Dyslexia Working Group

2021 Annual Report

Submitted to:
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By:
Dyslexia Working Group

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COLORADO
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Introduction

During the 2019 legislative session, the Colorado General Assembly called for the creation of a Dyslexia Working Group (DWG) through the passage of H.B. 19-1134. *See* section 22-20.5-103, C.R.S. Under the statute, the Commissioner of Education was required to convene a working group to improve the educational outcomes for student with dyslexia. The DWG has seven tasks outlined in statute:

1. Analyze current national and statewide data related to students identified as having dyslexia, including but not limited to identification rates and achievement rates;

2. Analyze the implementation and demonstrated effectiveness in other states of statewide legislation for dyslexia screening, educator training, and other dyslexia related laws;

3. Identify and recommend appropriate dyslexia screening tools and processes as well as comprehensive assessments that address the recognized challenges of dyslexia, including phonological processing, phonemic awareness, and decoding and encoding skills;

4. Identify and recommend a statewide plan for supporting students who are identified as having dyslexia, including specific intervention structures and their components, which must include evidence-based interventions, progress-monitoring systems, and data collection systems;

5. Identify and recommend components of dyslexia awareness training for Colorado educators, including the content, target audience, time frame for training, and projected cost;

6. Identify and recommend educator training for in-state approved programs of preparation for teacher and alternative teacher programs and recommended training for current educators, based on effective practice in other states, as well as recommendation from state and national organizations focusing on literacy. The recommendations concerning educator training may include the content, target audience, time frame for training, and projected cost; and,

7. Provide recommendations to CDE concerning the design and implementation of the pilot program.

In addition, the Dyslexia Working Group must, "analyze and integrate, as appropriate, the work and recommendations of other previous and ongoing state initiative related to improving the identification and support of students who have dyslexia" 22-20.5-103(3), C.R.S.

Membership and Facilitation

Members of the Dyslexia Working Group

The authorizing legislation for the DWG required the group to include the following members:

- A parent of a child identified with dyslexia;
- A parent of a child identified with dyslexia and a disability;
- A school district literacy specialist;
- A school district director of special education;
- A state or national literacy expert;
- A state or national dyslexia expert;
- Two elementary grade teachers, one of whom teaches in a rural or small rural school district;
- A principal of an elementary school in rural school district or an employee of a BOCES who has expertise as a literacy specialist;
- A faculty member of an IHE who teaches in an approved educator preparation program for elementary grade teachers; and

- A member of the local chapter of the international dyslexia association.

In 2019, CDE solicited nominations and applications for the DWG to determine appointment recommendations for the Commissioner of Education. CDE recommended applicants to the Commissioner for appointment based on the quality of their application packet and their ability to serve through the duration of the working group. At the direction of the Commissioner, CDE made it a priority to include members who were representative from across the state, including small rural and rural districts, urban and suburban districts. Table 1 shows the membership of the DWG.

TABLE 1: Dyslexia Working Group Membership by Region and Role

Member	Region	Role
John Alexander	Out of State	A state or national literacy expert
Jamie Brackney	Pikes Peak	A parent of a child who is identified as having dyslexia and a disability
Alex Christy	Metro Area	Two elementary grade teachers, one of whom teaches in a rural school district or a small rural school district
Kathleen Collins	Northwest	A principal who is employed at an elementary school in a rural school district or an employee of a board of cooperative services who has expertise as a literacy specialist
Tamara Durbin	Northeast	A school district director of special education
Amanda Harris	West Central	Two elementary grade teachers, one of whom teaches in a rural school district or a small rural school district
Karin Johnson	Metro	A parent of a child who is identified as having dyslexia and a disability
Andrea Kamper	Northwest	A parent of a child who is identified as having dyslexia
Karen Leopold	Metro Area	A member of the local chapter of an international dyslexia association
Kathy McCall	North Central	A school district literacy specialist
Laura Santerre-Lemmon	Metro Area	A state or national dyslexia expert
Jennifer Urbach	North Central	A faculty member of an institution of higher education who teaches in an approved educator preparation program for elementary grade teachers

Members serve two-year terms and may opt to serve a second term. At the end of the first two-year term, the following positions were open:

- A parent of a child who is identified as having dyslexia
- An elementary teacher who teaches in a non-rural or small rural school district
- A principal who is employed at an elementary school in a rural school district or an employee of a board of cooperative services who has expertise as a literacy specialist
- A member of the local chapter of an international dyslexia association
- A state or national literacy expert

CDE conducted an application process in the spring of 2021 to fill the positions, and at the time of the publication of this report, the application review process was underway.

Facilitation of the Working Group

For the 2019-20 school year, the department scheduled the DWG meetings for the following dates:

- September 20, 2019
- October 17, 2019
- December 6, 2019
- January 8, 2020
- March 12, 2020
- April 8, 2020
- May 22, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the DWG conducted their work through online virtual meetings. All meetings of the DWG were open to the public; however, only working group members have an active role in the meeting. CDE has developed a DWG webpage (http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/codyslexiaworkgroup) where all meeting dates, locations, and notes are posted for transparency.

The DWG has formed three teams that focus on the different components of the DWG's charge. The teams for the 2020-21 school year were (1) indicators of dyslexia, (2) screening screening tools and processes, and (3) dyslexia awareness training for Colorado educators. Team leads met with the facilitator to determine the agenda for the small working groups and for the DWG virtual meetings.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

The DWG recommends that CDE share the DWG recommendations and resources with Colorado agencies and embed the recommendations and resources into the CDE initiatives to include, at a minimum, the following:

Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado Department of Education Dyslexia Website and Handbook
- Colorado Educator Licensing, Preparation, and Licensing Unit
- Colorado Preschool Program
- Colorado READ Act
- Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant Program
- Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant (CLSD)
- Early Literacy Grant
- Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) including Child Find
- Growing Readers Together (GRT) Early Literacy Librarian Team
- Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Preschool Special Education
- Positive Behavior Support and Intervention (PBIS)
- RANDA, Educator Evaluation, embed Science of Reading under Quality 1

College and Teacher Preparation Programs
- Colorado Alternative Teacher Education Programs
- Colorado Community College System (CCCS)
- Colorado Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)

- Colorado College and University Teacher Preparation Programs
- CEEDAR Module of Dyslexia
- Colorado School Psychology Preparation Programs
- Colorado Speech Language Pathology Preparation Programs

Colorado Governmental Agencies
- Colorado Department of Corrections
- Colorado Juvenile Detention Centers
- Colorado Department of Health and Human Services

Educator Training Opportunities
- Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE)
- Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB)
- Colorado BOCES Association (CBA)
- Colorado Branch of the Reading League
- Colorado Consortium of Special Education Directors
- Colorado Education Association (CEA)
- Colorado Nonprofits
- Institutes of Higher Education
- Rocky Mountain Branch of the International Dyslexia Association

Embedding the dyslexia work into existing structures will lead to a higher level of sustainability and should include cross training and sharing of resources within CDE.

Recommendation #2

The DWG recommends that CDE embed the DWG's Potential Indicators of Dyslexia by Grade Level (see Appendix A) within existing Colorado and CDE initiatives identified in Recommendation #1 and share with the additional groups the DWG identified (college and teacher preparation programs, Colorado government agencies, and educator training opportunities). The purpose of the Indicators is to inform teachers in dyslexia screening and/or evaluation processes.

Recommendation #3

The DWG recommends that CDE revise the current CDE READ Act interim assessment review rubric by including the dyslexia indicators by the end of October 2021 and share information with the groups the DWG identified (i.e., CDE, college and teacher preparation programs, Colorado government agencies, and educator training opportunities).

Recommendation #4

The DWG recommends CDE use the revised rubric to review current READ Act interim assessments by July 2022 and share that information with the groups the DWG identified (i.e., CDE, college and teacher preparation programs, Colorado government agencies, and educator training opportunities). Following the review, the DWG recommends that CDE include a chart that indicates which subtests of approved interim measures assess specific dyslexia indicators.

Next Steps for the Dyslexia Working Group

For the 2021-22 school year, the DWG recommends that it continue to meet virtually through small working groups and with the entire DWG until face-to-face meetings are initiated by CDE. The focus for the DWG during the 2021-22 school year will be to:

- Advance initial and substantial recommendations to final recommendations to continue to meet its charge.

- Provide input and feedback to CDE on Dyslexia Pilot Program.

- Continue the small working group work related to dyslexia awareness training recommendations.

- Begin the small working group focused on educator preparation program recommendations.

To support the progress of the DWG, the team leads will continue to meet with the DWG facilitator in between whole group meetings and will meet with University of Oregon Dyslexia Pilot Project team to share resources and identify connections.

Appendices

Appendix A

Potential Indicators of Dyslexia by Grade

Use this checklist to examine areas of struggle with students and children. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. Any indicators from current and previous grades can help inform decision making.

Preschool

Language

- ❏ Language delay (often earliest indicator)

- ❏ Trouble learning common nursery rhymes

- ❏ Mispronounced words; persistent baby talk

- ❏ Difficulty in learning/remembering names of letters/numbers

- ❏ Difficulty learning/remembering days of the week, numbers, or other sequences

Social/Emotional

- ❏ Expresses dislike for reading and other academic tasks

- ❏ Exhibits anxiety or frustration

- ❏ Avoidance behaviors

Pre-Reading/Early Literacy

- ❏ Failure to know letters in own name

- ❏ Difficulty learning sound letter correspondences

- ❏ Lack of interest/appreciation/recognition of rhymes and rhyming patterns (cat, bat, rat)

Other

- ❏ Confuses left and right/dominant hand delay

- ❏ Difficulty remembering spoken directions

- ❏ Appears distracted, unfocused

Kindergarten-1st Grade

Are there Previous Grade Indicators? ❏ Yes ❏ No (Check those, too)

Language

- ❏ Confuses names or pronunciations of letters with similar sounds (p/b, z/s, v/f, d/t)

- ❏ Demonstrates poor memory for classmates' names

- ❏ Difficulty retrieving specific words

- ❏ Doesn't easily recognize that words begin with the same sound

Social/Emotional

- ❏ Complaints about reading or spelling, avoidance, misbehavior when time to read

- ❏ Lack of motivation about school or learning

- ❏ Lack of confidence in learning

- ❏ Negative self-image compared to grade-level peers

Pre-Reading/Early Literacy

- ❏ Failure to understand that words come apart

  (batboy > bat boy)

- ❏ Inability to associate letters with sounds (learning sound letter correspondences)

- ❏ Reading errors show no connection to sounds of letters (big read as goat)

- ❏ Inability to read or sound out common one-syllable words (cat, map, nap)

Other

- ❏ History of reading problems with parents or siblings

- ❏ Trouble easily clapping hands to rhythm of a song

2nd Grade - 6th Grade

Are there Previous Grade Indicators? ❏ Yes ❏ No (Check those, too)

Reading

❏ Relies on pictures or memorization when reading

❏ Has trouble reading/spelling sounds in sequential order

❏ Confuses similar looking letters and words (b/d, p/q, was/saw)

❏ Difficulty reading/sounding out multisyllabic words

❏ Lack of strategy in decoding

❏ Slow progress in reading

❏ Trouble reading unknown words

❏ Frequent guessing

❏ Inability for reading function words (that, at, in)

❏ Omits parts of words when reading

❏ Oral reading full of substitutions, omissions, mispronunciations

❏ Choppy, labored, word by word reading

❏ Lacks inflection, prosody

Language

❏ Mispronunciation of long words, or fracturing of words (cinnamon for synonym)

❏ Difficulty breaking spoken words apart into sounds or syllables

❏ Speech is not fluent

❏ Use of imprecise language (stuff, things)

❏ Difficulty retrieving correct word/confusing words that sound alike (lotion/ocean, tornado/volcano)

❏ Trouble remembering dates, names, telephone numbers, lists, rote memorization

❏ Difficulty remembering isolated pieces of verbal information

❏ Need time for oral response or inability to provide quick verbal response

❏ May have much to say, but provides little specific detail

❏ Lacks interest in books and shared reading activities

❏ Fails to understand age-appropriate stories

❏ Keeping up with comprehension on longer reading assignments

❏ Difficulty making inferences, predicting outcomes, drawing conclusions

Writing

❏ Spells words incorrectly, even in high frequency words (was, then, were)

❏ Spells words phonetically

❏ Difficulty proofing written work

❏ Poor/Messy handwriting

Social/Emotional

❏ Complaints about reading or spelling, avoidance, misbehavior when time to read

❏ Lowered self-esteem

❏ Anxiety

❏ Lack of motivation about school or learning

❏ Lack of confidence in learning

❏ Negative self-image compared to grade-level peers

Other

❏ History of reading problems with parents or siblings

❏ Suffers writing/reading/task fatigue

❏ Poor performance on multiple choice tests

❏ Inability to complete tests on time

❏ Trouble reading word problems (math)

❏ Difficulty memorizing multiplication tables

❏ Tendency to solve math problems in head vs. on paper

❏ Difficulty expressing or indicating when he/she does not understand

❏ Requests multiple repetitions of instructions/directions with little improvement in comprehension

❏ Inability to complete homework/excessive homework

❏ Unorganized, difficulty keeping track of assignments, work

6th Grade and On

Are there Previous Grade Indicators? ❑ Yes ❑ No (Check those, too)

Reading

❑ Rarely reads for pleasure

❑ Avoids reading aloud

❑ Hard time making inferences and/or understanding sarcasm

Writing

❑ Spells words incorrectly, even in high frequency words (was, then, were)

❑ Spells words phonetically

❑ Avoids writing, handwritten responses are brief and simplistic

❑ Word processing compositions are disorganized or lack cohesion

Language

❑ Pauses or hesitates, uses "um", "like" repeatedly

❑ Not fluent or anxious when speaking

❑ Often pronounces names incorrectly, avoids vocabulary words that might be mispronounced

❑ Talks in short sentences

❑ Relates stories or events in a disorganized or incomplete manner

❑ Struggles when put on spot in conversation or writing

❑ Oral vocabulary smaller than listening vocabulary

❑ Difficulty remembering names of people, places

❑ Confuses similar sounding names

Social/Emotional

❑ Complaints about reading or spelling, avoidance, misbehavior when time to read

❑ Lowered self-esteem

❑ Anxiety

❑ Lack of motivation about school or learning

❑ Lack of confidence in learning

❑ Negative self-image compared to grade-level peers

Other

❑ Has to study more than peers

❑ Difficulty with directionality, walking in building or driving

❑ Difficulty learning foreign language or reading music

❑ History of reading or foreign language problems with family members

References

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