Dyslexia: Legislative Updates, Definition and Myths, and Effective Reading Instruction

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Agenda

- Legislative Updates
- Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation
- What is Dyslexia and Why is it Important?
- Effective Reading Instruction

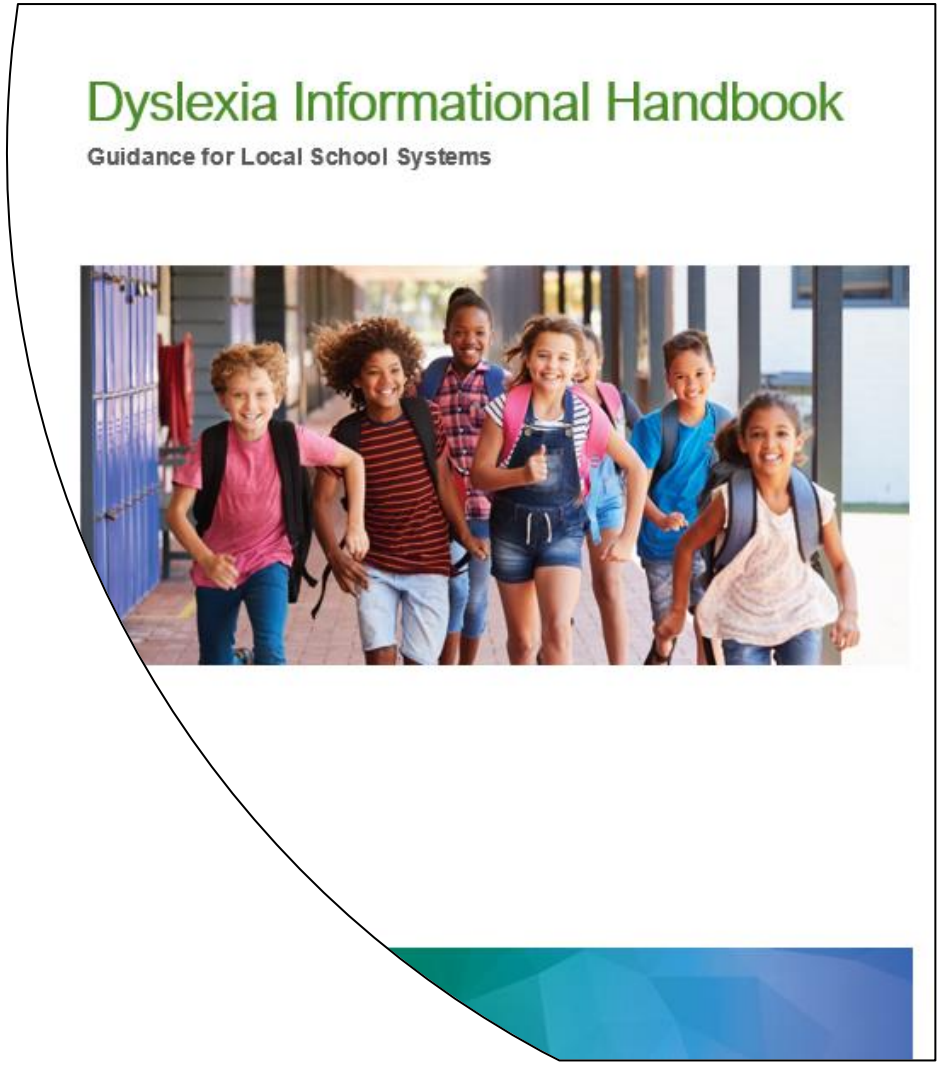
Dyslexia Updates

S.B. 48 Key Ideas

- Policies for the identification and assistance of students with characteristics of dyslexia
- Dyslexia informational handbook
- Professional development
- Teaching endorsement in dyslexia
- Pilot program
- K-3 screening for characteristics of dyslexia

Dyslexia Informational Handbook

- What is dyslexia?
- Components of effective reading instruction
- Screening for reading difficulties through MTSS
- Identification of dyslexia
- Delivery of dyslexia instruction using Structured Literacy approach
- Special Education services and dyslexia
- Professional learning best practices and opportunities
- ***Revised Handbook coming in 2023 (including an EL section!***



PSC-Approved Dyslexia Endorsement Programs

- Central Savannah River Area RESA
- Griffin RESA
- Metro RESA
- Middle Georgia RESA
- North Georgia RESA
- Northeast RESA
- Northwest RESA
- Okefenokee RESA
- West Georgia RESA

PSC-Approved Dyslexia Endorsement Programs

- Columbus State University
- Georgia College and State University
- Georgia State University
- Reinhardt University
- Shorter University
- Thomas University
- University of Georgia
- University of West Georgia

2021-2022 Endorsements Issued

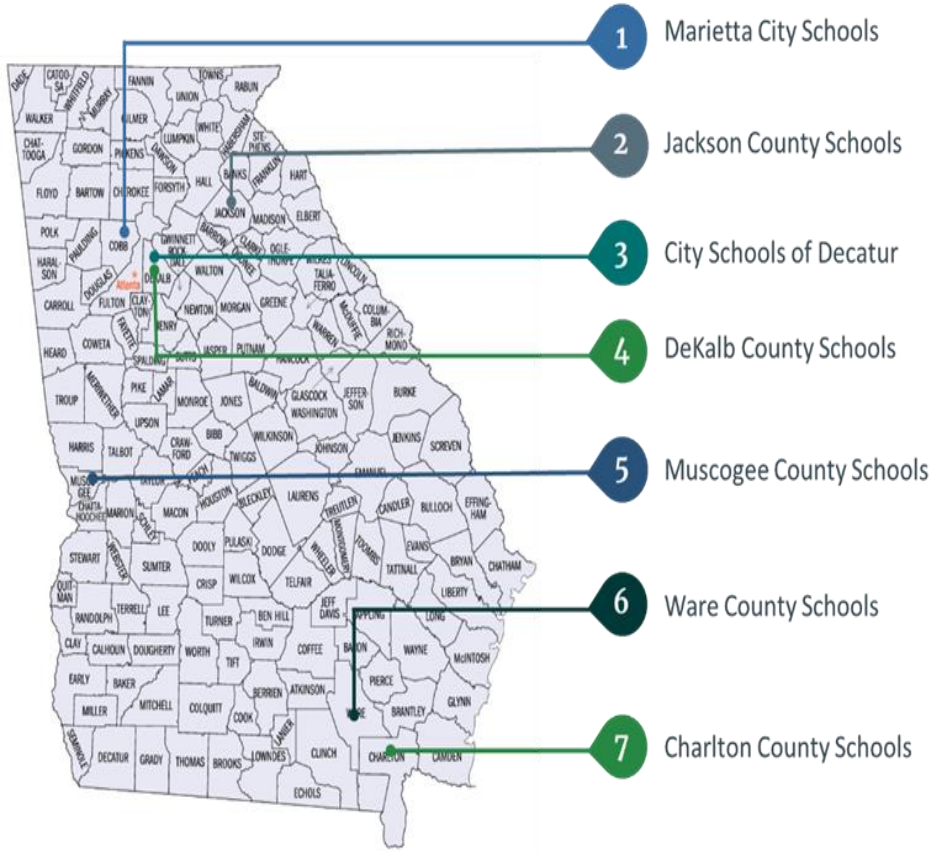
545

Dyslexia Pilot Update

- The Dyslexia Pilot Program is currently in its third year of implementation
- The pilot program will end in June 2023. A final Dyslexia Pilot Program report will be available in summer 2023.
- As of June 2022, a total of 45 schools were reported by the districts to be involved in the pilot in 2021–22.

Participating Pilot Districts

- Marietta City Schools
- Jackson County City Schools
- City Schools of Decatur
- Dekalb County Schools
- Muscogee County Schools
- Ware County Schools
- Charlton County Schools



Pilot District Location, Student Enrollment, and Number of Pilot Schools

District	Location	Student Enrollment 2021-2022	Number of Schools in Pilot
Marietta City Schools	Atlanta (Urban)	8,696	4
Jackson County Schools	Near Athens (Non-Rural)	9,245	3
City Schools of Decatur	Atlanta (Urban)	5,645	7
Dekalb County Schools	Atlanta (Urban)	93,293	13
Muscogee County Schools	Columbus (Non-Rural)	29,774	15
Ware County Schools	South Georgia (Rural)	6,010	1
Charlton County Schools	South Georgia (Rural)	1,693	2

Successes Districts Identified in 2021–2022

Context	• The flexibility to implement the pilot in different ways was valuable for three districts as they staged their efforts, examined differences in implementation across their schools, and in some cases prepared to expand the pilot districtwide. • A few districts reported seeing improved literacy outcomes for students in 2021-22 as compared to previous years.
Staff & Resources	• Several districts spoke of the value of motivating staff to grow professionally and shift their mindsets regarding how reading instruction and intervention should be provided. • Within-district training and professional development on reading instruction generally, as well as on specific approaches to instruction and intervention, were reported as instrumental to the work of the pilot by more than half of the districts.
MTSS	• All seven districts talked positively about their experiences with screening tools. For example, most said the tools provided them with valuable, high-quality data that helped them make better instructional decisions. • Two districts cited intervention as a specific success in 2021-22, saying their processes and intervention strategies worked well. Two more districts mentioned successes with progress monitoring, noting that it had become routine for school staff and progress monitoring processes were being followed.

Challenges Districts Identified in 2021–2022

Context	• All but one district described contextual factors as challenges (e.g., their large size, staff turnover). • Getting buy-in from school and district staff and school boards for screening, teaching the science of reading, and updating curriculum resources were challenges for four districts. • Four districts described district-to-school communication and collaborating across district offices and between schools as challenging. • A few districts reported challenges from the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron wave.
Staff & Resources	• Six districts pointed to logistical hurdles they faced in implementation, including finding the time, staff, or space to provide intervention and the difficulty of balancing pilot implementation with other initiatives. • A majority of districts found that gaps in their core instructional materials and/or the implementation of new core materials presented challenges to pilot implementation. • Six districts reported that the need to build the knowledge of school and district staff was a challenge to implementing the pilot. They specifically mentioned the need to build knowledge of MTSS, dyslexia, the science of reading and structured literacy, and the pilot itself.
MTSS	• Almost every district identified using data well as a particularly difficult challenge. The main struggles they cited revolved around interpreting screening and progress monitoring data, combining data from different sources, and using it to make decisions about instruction, intervention, and the need for further assessment.

Dyslexia Pilot Panel Webinar

Session 1: 3:00 – 4:30 pm • January 26, 2023

District representatives will share how the pilot affected

- core reading instruction
- screening for dyslexia and other reading difficulties
- intervention
- progress monitoring
- use of student data for instruction and intervention

Attendees will be given a planning and discussion guide at the end of Session 1 to use in discussions with colleagues.

Session 2: 3:00 – 4:30 pm • March 9, 2023

Attendees can ask questions that arise in using the planning guide to increase readiness for S.B. 48 implementation.

Unraveling Dyslexia Webinar Series

- A four-part GaDOE Dyslexia Video Series was developed through a partnership between the Georgia Department of Education and the Mary Frances Early College of Education at the University of Georgia.
- In each of the Unraveling Dyslexia webinars, Dr. Sayeski “unraveled” the content presented in each video.
- Dr. Lindstrom answered questions to clarify further the information presented and provide guidance on how best to support students with dyslexia in the school setting.
- https://ga.dyslexiaida.org/2022-unraveling-dyslexia/

Dyslexia Task Force

- ~60 members
- Working Groups
  - Screening for Characteristics of Dyslexia
  - Dyslexia Parent Handbook
  - Statewide Dyslexia Professional Learning
  - Dyslexia Informational Handbook
    - MTSS
    - Intervention
    - English Learners
    - IDEA

GaDOE Dyslexia Website

GADOE Dyslexia Website

What is Dyslexia? Why is it Important?

Why is Information about Difficulty with Reading Necessary?

- 65% of 4th graders in the US are not proficient in reading.
- Approximately 1 out of 10 students experience persistent difficulty in learning to read.
- Students with dyslexia can receive services under the IDEA within the category of specific learning disability (see Video #3)

Behind the Numbers

- On the NAEP, 64% of 4th graders performed in the Below Basic range
- What does ”below basic” performance mean?
- Poor oral reading fluency and word reading skills (White et al., 2021)

Behind the Numbers

- *1 in 10* or *1 in 5*?
  - National Center for Learning Disabilities, Learning Ally, Decoding Dyslexia, Shaywitz (1 in 5)
    - Broader definition inclusive of attention and reflective of current outcomes
  - A more conservative estimate is 1 in 10
    - Reflective of *persistent difficulty* in learning to read despite adequate instruction

Definitions and Myths

- Most commonly used definition = IDA (2002)
  - Specific learning disability
  - Neurobiological in origin
  - *Phonological component*
  - Difficulties with word recognition are tied to difficulties with comprehension and vocabulary [knowledge] acquisition

Persistent Myths

- Individuals with dyslexia do NOT read backward
  - Reversals in spelling are common for all children and can persist for individuals with reading disabilities but are not an indication of a visual problem
- Independent of cognition
  - Many students with dyslexia have average to above average intelligence

What is the Relationship between Phonology and Reading?

- Reading = the act of translating print into words
- Orthography = the way words are written
- English orthography is alphabetic
  - Speech sounds are represented by letters (/m/ /a/ /t/ = mat)
  - Some have a 1-1* correspondence (/b/ = b, bb), some sounds are represented by more than one spelling (/f/ = f, ff, ph, gh).
- Learning to read = learning the code
  - This sound is represented by this spelling pattern

How the Brain Learns to Read

Stanislas Dehaene:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlYZBi_07vk

Can schools use of the term dyslexia?

- **YES.** Schools can use the term dyslexia when they identify that a student has characteristics of dyslexia.

- *NOTE*: Schools should not tell a family that a student "has dyslexia" as this implies a diagnosis. However, schools can say that they have identified *characteristics of dyslexia*.

Is SLD identified through a special education evaluation the same as a diagnosis of dyslexia?

- Although dyslexia is often referred to as a ‘medical diagnosis,’ the diagnosis of dyslexia is given by a licensed psychologist.
- A primary care doctor or pediatrician does not diagnose dyslexia, but they can make a referral to a licensed psychologist.

Is SLD identified through a special education evaluation the same as a diagnosis of dyslexia?

- A diagnosis of dyslexia is made based on the current diagnostic guidelines in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition (DSM-5). This diagnosis may be called a Specific Learning Disorder (SLD) - with impairment in reading.

Is SLD identified through a special education evaluation the same as a diagnosis of dyslexia?

- The label SLD is used both in schools and clinically; however, they don't mean the same thing.
- The *diagnostic* term is Specific Learning Disorder and the special education *category* is Specific Learning Disability.

Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia

- Schools do not provide a diagnosis of dyslexia. As mentioned already, this diagnosis is provided by a licensed psychologist.

- Beginning the 2024-2025 school year, all elementary schools *will be required* to screen and identify students in grades K-3 with characteristics of dyslexia and to share these results with parents (Georgia Senate Bill 48).

Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia

There are currently three ways a student with characteristics of dyslexia may come to the attention of a schools and families under ‘dyslexia identification’ in Georgia:

1. A child may complete a private evaluation and receive a diagnosis of dyslexia from a licensed psychologist.
2. The school may identify “characteristics of dyslexia” through its screening system and MTSS process. The school will report this information to parents and use knowledge of dyslexia characteristics to guide instruction.

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Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia

3. A child may be identified through a special education evaluation and require special education services and supports under the category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). If students meet criteria for SLD, and they demonstrate foundational reading deficits, they may also demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia that can be documented.

Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia

- ***It is important to note (again) that a child may not qualify for special education, but may still have characteristics of dyslexia.*** These students may qualify for additional supports and intervention through the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) process at school (Tier 2/3).

Effective Reading Instruction

Essential Instructional Practices for Tier 1 Instruction

- High-quality reading instruction is characterized by evidence-based practices using a **structured literacy approach**.
  - Umbrella term that refers to approaches to reading that reflect key instructional features
    - How instruction is provided
    - What teachers teach
  - Instruction is **explicit**, **systematic**, and **cumulative**.

Structured Literacy

- Structured Literacy
- An approach to reading instruction where teachers carefully structure important literacy skills, concepts, and the sequence of instruction, to facilitate children's literacy learning and progress as much as possible.
- This approach to reading instruction benefits ALL students. (Baker et al., 2014; Gersten et al., 2008; Kamil et al., 2008; Vaughn et al., 2006).

Structured Literacy

- Learning to read is like solving a puzzle; the brain likes puzzles
  - It is fun as long as the challenge is within reach.
  - Slowly unfold the game to young children.
- There is NO harm in directly teaching students the relationship between speech sounds and letters.
  - Kids will not cry, creativity will not be stunted, curiosity will not be killed

Explicit vs Not Explicit

- Explicit
  - I do (Show)
  - We do (Practice Together)
  - You do (Student Does)
- Not Explicit
  - Who knows…?
  - Guessing words by pattern
  - Struggling to read words without sufficient instruction

Leveled Texts

- Leveling has nothing to do with phonics
  - Sentence length, number of syllables in a word, number of sentences in the book
  - Coyote?!
  - Insufficient practice with applying known phonics concepts can lead students to not understand the alphabetic principle
  - This can lead to relying on picture or context clues rather than print

But, We *Do* Teach Phonics

- Not all phonics instruction is equivalent
- Students read a book about a *coyote* that is a *mammal*, and the phonics "lesson" is to find a picture that begins with the letter C?!

Decodable Texts

- Reading connected text is when students get to practice solving the puzzle.
- Decodable texts = A Student's First Puzzle

Scope and Sequence

- A plan for how to move from basic to more complex
- As students gain confidence with the puzzle, they will begin to pick up on patterns and make inferences
- Providing ample and connected practice will facilitate student learning

Decoding = Sight-Word Instruction (Not Whole-Word Flashcards!)

- Sight words are any words recognized automatically upon sight
- Sight words are created via the process of orthographic mapping
  - Mapping speech sounds to letters
  - Attention to individual letters and patterns required
- Whole word ≠ sight word
  - Memorization of the whole unit; encourages guessing; speed prioritized over accuracy and attention to patterns

Spelling Instruction is Reading Instruction

- Break words into their sounds → Spellings of sounds [speech to print]
- Translate spelling patterns into sounds → Say words [print to speech]
- Instruction
  - Say sound, spell sound
  - See letter(s), say sounds
  - Hear words, spell words
  - See words, say words
  - Hear sentences, spell sentences
  - See sentences, read sentences

Regular and Irregular Words

- All words = irregular until the pattern is taught or learned
- Some words are particularly tricky or have unusual spelling patterns due to their origin
- The heart word method is great for introducing irregular, high-frequency words needed for reading all beginning texts
- Introduce irregular words after initial decoding instruction
  - In other words, teach students the code first, then how to use their blending skills for sounding out unusual spellings

Guiding Questions for Administrators and Teachers

Core Instruction

- What K-3 literacy curricula and instructional materials does your school/district currently use
- To what extent are these curricula and materials aligned with evidence-based reading instruction?
- What resources did you use to make that determination?

Core Instruction

- If < 80% of students are meeting grade-level standards for reading and writing:
  - How has your district or school examined student data and existing curricula and instructional materials to identify any gaps that need to be addressed on a school-wide or district-wide basis?
  - What plans are in place to strengthen core literacy instruction?

Targeted, Intensive Intervention (Tier II, Tier III, Special Education)

- What K-3 literacy intervention programs or strategies does your school/district use to provide additional targeted (Tier II) or intensive (Tier III/Special Education) support to students identified with reading difficulties?

Targeted, Intensive Intervention (Tier II, Tier III, Special Education)

- What intervention programs or strategies does your school/district use or plan to use that would be appropriate for students with characteristics of dyslexia?
- To what extent are these interventions similar to or different from the ones identified on the previous slide?

Targeted, Intensive Intervention (Tier II, Tier III, Special Education)

- Which foundational reading skills does each intervention program/strategy target?
  - Phonemic awareness
  - Phonics
  - Vocabulary
  - Fluency
  - Comprehension

Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines/ Reviews

- The Reading League
- ED Reports-ELA

Additional questions?

Preparing students for life.

www.gadoe.org

@georgiadeptofed

youtube.com/user/GaDOEmedia

Georgia Department of Education