public school.

The Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators has accredited eight independent schools that serve students with dyslexia and similar language-based learning differences in the SREB region. (See Appendix A.) While these schools are beyond the means of many families for their children, they all offer Orton-Gillingham training courses at reasonable rates to educators in their surrounding communities. Some communities have sponsored teachers from local public schools to receive training at little to no personal cost. In the summer of 2017, for example, the Georgia branch of the International Dyslexia Association funded training for 30 teachers from Forsyth County public schools.



Orton-Gillingham explicitly teaches the basic elements of language and the English language’s relationship to the writing system.



Students examine word structure using white and red circular counters to represent vowels and consonants.

Photos courtesy of The Schenck School, Atlanta, Georgia.

What is a multisensory instructional approach?

Multisensory approaches like Orton-Gillingham are based upon constant use of associations: how a letter or word **looks**, how it **sounds**, and how the speech organs or the hand in writing **feels** when producing it.

Mississippi Dyslexia Handbook

How is dyslexia reflected in state policy?

State policies related to dyslexia have advanced both nationwide and in the SREB region, especially during the past five years. A few pacesetter SREB states have had dyslexia policies for far longer. **Mississippi** established a Dyslexia Grant Program in 1997 that provides funds for dyslexia training and intervention in the general education setting to a small number of public school districts. In 2012, the state created the nation's only voucher program specifically for students with dyslexia. Qualifying students may receive a scholarship to attend an alternate public school or an approved non-public school that “emphasizes instruction in dyslexia intervention.” As of January 2018, the program was serving 210 students.

Since 1990, **Louisiana** has required that all students in kindergarten through third grade be screened at least once for characteristics of dyslexia. Now **Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee** have implemented similar laws. **North Carolina** assesses all kindergarten through third-grade students three times per year for five different reading skills. While the assessment is not specifically focused on dyslexia, poor performance on these assessments should be a red flag for school officials.

Virginia also requires an assessment of reading skills at multiple points in the early grades, and its department of education found that the state's assessment instrument is reliable and valid for identifying students with reading problems. **Texas** requires schools to formally screen students for dyslexia if they do not meet a benchmark on a universal assessment of reading skills. **Florida** does not require universal formative assessments, but it does require screening for dyslexia if a student has clear and extensive difficulties with reading.

Three SREB states — **Kentucky, Maryland and South Carolina** — established task forces to develop recommendations for policies related to dyslexia identification and intervention. In 2015, Maryland's Dyslexia Task Force produced a report that examined current practices in the state. Using parent surveys, the task force identified some common misconceptions among school personnel. Parents reported being told, for example, that educators were not allowed to use the term *dyslexia* because it is a medical diagnosis, that dyslexia cannot be detected until a child is in third grade and two years behind in reading, and that the identification of dyslexia is not required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Based on surveys of educators, the task force also reported that many teachers did

Overcoming a Reluctance to Name Dyslexia

Children with dyslexia who attend public schools often need specific instructional methods and services that are not typically offered in a general education environment. Students are only entitled to these services if they are classified as having a disability in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA identifies multiple categories of disabilities that qualify students for an Individualized Education Program, or IEP. Dyslexia is categorized in the IDEA under the term *specific learning disability*. This umbrella term includes any “disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written.”

Recognizing dyslexia's impact on language processing in the brain makes it possible for educators to determine the best instructional strategies for children affected by it. However, public school officials are sometimes hesitant to label a student's reading difficulties as “dyslexia.” They believe labeling a student with dyslexia would provide a medical or psychological diagnosis that they are not licensed to make. Some states and local education agencies have side-stepped this issue by creating policies for children with *characteristics* of dyslexia, avoiding the direct label.

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) provided guidance on the use of the term dyslexia in public schools. The guidance clarified that the IDEA does not prevent schools from using the term. In fact, OSERS reminded state and local education agencies that acknowledging the exact nature of a child's specific learning disability is important for addressing the child's educational needs. It urged public schools to be willing to identify dyslexia by name and use proven methods for teaching children with dyslexia

Resources for Training Teachers

Initial training to teach school staff about dyslexia does not have to be expensive. Dyslexia International, a nonprofit organization, provides a free online training course to help teachers identify dyslexia and learn about best practices for teaching literacy to children who struggle with reading and writing. The course, called *Supporting Children with Difficulties in Reading and Writing*, was developed in collaboration with the University of London. It is scientifically-based and offered in a Massively Open Online Course (MOOC) format via the website Coursera.

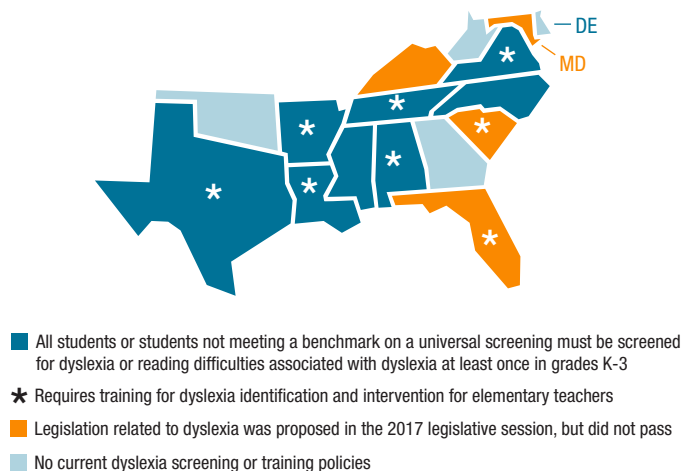
The initial version of the course was presented at the UNESCO-sponsored 2010 World Dyslexia Forum, and it has since been adapted into a teacher training program by the Belgian Ministry of Education. Kristin Anthian from Learning Difficulties Australia, an association of Australian teachers and other professionals, reviewed the online training course in 2015 and concluded, “While it can’t replace direct hands-on professional learning and feedback, it can certainly fill a much-needed gap in terms of accessibility.” Schools with limited financial resources may be able to take advantage of this free training option to help their teachers learn to recognize dyslexia and use strategies that can benefit struggling readers.

For more information, visit www.dyslexia-international.org/our-projects.

not understand what dyslexia is or know about instructional methods that research has shown to be effective for children who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Of the teachers surveyed, 30 percent said they learned about dyslexia in their teacher preparation programs.

Many SREB states recognize that it is important to train educators to identify and teach students with dyslexia. Eight states require that current teachers receive professional development on recognizing dyslexia and using specific teaching methods for students who experience reading difficulties that are typical of individuals with dyslexia. (See map below.) Of these states, four — **Arkansas, Florida, Texas** and **Virginia** — also require that teacher preparation programs offering certification for kindergarten through third grade provide candidates with training on the use of proven teaching methods for students with reading difficulties. While **North Carolina** does not specifically mention dyslexia in its policy, it does require that teacher preparation programs include instruction in the “diagnosis of specific areas of difficulty with reading development and of reading deficiencies” and instruction in “reading interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students.”

Dyslexia Policies in SREB States, January 2018



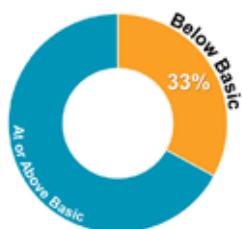
Source: SREB review of state documents. For more information, see the master policy table at the end of this report.

States in the SREB region continue to adopt, refine and consider policies related to dyslexia. Legislation considered during the 2017 **Kentucky** legislative session would have made sweeping changes to the state's dyslexia policies. Although the bill did not come to a vote before the session ended, its main sponsor has refiled similar legislation for the 2018 session. Legislators in **South Carolina** seek to require screening for specific early literacy skills for students in kindergarten through second grade and require specific interventions for students who have characteristics of dyslexia. A bill proposed in **Maryland** in the 2017 session would have created a committee to design and implement a six-year Dyslexia Education Pilot Program in select local school systems.

How can SREB states ensure that children with dyslexia learn to read proficiently?

For the 2012 SREB Challenge to Lead update to the region's goals for education, policymakers in SREB states aimed for more students to reach proficiency in reading by the end of third grade. Since the goal was set, SREB states have seen improvement in the reading performance of fourth graders on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Too few students, however, have performed at the Proficient level. More troubling still is that 33 percent of fourth graders in SREB states performed below the Basic level on NAEP reading in 2015 — fully *one-third* of fourth graders had not achieved even partial mastery of grade-level reading skills. As a result, they are likely to struggle in their later school years. A study by Hernandez and the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that 63 percent of students who did not graduate from high school on time had shown reading performance in third grade that is roughly equivalent to below Basic on NAEP.

Performance on 4th Grade NAEP Reading
SREB States, 2015



Given that as many as 20 percent of all students have trouble learning to read due to dyslexia, and that the public-school system could be doing more to help these students, it is no wonder so many third and fourth graders fall below basic on tests like NAEP. SREB's 2017 report *Ready to Read, Ready to Succeed* explains that support for all struggling readers, including students with dyslexia, starts with early identification and immediate intervention. Effective assistance must include knowledgeable reading teachers and proven, scientifically-based strategies for struggling readers.

States can ensure that children with dyslexia are identified early and consistently in all schools.

As states consider policy changes to help children with dyslexia, they may note that dyslexia is characterized by an array of language and literacy difficulties that can vary from person to person. Some organizations, including the Dyslexia Resource Trust, have compiled a list of signs that indicate a child may have dyslexia. These can provide a basis for school officials to watch for difficulties and to be prepared to conduct a formal dyslexia screening to determine which children need further evaluation.

Increasingly, however, states are choosing to require screenings for all young students to ensure that no child falls through the cracks. Noted researchers Shaywitz, Morris and Shaywitz wrote in 2008 that reading intervention focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics and text comprehension in the earliest grades can reduce the percentage of children who are at-risk for continuing reading difficulties to less than 5 percent of students. Early and systematic identification is critical to getting struggling readers this intervention support. These researchers note that it is much more challenging to catch children up after second grade.

Reading intervention focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics and text comprehension in the earliest grades can reduce the percentage of children who are at-risk for continuing reading difficulties to less than 5 percent of students.

Several short screening assessments are effective for identifying skill gaps that are characteristic of dyslexia. Some of the best-known include components of DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). These components have been tested and found to be reliable and valid, meaning that they consistently measure what they are intended to measure. **Arkansas** and **North Carolina** specify the use of DIBELS or an equivalent tool when screening students for dyslexia.

Requiring local education agencies to use a particular screening instrument or choose from a few validated instruments can help ensure that students with dyslexia are identified consistently throughout the state. In a 2011 evaluation of the impact of **Mississippi's** Dyslexia Grant Program, researcher Hollifield noted that the screening instruments used to determine students' eligibility for dyslexia intervention varied from district to district, as did the assessments used to track students' progress. This made it impossible to draw any definitive conclusions about the effect of the program on the reading achievement of students with dyslexia. States wishing to assess the effectiveness of their programs and policies need to ensure that all local districts screen students in the same way, using the same eligibility standards and assessments of progress.

States can strengthen teacher training and certification requirements to emphasize scientifically-based reading instruction and equip teachers to recognize dyslexia.

Teaching reading — to any student, at any level — requires expertise. The seminal 2000 National Reading Panel report identified a need for highly-qualified reading teachers. It did not, however, specify what knowledge and skills teachers need to be effective.

The International Dyslexia Association filled this gap as it relates to teaching reading by developing standards for teacher preparation, certification and professional development. These *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading* detail what teachers should know and be able to do as they teach reading, within the following categories:

- Foundation Concepts about Oral and Written Learning
- Knowledge of the Structure of Language
- Structured Language Teaching
 - Phonology
 - Phonics and Word Recognition
 - Fluent, Automatic Reading of Text
 - Vocabulary
 - Text Comprehension
 - Handwriting, Spelling, and Written Expression
- Interpretation and Administration of Assessments for Planning Instruction
- Knowledge of Dyslexia and Other Learning Disorders

These standards specify the use of **structured literacy** teaching strategies to address the five essential components of reading identified by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Structured literacy is a form of instruction that systematically teaches students the basic elements of language that are required for decoding words when reading. These include phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association, syllable types and syntax. Mastery of these language skills is crucial for children with dyslexia, says Carolyn Cowen with the International Dyslexia Association, but structured literacy instruction can benefit other children, too. Neurological research conducted by scientists including Yoncheva, Wise, and McCandliss supports this conclusion.

States can encourage the use of instructional methods and interventions that are effective for students with reading difficulties and ensure that teachers receive adequate training for implementing these strategies.

A variety of reading curricula and intervention programs are on the market. But research shows that children who struggle to learn the fundamentals of reading benefit from structured, multisensory instruction. To help provide guidance for educators, the International Dyslexia Association has compiled a *Matrix of Multisensory Structured Language Programs*, with information on proven approaches to teaching language and reading skills. The programs include the Orton-Gillingham Approach, Alphabetic Phonics, Language! and Wilson Foundations.

Intensive, targeted intervention is necessary for students who experience significant reading difficulties. Both the What Works Clearinghouse and Evidence for ESSA have identified the Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LiPS) program as a very effective one-on-one intervention for struggling readers, based on multiple high-quality studies. These sites also contain information about other common reading interventions and allow comparisons of their effectiveness.

Struggling readers need both proven interventions and instruction from knowledgeable reading teachers if state efforts are to pay off. But training on the best instruction and intervention methods for children with dyslexia can be cost-prohibitive. Providing local education agencies with information on ways they can access training at a reasonable cost — or even designating existing intervention funds for training on a given approach — can help ensure that education dollars are spent on methods that work.

Finally, states and local education agencies should not discourage schools from making appropriate referrals for special education services or reward schools for serving fewer students in special education programs.

If schools have well-trained teachers, strong research-based curricula, and effective interventions for all struggling readers, fewer students with dyslexia may face significant difficulties in a general education environment. Students with more severe forms of dyslexia, however, are likely to need reading and writing instruction in a small-group setting with specialized instruction and goals. Schools should not delay a referral for evaluation to determine whether students who do experience significant difficulties are eligible for special education services.

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services has clarified repeatedly, including in a January 2011 memo, that states and local education agencies may not use an intervention process to delay the evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability. It behooves states to identify these children as soon as possible: when students fall too far behind in the early grades, it becomes increasingly difficult and expensive to provide adequate remediation later.

If states can identify more students who face the challenges of dyslexia and provide effective early interventions, they should be able to reduce the proportion of students who perform below grade-level expectations. This in turn will ensure that a greater proportion of all students are prepared for success in fourth grade and beyond.

The **What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)** is supported by the Institute of Education Sciences. It reviews the existing research on educational programs and practices to help educators make evidence-based decisions.

Evidence for ESSA was launched in February 2017. Like the WWC, it provides information about programs and practices in education. Evidence for ESSA uses the newer criteria of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act to assess the available evidence on these programs and practices.

APPENDIX A

Independent Schools in the SREB Region Serving Students With Dyslexia Accredited by the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators

School Name	Location	Grades Served
Greengate School	Huntsville, AL	K and 1-8
The Schenck School	Atlanta, GA	K and 1-6
Triad Academy at Summit School	Winston-Salem, NC	Jr. K and 1-9
The Key School at Carolina Day School	Asheville, NC	2-8
Camperdown Academy	Huntsville, AL	1-8
Sandhills School	Greenville, SC	1-12
Trident Academy	Mount Pleasant, SC	K and 1-12
Riverside School	Richmond, VA	K and 1-8

APPENDIX B

Independent Teacher Training Programs in the SREB Region Accredited by the International Dyslexia Association

Program Name	Location
Orton-Gillingham, Greengate School	Huntsville, AL
Wilson Language Level 1, Susan Boros Sentell & Associates	Palm City, FL
The Hardman Technique, Woodland Hall Academy	Tallahassee, FL
Orton-Gillingham, The Schenck School	Atlanta, GA
Wilson Language Level 1, Ava White Academy and Tutorials	Gainesville, GA
Courses at the Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center	Rockville, MD
Dyslexia Therapy Program, Mississippi College	Clinton, MS
DuBard Association Method, The DuBard School at University of Southern MS	Hattiesburg, MS
Orton-Gillingham, The Key School at Carolina Day School	Asheville, NC
Orton-Gillingham, Camp Spring Creek	Bakersville, NC
Hill Professional Education Program, The Hill Center	Durham, NC
Orton-Gillingham Multisensory Structured Language Teacher Training, Greenhills School	Winston-Salem, NC
Orton-Gillingham, Triad Academy at Summit School	Winston-Salem, NC
Structured Multisensory Language Foundations, Payne Education Center	Oklahoma City, OK
Orton-Gillingham, Sandhills School	Columbia, SC
Orton-Gillingham, Camperdown Academy	Greenville, SC
Orton-Gillingham, Trident Academy	Mount Pleasant, SC
Simultaneous Multisensory Institute of Language Arts (SMILA)	Memphis, TN
Dyslexia Therapy Training Program, Rawson Saunders Institute	Austin, TX
Dyslexia Therapist Training Course, Scottish Rite Dyslexia Center of Austin	Austin, TX
Wilson Language Level 1, Region 13 Education Service Center	Austin, TX
Dyslexia Specialist Preparation Program, Neuhaus Education Center	Bellaire, TX
Dyslexia Therapist Training Course, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children	Dallas, TX
Learning Therapist Certificate Program, Southern Methodist University	Dallas, TX
Courses at Literacy Education and Academic Development (LEAD)	Dallas, TX
Shelton Academic Language Approach (SALA)	Dallas, TX
Shelton Adolescent Reading Approach (SARA)	Dallas, TX
Shelton MSL Training Course	Dallas, TX
Dyslexia Therapist Training Course, Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas	Lubbock, TX
Multisensory Integrated Reading and Composition, McKinney Christian Academy	McKinney, TX
Dyslexia Therapist Training Program, JPW Learning Center	San Angelo, TX
Dyslexia Therapist Training Program, Scottish Rite Learning Center of South Texas	San Antonio, TX
Orton-Gillingham, Riverside School	Richmond, VA
Courses at the National Institute for Learning Development	Suffolk, VA

APPENDIX C

Dyslexia Policies in SREB States

	AL	AR	DE	FL	GA	KY	LA	MD	MS	NC	OK	SC	TN	TX	VA	WV
Definition and Information																
Dyslexia is officially defined in state policy or state department guidance	Y	Y		P		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
State serves as a clearinghouse for parents, teachers, or other stakeholders via a resource document or webpage specifically about dyslexia	Y	Y		P		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	
Parents must be notified if their child exhibits characteristics of dyslexia <u>or</u> fails a screener intended to identify students at risk of dyslexia	Y	Y		Y ¹		P			Y			P	Y	Y		
State has established a dyslexia task force or advisory council to explore or guide policies	Y					Y		Y				P	Y	Y ²		
Identification and Intervention																
Grades in which schools must screen students for reading difficulties associated with dyslexia	K-12 ³	K-2 3 and up ⁴				K-3 ^P	K-3		K-1	K-3		K-2 ^P	K-2	K-2	K-1, 2 ³ , 3	
State designates certain screening instruments <u>or</u> characteristics of screening instruments for use in identifying students at risk of dyslexia		Y				P	Y	Y	Y	Y		P	Y	Y	Y	
State identifies specific intervention or remediation methods for students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia	Y	Y		Y		P	Y	Y	Y	Y		P	Y	Y		
Educator Training																
Teacher preparation programs must include training on the characteristics of dyslexia for candidates seeking certification for grades K-3		Y				P		Y		Y ⁵	*			Y ⁶	Y	
Teacher preparation programs must include training on the use of proven teaching methods for students with reading difficulties for candidates seeking certification for grades K-3		Y		Y		P				Y ⁷	*			Y ⁶	Y	
State <u>offers</u> professional development on recognizing or teaching students with dyslexia	Y	Y								Y		Y	Y		Y	
State <u>requires</u> professional development for elementary teachers on recognizing dyslexia	Y	Y				P	Y					Y	Y	Y ⁸	Y ⁹	
State <u>requires</u> professional development for elementary teachers on the use of specific teaching methods for students with dyslexia	Y	Y		Y ¹⁰		P	Y					Y	Y	Y ⁸	Y ⁹	

P or ^P Legislation was proposed, but was not passed by the end of the state's 2017 legislative session.

* A teacher training pilot program for teacher candidates at institutions of higher education was enacted in 2012, but no institutions currently participate.

¹ Parents must be notified if their child exhibits a "substantial reading deficiency" on a screening or assessment of reading.

² A committee was established to "develop a plan for integrating technology into the classroom to help accommodate students with dyslexia."

³ Only students who score below a certain benchmark on a universal screening for reading skills

⁴ If classroom teacher finds that student is struggling with reading

⁵ Educator preparation programs must include "instruction in evidence-based assessment and diagnosis of specific areas of difficulty with reading development and of reading deficiencies."

⁶ Only applies to certificates that require a person to possess a bachelor's degree

⁷ Educator preparation programs must include "instruction in appropriate application of instructional supports and services and reading interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students."

⁸ Only applies to teachers who screen or teach students with dyslexia

⁹ For license renewal

¹⁰ For the renewal of a professional certificate that includes reading instruction or intervention for students in kindergarten through grade 6 with beginning validity date of July 1, 2020 or later

Source: Education Commission of the States, National Center on Improving Literacy, and SREB analysis of state documents

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3

THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD
KNOW ABOUT
DYSLEXIA

At least



1 IN 10

people are thought to be affected
by dyslexia

researchers say

80 to 90%

of people with
learning disabilities
are likely to have some form of dyslexia



early identification
and
multi-sensory
teaching methods

can help students with dyslexia become
successful readers

