

# Legislative Report Iowa Dyslexia Board

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November, 2020

## LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

[Senate File 2356](#) was signed into law on June 17, 2020. This legislation established the Iowa Dyslexia Board to guide, facilitate, and oversee implementation of dyslexia instruction in Iowa and make recommendations for continued improvement of such instruction. Additionally, the Iowa Dyslexia Board is legislated to submit:

- Recommendations to the Iowa Department of Education (Department) regarding the required and preferred qualifications for a dyslexia consultant position required in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 60,
- Recommendations to the area education agencies regarding the required and preferred qualifications for dyslexia specialists required in accordance with section 273.2, subsection 11, and
- Submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly annually.

The Iowa Dyslexia Board is legislated through July 1, 2025.

## LEGISLATED PRIORITIES

Senate File 2356 outlines the below priorities relating to the education of students with characteristics of dyslexia.

- [Establishment of the Iowa Dyslexia Board.](#)
- [Dedicated Dyslexia Positions at the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Area Education Agencies.](#)
- [Establishment of the Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement.](#)
- [Required Dyslexia Training.](#)

This report outlines the status of each of these priorities.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IOWA DYSLEXIA BOARD

During fall 2020 the governor's office began the search to form the Iowa Dyslexia Board. Board members serve staggered three-year terms and fulfill the following roles:

- The director of the Department or the director's designee.
- A representative of the Iowa Reading Research Center.
- A representative of an area education agency.
- One school administrator.
- One reading specialist.
- One special education teacher.
- An elementary core literacy teacher.
- Two representatives of Decoding Dyslexia who are parents of children with dyslexia.
- One representative of Decoding D
- yslexia who is an individual with dyslexia.
- One provider certified in a structured literacy reading program.
- One psychologist or speech language pathologist licensed in the state of Iowa with experience in diagnosing dyslexia.
- A representative of an institution of higher education in Iowa with documented expertise in dyslexia and reading instruction.

- The Department dyslexia consultant if maintained by the Department pursuant to section 256.9, subsection 60.

The governor's office is in the final stages of reviewing recommendations for the Iowa Dyslexia Board with the intent for the Board to be in place during the 2020-2021 school year. During this time the Board will:

- Select chair/co-chair.
- Set a meeting schedule.
- Develop a vision, mission, reason to act and core values.
- Develop recommendations to the Department and Iowa area education agencies regarding required and preferred qualifications for dyslexia consultant/specialist positions.
- Prioritize Board actions related to the education of children with the characteristics of dyslexia.

## **DEDICATED DYSLEXIA POSITIONS AT THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND IOWA AREA EDUCATION AGENCIES**

By July 1, 2024, the Department is to dedicate a full-time position to serve as a dyslexia consultant. Pending an appropriation by the general assembly, Iowa area education agencies are to dedicate at least one full-time equivalent position to maintain a dyslexia specialist. The Iowa Dyslexia Board is to make recommendations regarding the required and preferred qualifications for these positions.

The Department began a search to fill the Department dyslexia consultant position during winter of 2020. The position, education program consultant (EPC), Explicit Instruction, once hired would fill the responsibilities of the dyslexia consultant. Those responsibilities include providing technical guidance and assistance to the Department, area education agencies, school districts, and accredited nonpublic schools relating to:

- the identification of students with characteristics of dyslexia, and
- the instruction of students with dyslexia.

The consultant is to be highly trained in dyslexia and have at least three years of field experience in screening, identifying and treating dyslexia and related disorders.

The EPC, Explicit Instruction position includes the following job description:

1. Participate on Department internal teams to integrate statewide efforts related to effective instruction within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). This work includes helping to establish consistency in information and resources related to explicit and systematic instruction, direct instruction, structured literacy, special designed instruction (SDI), other evidence-based instructional approaches used with struggling learners and students with disabilities, children with dyslexia, and the relationship between these approaches and those used with all students.
2. Support scaling and implementation of evidence-based instructional practices in providing class-wide, small group, and individual-student instruction/interventions and supports across the state for struggling learners, including students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and students with dyslexia. This includes participation in existing statewide collaborative implementation and scaling structures, including: 1) facilitation of or membership on statewide development

and delivery teams; 2) providing technical assistance focusing on needs assessment, implementation, and evaluation of instructional efforts; 3) using implementation science to support scaling and implementation efforts.

3. Provide guidance related to implementation of explicit and systematic instruction as part of specially designed instruction, including staying current on both federal and state requirements, and communicating to Iowa stakeholders the implications and connections for students that need specially designed instruction.
4. Serve as regular or ad hoc team member and instructional expert on internal committees and work teams, including, but not limited to district and area education agency site visits. This work also includes participation as a team member on the Parent Call Cadre and regular participation and contribution to the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG).

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DYSLEXIA SPECIALIST ENDORSEMENT

By July 1, 2021, the Board of Educational Examiners' (BoEE) in collaboration with the Iowa Reading Research Center, is to establish an advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement. The Iowa Reading Research Center drafted rules for the endorsement that were introduced as a discussion item at the [September 11, 2020, BOEE meeting](#). The BoEE voted to notice the rules on October 23, 2020, and the rules will be published in the legislative register on December 2, 2020. See also [Appendix A](#) for proposed rule change. While the rules continue through the approval process with the BoEE, the Iowa Reading Research Center has initiated the approval process in the University of Iowa (UI) system. Courses and practica for the 18 semester hours have been identified and syllabi are being developed. Given the number of approvals required (BoEE, UI College of Education, UI Curriculum Council, Board of Regents, Iowa Department of Education) and the lack of funding to support the Iowa Reading Research Center's work, the endorsement may not be in place for enrolling the pilot cohort in the fall 2021 semester. The pilot will inform the rules describing the standards and procedures for approval of practitioner preparation programs that offer the advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement. Legislation requires these rules to be adopted by the BoEE by July, 1, 2022.

## REQUIRED DYSLEXIA TRAINING

By July 1, 2024 (or within one year of hire after July 1, 2024) district school boards shall require all persons employed by the school district who hold a teaching license with any of the following endorsements to complete the Iowa Reading Research Center *Dyslexia Overview* module.

- Prekindergarten or elementary special education.
- Prekindergarten through grade three levels issued under chapter 272.
- Title I teachers and Title I paraprofessionals under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.
- English as a second language.

By the same date, area education agencies personnel who are issued a license, certificate, statement of recognition, or authorization (other than a coaching authorization) under chapter 272 from the BoEE shall complete the Iowa Reading Research Center *Dyslexia Overview* module.

The Iowa Reading Research Center Dyslexia Module was introduced to the field in April 2019. The 60 minute module includes videos, interactive content and quizzes to support persons in an overall understanding of dyslexia. The module is available for free to all Iowa residents and can be found on the Iowa Reading Research Center [eLearning page](#).

Review of enrollments show an increase during spring and summer of the 2019-2020 school year when educators were affected by COVID-19 closures. This data provides a baseline for this legislated training required by July 1, 2024.



## APPENDIX A

### NOTICE MEMO

**Date:** 9/11/2020

**To:** Board Members

**From:** Mike Cavin, Interim Executive Director

**RE:** Amend IAC 282 Chapter 13, Dyslexia Specialist

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2020 Iowa Acts, [Senate File 2356](#), directs the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners to collaborate with the Iowa Reading Research Center to create a dyslexia specialist endorsement.

The following rule change is proposed:

Adopt the following new subrule 282-13.28(36):

*282-13.28(36) Dyslexia Specialist.* K-12. The applicant must have met the requirements for the standard license and have completed at least three years of post-baccalaureate teaching experience in a K-12 setting.

- a. Authorization.* The holder of this endorsement is authorized to serve as a dyslexia specialist in kindergarten and grades one through twelve.
- b. Content.* Completion of 18 semester hours in dyslexia strategies to include the following:

- (1) Knowledge of dyslexia. The dyslexia specialist will have knowledge of dyslexia and:
  1. Understand the tenets of the International Dyslexia Association's definition of dyslexia including the neurobiological nature and cognitive-linguistic correlates.
  2. Identify distinguishing characteristics of dyslexia and commonly co-occurring disorders including dysgraphia, dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, expressive and/or receptive language disorders, etc.
  3. Recognize that dyslexia may present differently along a continuum of severity and impact depending upon age, grade, and compensatory factors.
  4. Understand federal and state laws that pertain to dyslexia, including use of the word dyslexia within school settings and documentation.
  5. Understand common misconceptions regarding characteristics of and interventions for dyslexia.

- (2) Psychology of language and reading. The dyslexia specialist will understand the highly complex processes by which children learn to speak, read, and write, including language acquisition, linguistics, and the structure of written language including phonological processing, phonics, orthography, morphology, syntax, and semantics as well as the relationship of these components to typical and atypical reading and writing development and instruction for students with dyslexia.

(3) Curriculum and instruction. The dyslexia specialist will use appropriate instructional approaches and materials as well as integrated, comprehensive, explicit, and systematic literacy instruction to support student learning in reading and writing including the following:

1. Instruction utilizing multisensory and multimodal strategies (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile), systematic and cumulative instruction, direct instruction, diagnostic and prescriptive teaching, as well as synthetic and analytic instruction.

2. Instructional approaches supported by the science of reading for the following areas: phonological processing, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, and writing.

3. Creation of a dyslexia-friendly learning environment (within or outside the regular classroom) utilizing evidence-based accommodations and modifications to meet the needs of students with dyslexia, including appropriate interventions, remediation, assistive technology, and classroom accommodations for students with dyslexia.

4. Use of data to determine effectiveness of the instruction and curriculum along with student responsiveness to it.

(4) Assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation. The dyslexia specialist will be confident using a variety of formal assessment tools and practices to evaluate students' reading and writing abilities in a variety of domains.

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the literature and research related to assessments and their purposes (including the strengths and limitations of assessments) and assessment tools for screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and measuring outcomes. Demonstrate an understanding of the signs and symptoms of reading difficulties, including but not limited to dyslexia; and also demonstrate an understanding of norms and student benchmarks.

2. Select, administer, and interpret assessments for specific purposes including screening students at risk for dyslexia and identifying students who display a profile of dyslexia.

- a. Understand the features of standardized norm-referenced assessments.

- b. Understand the importance of selecting reliable and valid assessments to evaluate typical and atypical reading development.

- c. Interpret various scores derived from standardized norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments.

3. Use assessment information to plan and evaluate instruction including appropriate interventions, remediation, assistive technology, and classroom accommodations for students with dyslexia and other difficulties. This will include the use of multiple data sources for analysis, instructional planning, examining the effectiveness of specific intervention practices, and examining students' responses to interventions.

4. Communicate assessment results and implications to a variety of audiences including staff, parents, and students.

5. Understand appropriate IEP goals and 504 plans for students who display characteristics of dyslexia.

(5) Practicum in dyslexia. The dyslexia specialist will participate in elementary and secondary practicum experiences with instructors who have experience with and are currently serving students who display characteristics of dyslexia. The cooperating teacher must be approved by the Iowa Reading Research Center. The practicum must include:

1. Supervised administration of norm-referenced literacy assessments

2. Practice composing a report of literacy assessment results that will include interpretation of the results and instructional recommendations
3. Supervised delivery of systematic, explicit, and multisensory intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia
4. Practice composing a report of students' response to intervention