

2025 Iowa Dyslexia Board Annual Report

Legislative Authority

Iowa Code section 256.32A was signed into law in 2020. This legislation states:

1. An Iowa Dyslexia Board is established to guide, facilitate, and oversee the implementation of dyslexia instruction in Iowa and make recommendations for continued improvement of such instruction.

The Iowa Dyslexia Board shall also submit recommendations as follows:

- a. To the department regarding the required and preferred qualifications for a dyslexia consultant position required in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 60.
- b. To the area education agencies regarding the required and preferred qualifications for dyslexia specialists required in accordance with section 273.2, subsection 11.
2. The Iowa Dyslexia Board shall consist of the following members: (as listed in Appendix A).
3. The term of membership is three years. The terms shall be staggered so that at least four of the terms end each year, but no member serving on the initial board shall serve less than one year. The governor shall determine the length of the initial terms of office.
4. The Iowa Dyslexia Board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly by November 15 annually.
5. This section will be repealed on July 1, 2027.

The Iowa Department of Education is submitting this report on behalf of the Iowa Dyslexia Board.

2024-25 Iowa Dyslexia Board Priorities

- Priority 1: Complete and communicate the Iowa Dyslexia Handbook for parents, families and teachers with a goal date of April 2025.
- Priority 2: Expand educator understanding and practices with the Science of Reading.
- Priority 3: Develop guidance, tools and resources for a Dyslexia Professional Development Plan to be used by the Iowa Department of Education (Department), area education agencies (AEAs) and school districts across Iowa.

Board Report Annual Summary

This section details the work of the Iowa Dyslexia Board (Board) for the 2024-25 academic year in response to Iowa Code 256.32A, which applies to the Board. The code section states, “The Iowa dyslexia board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly by November 15 annually.”

The Board took the following actions during the 2024-2025 academic year.

- Provided input and guidance for the Iowa Dyslexia Handbook. The Board approved the handbook at the February 2025 meeting. Training sessions followed.
- Heard a presentation from the Department’s Higher Education and Postsecondary Readiness Division related to their guidance for the Science of Reading. Additionally, the Board provided feedback for the Iowa Literacy Educator Preparation Workbook.
- Collaborated to support the development of the Dyslexia Professional Development Plan throughout the year. Updates regarding the plan were provided for the Board by the Department’s Dyslexia Consultant.
- Provided input into three main State of Iowa projects: 1) The Dyslexia Handbook, 2) The Iowa Literacy Educator Preparation Workbook and 3) The Comprehensive State Literacy Plan.

Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement

This section provides updates about the availability of the Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement at Iowa’s institutes of higher education during the 2024-25 academic year, in response to Iowa Code 272.2(22) 22 listed below.

By July 1, 2021, adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A, developed in collaboration with the Iowa Reading Research Center, establishing an advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement. The endorsement shall require a strong understanding of structured literacy instruction; the neurobiological nature, cognitive-linguistic correlates, developmental indicators, compensatory behaviors, potential psychological factors, and co-occurring disorders of dyslexia; demonstrated skill in administering informal and formal assessments related to dyslexia; demonstrated skill in delivery of explicit, systematic literacy intervention; demonstrated skill in developing and supporting services for students with characteristics of dyslexia including those who are eligible for services under chapter 256B or section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794, as amended; demonstrated skill in the design and implementation of accommodations and modifications; demonstrated competence in creating a dyslexia-friendly learning environment; and demonstrated skill in the use and integration of assistive technology. This endorsement shall, at a minimum, require three years of prior teaching experience and completion of a supervised practical experience.

Grand View University

- Graduated 36 dyslexia endorsees as of September 2025.
- Cohort three began in May 2025 with nine students enrolled.
- Hosted informational Q&A session for prospective applicants, with strong statewide interest reported.

University of Iowa

- Graduated 34 dyslexia endorsees as of May 2025.
- The model shifted from a cohort to individual plans (i.e., enrollees can start at multiple points of the year).
- The current enrollment for summer 2025 is three students.

Collaborative and Statewide Efforts

- Panels of dyslexia specialists from AEA's and Iowa school districts participated in board meetings via Zoom to share insights on student impact and local implementation.
- These panels provided clarification on roles and needs, with ongoing appreciation for their expertise and continued support.

Legislative/Policy Developments

- Board members followed legislation pertinent to dyslexia, such as Senate File 286.
- The Board also followed House File 890. This legislation provides a stipend to those receiving the dyslexia specialist endorsement using monies remaining from the National Board Certification.

Dyslexia Specialists in AEA's

This section provides updates regarding the employment of dyslexia specialists in every AEA in response to Iowa Code 273.2(11), listed below. This code section applies to AEA's' established services and programs.

Subject to an appropriation by the general assembly for such purpose, the area education agency board shall, by July 1, 2024, dedicate at least one full-time equivalent position to maintain a dyslexia specialist. The area education agency board may hire such a specialist or may provide appropriate training to qualify an existing employee as a specialist on dyslexia. The specialist shall provide technical guidance and assistance, including but not limited to professional development, strategies, and materials to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools relating to the identification of and instruction for students with characteristics of dyslexia. The specialist shall be highly trained in dyslexia and have a minimum of three years of field experience in screening, identifying, and treating dyslexia and related disorders. In the absence of an appropriation, each area education agency board is encouraged to employ a highly qualified dyslexia specialist.

The Board was notified of the following during the 2024-25 academic year:

- Eight of the nine AEA's employed a staff member who had completed the dyslexia specialist endorsement.
- AEA dyslexia specialists partnered with the Department on the development of the Dyslexia Professional Learning Plan.
- Dyslexia specialists from eight of the nine AEA's were present via Zoom during the February meeting to talk with the group about what they are seeing across Iowa. They also discussed their specific roles in their local AEA's. During the meeting the specialists also answered clarifying questions from the Board regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Educator Preparation Programs

This section of the report provides updates about the inclusion of dyslexia-specific information in educator preparation programs (EPPs). The Board received reports on Department initiatives with EPPs, including:

- The Iowa Literacy Educator Preparation Workbook designed to support the Department's Educator Quality team.
- Supports for EPPs, including the Literacy Workbook, the Foundations of Reading Test, the Science of Reading Summit for Educator Preparation held in June 2024, Iowa Code updates due to House Files 2545 and 2618 and the Annual Report Data on Science of Reading implementation. Department Education Program Consultant Lindsay Harrison facilitated a panel of higher-education instructors (Gwen Marra, Jen Stover, Staci Kinzebach and Stacey Brown), who shared how these resources are strengthening teacher education programs and improving instruction for pre-service teachers.
- Wanda Steuri, the Department's Science of Reading and dyslexia consultant, presented the keynote at the Iowa Association for Colleges of Teacher Education.

Required and Recommended Dyslexia Training

This section of the report provides updates about the Dyslexia Overview module training for AEAs and school districts, in response to Iowa Code sections 273.3(25) and Iowa Code 279.72 listed below.

Require, by July 1, 2024, any person employed by the area education agency who holds a license, certificate, statement of recognition, or authorization other than a coaching authorization, issued by the board of educational examiners under chapter 272, to complete the Iowa Reading Research Center dyslexia overview module. Such persons employed after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year of the employee's initial date of hire.

By July 1, 2024, the board of directors of a school district shall require all persons employed by the school district who hold a teaching license with an endorsement for prekindergarten, prekindergarten or elementary special education, or prekindergarten through grade three levels issued under chapter 272, all practitioners and paraprofessionals assigned as Title I teachers and Title I paraprofessionals under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, and all practitioners endorsed to teach English as a second language to complete the Iowa Reading Research Center dyslexia overview module. Such persons employed by the school district after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year of the employee's initial date of hire.

In response to this Iowa Code section, the following data was collected by the Iowa Reading Research Center.

Dyslexia Overview Training Module: Enrollment and Completion

Year (October to October)	Enrollment Count	Completion Count
2018-19	847	594
2019-20	3,947	3,570
2020-21	3,311	3,024
2021-22	3,550	3,332
2022-23	6,798	6,416
2023-24	18,326	17,316
2024-present	7,693	6,983

Department Initiatives

During the 2024-25 academic year, the Department successfully implemented numerous initiatives to increase student reading proficiency. These items are listed below.

- More than 5,500 teachers and administrators representing over 200 districts across Iowa registered for LETRS professional learning. Registration included PK-8 educators, administrators and higher-education instructors who teach courses about reading methods. LETRS teaches the skills needed to master the foundation and fundamentals of reading and writing instruction: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and written language.
- The Dyslexia Handbook was completed and posted on the Department's Dyslexia webpage. The Department's dyslexia consultant presented an overview of the handbook across Iowa, both in person and virtually.
- The Department presented on the adopted Iowa Academic Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects.
- The Department released the Comprehensive Statewide Literacy Plan to guide literacy instruction across Iowa.
- Decodable book packs were distributed to Iowa first-graders.
- Statewide, 243 school districts used the personalized reading assistant featuring Amira, created by EPS Learning.
- The Department offered uPAR to Iowa schools through the Access for All initiative.

Iowa Dyslexia Board Goals for the 2025-26 Academic Year

Relying on our collective dyslexia experience and expertise, the Board established the following priorities for the 2025-2026 academic year.

- Priority 1: Provide input and feedback for the Dyslexia Professional Development Plan.

- Priority 2: Communicate the Board's work across Iowa.
- Priority 3: Provide input and feedback related to evidence-based, explicit and systematic literacy instruction and assessment to a variety of stakeholder groups.

Appendix A: 2025-26 Iowa Dyslexia Board Members

Name and Organization*	Terms Serving	Legislated Representation
Kody Asmus Nevada CSD	First Term 12/1/25 - 6/30/28	School District Administrator
Bambi Boggs Ottumwa CSD	First Term 12/1/23 - 6/30/26	Decoding Dyslexia Iowa, Individual with Dyslexia
Kristen Craig Waukee CSD	Second Term 6/30/21 - 6/30/26	Elementary Literacy Teacher
Shawn Datchuk Iowa Reading Research Center	Standing Beginning 7/1/24	Iowa Reading Research Center
Katryn Daugherty Elk Horn Exira CSD	First Term 7/1/25 - 7/1/28	Reading Specialist
Michelle Geistkemper Northeast Iowa Community College	First Term 7/1/24 - 6/30/27	Iowa Institution of Higher Education
Katie Greving Decoding Dyslexia Iowa	Second Term 6/30/21 - 6/30/27	Decoding Dyslexia Iowa, Parent of a Child with Dyslexia
Megan Hunemuller Decoding Dyslexia Iowa	First Term 7/1/24 - 6/30/26	Decoding Dyslexia Iowa, Parent of a Child with Dyslexia
Nina Lorimor-Easley Independent Consultant	Third Term 7/1/25 - 6/30/28	Dyslexia Interventionist, Structured Literacy Practitioner
James Northwick Atlantic CSD	Second Term 8/30/22 - 6/30/27	School Administrator
Katy Severe Grand View University	First Term 7/1/24 - 6/30/27	Iowa Institution of Higher Education
Wanda Steuri Iowa Department of Education	Standing Beginning 7/1/23	Iowa Department of Education Dyslexia and Science of Reading Consultant
Tina Wahlert Iowa Department of Education	Standing Beginning 7/1/24	Designee of the Director of the Iowa Department of Education
Dr. Jill White Cedar Falls CSD	First Term 1/30/25 - 6/30/28	Special Education Administrator
Dr. Tammy Wilgenbusch University of Iowa Stead Family Dept. of Pediatrics	First Term 9/7/22 - 6/30/25	Iowa Psychologist, Speech Language Pathologist and Dyslexia Diagnostician
Shane Williams Mississippi Bend AEA	Second Term 6/30/21 - 6/30/27	Iowa Area Education Agency
Tom Wood Iowa Department of Education	Standing Beginning 7/1/24	Iowa Department of Education, Non-Voting Member
Lindsay Harrison Iowa Department of Education	Standing Beginning 7/1/24	Iowa Department of Education, Non-Voting Member

*CSD stands for "community school district."