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DYSLEXIA POLICY BRIEF

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Over the past two legislative sessions, the Florida Legislature has made significant changes in requirements for reading instruction, certification, teacher preparation, and professional development to ensure all readers, particularly those who are struggling receive the necessary instruction to learn to read.

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

*Help for struggling
readers in Florida!*

*Beginning in Fall
2018, struggling
readers in 3rd – 5th
grades are eligible to
receive a \$500
scholarship for private
tutoring (SS 1002.411)*

2018 Legislative Session

- 1) Summer reading camps that utilize Research-Based Reading Instruction Allocation for the lowest 300 performing schools must only use teachers who are certified or endorsed in reading (SS 1011.92 (9)(c)(5)).
- 2) The designation of state's 300 lowest performing schools will now be determined by the average of the last three years of state assessment scores. Previously the designation was based on scores for the prior year (SS 1011.92 (9)(a)).
- 3) Districts with any of the states lowest 300 performing schools will continue to be required to provide an extra hour of evidence-based reading instruction, however, this extra instruction no longer has to be beyond the school day. Students who scored above grade level may also participate in the extra instruction (SS 1011.92 (9)(a)).
- 4) The state established a Reading Scholarship available to all 3rd through 5th grade students who scored a 1 or 2 on the FSA. The state allocated 9.2 million dollars to fund a \$500 per student scholarship, which will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis. (SS 1002.411).
- 5) Reading passages and writing prompts on the state's English Language Arts assessment must incorporate grade-level core curricula from social studies. (S.S. 1008.32(3)(a)).

2017 Legislative Session

- 1) 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)).
- 2) 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)).
- 3) 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))
- 4) 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.

OTHER NEWS

As of Fall of 2017, the University of Florida now offers an Online Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia. The certificate is a sequence of course that incorporate the most current evidence on assessment and instruction for children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

To ensure teachers across the state are familiar with the needs of students with dyslexia, Florida Department of Education recently developed an online two-hour course titled *Reading Difficulties, Disabilities, and Dyslexia* that will be available for all teachers in the State of Florida.

ADVOCACY

Representatives want to hear from you! As an educator you are in a unique to provide feedback on the implementation of research and policy at the school level. Representatives can only solve problems they understand, and you play a key role in developing their understanding.

Senate Education Committee

House Prek-12 Education Innovation committee

Prek-Quality Sub-Committee

Education Leadership Committee