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DYSLEXIA POLICY BRIEF

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Recently passed House Bill 7069 requires comprehensive changes to reading instruction in the state of Florida to ensure all readers, particularly those who are struggling receive the necessary instruction to learn to read. The law, which takes effect July 1, 2017 embeds the language “evidence-based, explicit, systematic, and multisensory instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension” in both new and existing requirements for instruction of struggling readers, teachers in K-3 and 6th-8th, teacher preparation programs, and recertification requirements.

The University of Florida’s Lastinger Center for Learning has been named in the law to develop training and assist in implementation of the new policy (SS 1001.215(3)).

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

- 1) The bill expands and clarifies what is meant by reading intervention. For example, previously the bill said that children retained in grade 3 receive intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate their specific reading deficiency must include “effective instructional strategies” but that has been replaced with “evidence-based, explicit, systematic, and multisensory instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.” (SS 1008.25 (7)(a)(1)).
- 2) Further, the term reading intervention has been defined as “evidence-based strategies frequently used to remediate reading but is not limited to individual instruction, multisensory approaches, tutoring, mentoring, and the use of technology that targets certain skills.” (SS 1001.215(8)).
- 3) The new law now requires Uniform Core Curricula in state-approved teacher preparation programs to include “evidence-based reading instructional strategies that improve reading performance for all students including explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and multisensory strategies.” This mandate is intended for all preparation programs, NOT just special education preparation. (SS 1004.04 (2)(b)(3)).
- 4) Requires 2 credits of college coursework or equivalent in “explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to “reading instruction, teaching phonemic awareness and implementing multisensory strategies,” for K-6

educators who renew certificates with beginning validity of July 1, 2020 (SS 1012.585(3)(a))

- 5) Each school district's professional development system must "provide training to reading coaches, classroom teachers, and school administrators in effective methods of identifying characteristics of conditions such as dyslexia and other causes of diminished phonological processing skills; incorporating instructional techniques into the general education setting which are proven to improve reading performance for all children." The training must help teachers integrate phonemic awareness, phonics, word study, spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, including academic vocab, text comp, multisensory instruction in explicit, systematic, sequential, using multisensory intervention strategies (SS 1012.98 (4)(b)(11)). Previously this was not a required component of a school district's professional development system.

Advocacy

Advocates have urged the public to call the members of the following legislative committee members in support of HB 79.

Senate Education Committee

House Prek-12 Education Innovation committee

Prek-Quality Sub-Committee

Education Leadership Committee