

Dyslexia Laws in the USA: An Update

by Martha Youman and Nancy Mather

“Dyslexia is Real” is the title of Tennessee’s House Bill 1735, passed on January 23, 2014. This bill follows a long history of legislative initiatives that have been designed to provide various legal protections for individuals with dyslexia. The path has not been easy, but today early childhood centers, K–12 schools, universities, and the workplace in a number of proactive states provide guidelines for the identification and treatment of dyslexia. This article summarizes the current status of dyslexia laws across the country, as presented in Table 1, and provides guidelines for the initiation of change in states that have lagged behind. It is an update to our article “Dyslexia Laws in the USA,” published in the *Annals of Dyslexia* (Youman & Mather, 2013).

As of December of 2015, 28 states had statewide dyslexia laws, 6 states had initiatives or resolutions related to dyslexia, and 14 states had handbooks or resource guides to inform parents and educators about proper procedures for students in public and private educational settings. The laws, particularly those being passed in the last five years, focus primarily upon a) dyslexia awareness, b) pilot programs for screening and intervention, c) teacher training, d) provision of interventions and accommodations, and e) overall rights for individuals with dyslexia.

Dyslexia Awareness

A number of states have spearheaded the recognition of dyslexia as a unique disorder with prevalence rates varying from 5% to 20% among researchers and national and international

organizations. This effort to recognize dyslexia is crucial because, unfortunately, the terminology used to describe reading disorders varies across states and settings. Individuals with dyslexia who are diagnosed in school settings fall under the category of “Specific Learning Disability (SLD),” a category within the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004). Individuals with dyslexia diagnosed in clinical settings fall under the category of “Specific Learning Disorder with Impairment in Reading” as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Both diagnoses include dyslexia as a descriptive term within their definitions, but within school settings, the actual term *dyslexia* is rarely used in psychological and diagnostic reports. Thus, most parents of children who receive special education services at school under the category of SLD in reading have not been informed that their child has dyslexia. Similarly, if a clinical diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorder with Impairment in Reading is made in a clinical setting with DSM-5, parents and teachers may not necessarily understand that this label encompasses dyslexia. With the hopes of separating dyslexia from a large umbrella of learning disorders, the states of Alabama, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas, have passed legislation for the recognition of a dyslexia day, week, or month. On such dates, schools and mental health practitioners are encouraged to educate others about the common characteristics of dyslexia, as well as the appropriate accommodations and interventions.

Pilot Programs for Screening and Intervention

Taking existing models for screening and intervention established in states such as Texas, a large number of states have followed suit by passing legislation to fund pilot programs for dyslexia assessment and intervention. For screening and assessment, for example, the state of Pennsylvania passed HB 198 (2013), which established a screening pilot program involving all students enrolled in full-day kindergarten in three different school districts for a period of three years. Assessment areas within the screening process include measures of phonological awareness and rapid naming. The ultimate goal of early assessment is to identify students at risk for reading failure and provide early interventions that will help students succeed in later grades.

Continued on page 16

Dyslexia Legislation and Resources in the United States

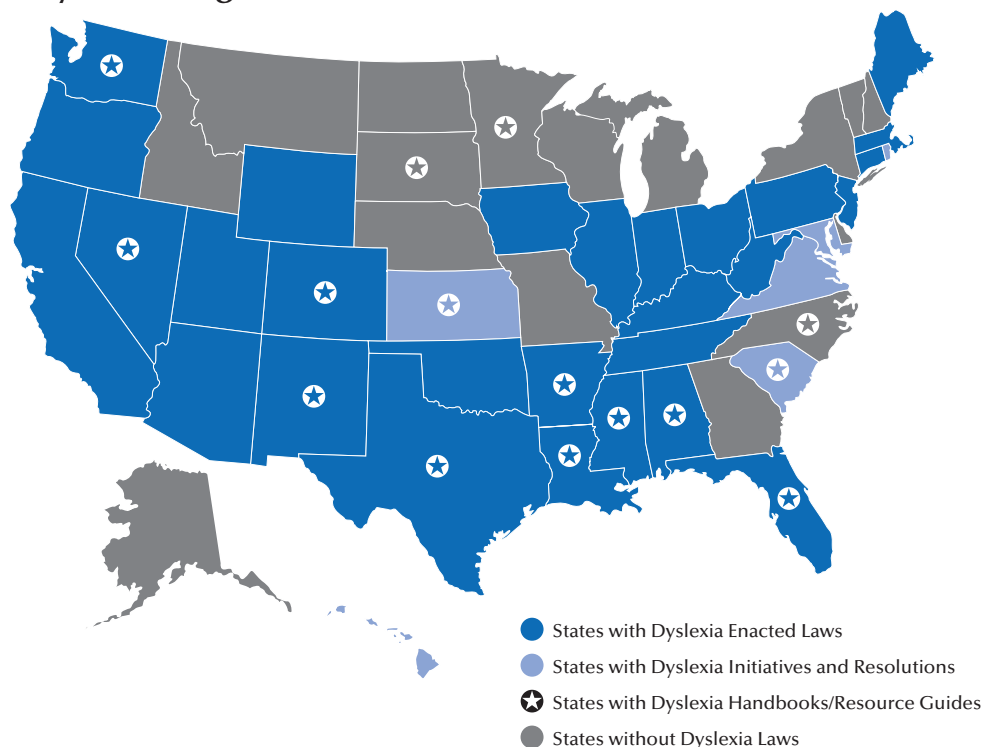


TABLE 1. U.S. Dyslexia Laws, Proposed Bills, Resolutions, Guidebooks, and Other Resources

Although the information in this table was updated in December 2015, passing dyslexia legislation is a complicated, dynamic process. If you have a question about legislation in your state, check with your state legislature.

STATE	LAW/PURPOSE	STATUS	RESOURCE GUIDES AND HANDBOOKS	OTHER INITIATIVES AND RESOLUTIONS
AK	None	None	None	None
AL	*Alabama Board of Education made changes directly to the Alabama Administrative Code without passing legislation (2015). Students screened for dyslexia and then given appropriate intervention, access to assistive technology, and accommodations in the general school population through the Response-to-Intervention (RTI) process, without the need for special education certification.	In AL Law	Alabama Dyslexia Resource Guide	Dyslexia Month
	*SB 314 (2015): Schools required to identify and educate students with dyslexia.	Failed		
AR	SB 749 (2011): Proposes K–12 screening, training, and intervention.	Failed	Dyslexia Resource Guide	None
	*SB 33 (2013): To ensure that children with dyslexia have their needs met by the public school system. Defines dyslexia and related disorders; requires screening and intervention.	Passed		
	*SB 788 (2015): Screening for dyslexia.	Passed		
AZ	*SB 1461 (2015): Provides definition of dyslexia, allows teachers to use dyslexia training toward continuing education credits, prevents grade retention of students with dyslexia based on reading scores.	Passed	None	None
CA	*AB1369 (2015): Requires update to the criteria for identifying children with dyslexia for special education services by adding “phonological processing” to the identification process for special education eligibility. Provides guidelines to be developed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California Department of Education to assist teachers, parents, and professionals in identifying, assessing and improving educational services for students with dyslexia.	Passed	None	None
	Education Code Section 56333-56338: Students with dyslexia who do not qualify for SLD receive services in the classroom.	In CA Law		
	Education Code Section 56240-56245: Encourages education of teachers.	In CA Law		
	Family Code Section 8733: Adoption agencies to report to adoptive parents if biological parents had disabilities, including dyslexia.	In CA Law		
	Education Code Section 52853: Schools to develop programs for training in dyslexia intervention.	In CA Law		
	Education Code Section 44227.7: Higher education encouraged to provide teacher training for dyslexia and related disorders.	In CA Law		
CO	SB 245 (2011): Provides funds for in-school dyslexia training, identification, and higher education programs to train on dyslexia.	Passed	SLD Topic Brief: Dyslexia and SLD	MTSS Guidance Document
CT	HB 115 (2000): Books on tape for classrooms with students with dyslexia.	Passed	None	None
	*SB 1054 (2015): State Department of Education support for students with dyslexia identification, intervention, and teacher training.	Passed		
DE	None	None	None	None
FL	HB 1249 (2011): Waives certain requirements for high school diploma for students with disabilities, including dyslexia.	Failed	FCRR Technical Report #8	None
	HB 1329 (2011): Scholarships for students with disabilities, including dyslexia.	Passed		
	*SB 472 (2015): Defines dyslexia; Department of Education pilot.	Passed		
GA	SB 69 “ABC Initiative” (2001): Determine risk for dyslexia in K–2.	Failed	None	None
HI	SB 2217 (2010): Promotes awareness of dyslexia, assessment and identification, remedial curriculum, progress monitoring, interventions, training, and technical assistance.	Failed	None	Establish work group to develop plan to improve awareness and strengthen support for persons with dyslexia; Task Force
	*HB 675 (2013): Promotes awareness of the definition and characteristics of dyslexia and other similar learning disorders. Requires DOE to provide professional development to teachers relating to students with dyslexia. Requires the Hawaii teachers standards board to establish licensure standards for reading specialists.	Failed		

*Laws with an asterisk are new additions to our 2012 review (Youman & Mather, 2013).

Dyslexia Laws in the USA: An Update

STATE	LAW/PURPOSE	STATUS	RESOURCE GUIDES AND HANDBOOKS	OTHER INITIATIVES AND RESOLUTIONS
IA	*SF 2319 (2014): An Act relating to improving student literacy skills, including dyslexia, and providing teacher assistance.	Passed	None	None
ID	None	None	None	None
IL	HB 5344 (2010): School Recordings for students who are blind or have dyslexia.	Failed	None	Dyslexia Week; Dyslexia Month; Recognized artist Willard Wigman
	HB 4084 (2011): Pilot Project for early screening and intervention.	Failed		
	*HB 2700 (2013): requires the State Board of Education to distribute to each school board information on screening instruments available to identify students who exhibit potential indicators of dyslexia and other reading disabilities.	Failed		
	*HB 3700 (2014): Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules that incorporate an international definition of dyslexia into the special education provisions of the Illinois Administrative Code.	Passed		
IN	*HB 1108 (2015): Dyslexia. Defines “dyslexia.” Requires teacher training programs to prepare teachers to recognize that a student who is not progressing at a normal rate related to reading may need to be referred to the school's multidisciplinary team to determine the student's special learning needs, including learning needs related to dyslexia. Provides that if an education service center offers in-service training or other teacher training programs, the education service center may offer courses for teachers on dyslexia characteristics and appropriate interventions.	Passed	None	None
KS	SB 75 (2011): Screening, instruction, intervention, and development of pilot programs.	Failed	Dyslexia: What Families Need to Know	Resolution to review early screening; Review level and pace of implementation of best practices of instruction; Review teacher preparation courses; Submit a progress report by December 31, 2009
	SB 410 (2012): Schools to implement “best practices” of instruction for students with dyslexia.	Failed		
	*SB 44 (2014): Relates to the identification and instruction of pupils with dyslexia. The bill requires Kansas schools to accept the diagnosis of dyslexia from any licensed psychologist, physician, or psychiatrist and to provide services for all children with a dyslexia diagnosis.	Failed		
KY	SB 278 (2000): Dyslexia resource center.	Failed	None	None
	HB 69 (2012): Early Education Assessment and Intervention; create a new section of KRS Chapter 158 to define “aphasia,” “dyscalculia,” “dysgraphia,” “dyslexia,” “phonemic awareness,” and “scientifically based research”; require the Kentucky Board of Education to promulgate administrative regulations to implement district-wide use of K–3 response-to-intervention system in reading.	In KY Law		
LA	R.S. 17:7(11): Identification and services within the general education program for students demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia; assessment, intervention, and accommodations.	In LA Law	Part XXXV. Regulations and Guidelines for Implementation of the Louisiana Law for the Education of Dyslexic Students	Resolutions to study dyslexia and review/study clarity of board regulations and guidelines relative to the education of students with dyslexia and the effectiveness of procedures for monitoring compliance of public schools and school districts

*Laws with an asterisk are new additions to our 2012 review (Youman & Mather, 2013).

STATE	LAW/PURPOSE	STATUS	RESOURCE GUIDES AND HANDBOOKS	OTHER INITIATIVES AND RESOLUTIONS
MA	Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 15A, §30, 1983: Waiver of college exams for students with dyslexia.	In MA Law	None	None
	*HB 1944/3932 (2011): High School graduation – Provides that a student with learning disabilities who fails to satisfy the requirements of the competency determination may nonetheless receive a high school diploma if specified requirements are met.	Failed		
	HB 3680 (2011): Requires teachers to get training in disorders including dyslexia.	In MA Law		
	*HB 463/SB 312 (2015): Definition of dyslexia and screening.	Pending		
MD	*HB 1252 (2012): Testing and Services – Establishes a pilot program for testing for dyslexia and related learning disorders. Requires county boards to provide specified services to students with dyslexia.	Failed	None	Dyslexia Task Force established
ME	*LD 231 (2015): Defines dyslexia, requires dyslexia screening in children in grades K–2, and creates dyslexia consultants.	Passed	None	None
MI	None	None	None	None
MN	None	None	Navigating the School System Guidebook, Minnesota Department of Education	None
MO	*SB 172 (2015): Department of Education to employ dyslexia specialists.	Failed	None	None
	*HB 921 (2015): Creates legislative task force on dyslexia.	Failed		
	*HB 1255 (2015): Requires public schools to screen for dyslexia.	Failed		
MS	Amendment to 37-23-15, Mississippi Code of 1972 (1997): Pilot programs for testing certain students for dyslexia.	Passed	Mississippi Dyslexia Handbook	Resolution to recognize significant educational implications of dyslexia and to take action to provide necessary services
	SB 2171 (2011): Dyslexia awareness license tag.	Failed		
	*HB 672 (2012): Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship. Increases the maximum number of master's candidate students eligible for a scholarship under the Dyslexia Education Scholarship Program from 10 to 20.	Passed		
	*HB 1031 (2012): Allows students enrolled in schools that do not have dyslexia programs to transfer to a different school or district.	Passed		
	*HB 1032 (2012): Dyslexia Scholarships for Teachers – A bill to establish the Mississippi Dyslexia Education Scholarship Program for the purpose of identifying and recruiting qualified university and college students from the state for schooling in education with a focus on dyslexia instruction.	Passed		
	HB 1494 (2012): Funds for educator training, including dyslexia.	Passed		
MT	None	None	None	None
NC	None	None	Dyslexia Report and Dyslexia Topic Brief	None
ND	None	None	None	None
NE	None	None	None	None
NH	None	None	None	None
NJ	AB 811 (2010): Provides for instruction in dyslexia awareness and methods of teaching students with dyslexia for candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers and paraprofessionals.	Failed	None	Dyslexia Professional Development Modules; Reading Disabilities Task Force
	*A 3606/S2441 (2013): Requires Department of Education to provide professional development opportunities related to reading disabilities; mandates K–3 and reading and special education teachers annually complete two hours of professional development related to reading disabilities.	Passed		

*Laws with an asterisk are new additions to our 2012 review (Youman & Mather, 2013).

Dyslexia Laws in the USA: An Update

STATE	LAW/PURPOSE	STATUS	RESOURCE GUIDES AND HANDBOOKS	OTHER INITIATIVES AND RESOLUTIONS
NJ cont.	*S 2439/A 3608 (2013): Directs State Board of Education to incorporate the International Dyslexia Association's definition of dyslexia into special education regulations. Defines dyslexia as "a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin."	Passed		Resolution urging State Board of Education to develop endorsement to the instructional certificate for teachers of students with dyslexia and to establish eligibility and training requirements for the endorsement
	*A 3605/S 2442 (2013): Requires all public school kindergarten students to be screened for dyslexia and other reading disabilities.	Passed		
NM	HB 230 (2010): Interventions for students with signs of dyslexia required.	Passed	New Mexico Dyslexia Professional Development Modules	None
NV	Section 1 – Chapter 388 of NRS (1984): Schools districts to establish reading programs.	In NV Law	Study of Dyslexia and Other Learning Disabilities	None
	*AB 341 (2015): Testing for dyslexia.	Passed		
NY	*A 09940 (2012): Dyslexia Teacher Certification – An act to amend the education law, in relation to the certification or training of teachers, administrators, and instructors in the area of dyslexia and related disorders.	Failed	None	None
OH	HB 96 (2011): Pilot Program for dyslexia screening.	Passed	None	Dyslexia Month; Dyslexia Task Force
	HB 157 (2011): Educational service centers to provide teacher professional development on dyslexia; "dyslexia specialist" to provide training for K–4 teachers in school districts and other public schools.	Passed		
OK	HB 1997 (2011): Dyslexia screening.	Failed	None	None
	HB 3073/SB 1565 (2012): Dyslexia training pilot program.	Passed		
	HB 3090 (2012): Scholarships for students with disabilities.	Passed		
	HB 1542 (2015): Screening and teacher training for students with dyslexia.	Failed		
OR	*SB 612 (2015): Focuses on teacher training, dyslexia screening, and the creation of dyslexia specialists.	Passed	None	None
	*HB 2412 (2015): Requires that educator preparation programs for early childhood, elementary, and special education include instruction on dyslexia.	Passed		
PA	HB 322 (1985–1986): Waives college entrance exams.	In PA Law	None	Dyslexia Month; Dyslexia Week
	*HB 198 (2013): Screening Pilot Program – Defines dyslexia and establishes pilot program to provide early screening and intervention services for children with risk factors for dyslexia, such as low phonemic awareness.	Passed		
RI	HB 7541 (2012): Rhode Island Dyslexia Act, defines dyslexia and the research-based interventions appropriate for students with dyslexia.	Failed	None	Dyslexia Commission
SC	None	None	Technical Assistance Guide for Dyslexia	Dyslexia Task Force
SD	None	None	The Dyslexia Handbook for Teachers and Parents in South Dakota	None

*Laws with an asterisk are new additions to our 2012 review (Youman & Mather, 2013).

STATE	LAW/PURPOSE	STATUS	RESOURCE GUIDES AND HANDBOOKS	OTHER INITIATIVES AND RESOLUTIONS
TN	*HB 1735/SB 2002 (2014): "Dyslexia is Real" defines "dyslexia" as a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin and is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. Requires regular teacher in-service training to formally address dyslexia and similar reading disorders and provide effective instruction for students with dyslexia using appropriate scientific research and brain-based multisensory intervention methods and strategies.	Passed	None	None
TX	SB 866 (2011): Education of public school students with dyslexia, the education and training of educators who teach students with dyslexia, and the assessment of students with dyslexia attending an institution of higher education.	Passed	Texas Dyslexia Handbook	Dyslexia Day
	SB 867 (2011): Adult testing accommodations for a person with dyslexia taking a licensing examination administered by a state agency.	Passed		
	Texas Education Code (TEC) § 38.003: Screening and treatment.	In TX Law		
	Texas Education Code §28.006: Diagnose reading in K–2.	In TX Law		
	Texas Education Code §7.028(b): Compliance with dyslexia law.	In TX Law		
	Texas Administrative Code §74.28: Districts to provide procedures for identification; adherence to dyslexia handbook; purchase program for students with dyslexia.	In TX Law		
	Texas Occupations Code Chapter 403: Licensed dyslexia practitioners and therapists.	In TX Law		
	*HB 1264 (2015): New PEIMS code to identify and track students with dyslexia.	Passed		
*HB 2683/SB 1971 (2015): Licensing of dyslexia practitioners.	Failed			
UT	*HB 171 (2013): Screening – Requires reading assessments and screening for learning difficulties in public schools. This Bill defines terms; requires the State Board of Education to develop a list of indicators that indicate whether a student may be at risk for a reading difficulty or dyslexia.	Failed	None	None
	*SB 117 (2015): Allows up to five school districts or charter schools to receive \$30,000 per school to invest in training and materials for dyslexia.	Passed		
VA	HB 558 (2010): Early reading intervention services for students in grades K–3 who demonstrate deficiencies.	Failed	None	Resolution to study dyslexia screening
VT	None	None	None	None
WA	SB 6016 (2009–2010): Funds pilot projects to develop educator training programs and develop a handbook.	Passed	Washington State Dyslexia Resource Guide	None
	SB 6318 (2011–2012): Revise teacher and principal evaluation through professional development and training, dyslexia included.	Failed		
	SB 662/SB 111 (2012/2013): Dyslexia screening and intervention.	Failed		
WI	AB 584 (2009–2010): Screening deficits in phonemic awareness or rapid naming.	Failed	None	None
WV	SB 662 (2012): Pilot project for dyslexia screening and institutions of higher education to include coursework on dyslexia.	Failed	None	None
	*SB 111 (2013): A bill to amend the Code of West Virginia by adding a new section defining "dyslexia"; establishing a dyslexia screening and intervention pilot project; and establishing a dyslexia teacher training pilot program.	Failed		
	*HB 4608 (2014): Defines dyslexia and dyscalculia.	Passed		
WY	SB 39 (2012): Dyslexia screening and intervention as early as possible in K–3.	Passed	None	None
	*SF 52 (2012): Screening and Response – An act relating to reading assessment and intervention; requiring assessment and early intervention for dyslexia and other reading difficulties; requiring a report; and providing for an effective date.	Passed		

*Laws with an asterisk are new additions to our 2012 review (Youman & Mather, 2013).

One example of a pilot program that targets early intervention was developed by the state of Washington. Under the Lorraine Wojahn Dyslexia Pilot Reading Program, the state provided funds to five schools to test the effectiveness of intervention programs for students with dyslexia. In the project report, Young (2011) reported an increase from 17% to 40% passing grades on the reading portion of Washington State exams for students who participated in the intervention programs. Similar projects that incorporate both screening and interventions have been implemented in recent years in Illinois (2014), Kansas (2011), Louisiana (2010), Maryland (2012), Ohio (2012), Virginia (2010), and West Virginia (2012).

Teacher Training

To learn to read and spell, children with dyslexia require intensive instruction by highly trained teachers (Moats, 2009). A number of states have recognized the importance of teacher training and have implemented training models that specifically teach reading intervention programs effective for students with dyslexia. The terms *dyslexia specialist* and *dyslexia therapist* are becoming common language in school districts and university training programs across the country. Training has come as result of funding for pilot programs for teacher training and the establishment of standards for professionals working with students with dyslexia. The state of Texas, for example, provides opportunities for general education teachers and reading specialists to obtain a Dyslexia Practitioner License, which requires a bachelor's degree, 45 hours of coursework in Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) education, and 60 hours of supervised clinical experience in MSL instruction.

Until recently, responsibility for the cost of teacher training programs for dyslexia therapists and specialists has remained in the hands of educators who seek these credentials. A number of states, however, have passed legislation that provides funds in the form of scholarships and grants as incentives for teachers to pursue additional training. Under the Dyslexia Education Scholarship Program (HB 672; 2013), for example, the state of Mississippi awards a total of 20 yearly scholarships to teachers who wish to enroll in a dyslexia therapist program. Similarly, Mississippi HB 1032 (2012) provides scholarships to college students from the state who will participate in educational programs that have a focus on dyslexia instruction.

Provision of Interventions and Accommodations

The intervention strategies and programs that are empirically proven to work for students with dyslexia involve targeted instruction in areas such as phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency, and vocabulary (National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Torgesen, Foorman, & Wagner, 2010). In an effort to ensure that children with dyslexia receive appropriate interventions and accommodations, a number of states have passed legislation explicitly requiring instruction in these areas. Legally backed, explicit intervention programs for students with dyslexia, for example, currently exist in New Mexico, Louisiana, Texas, Minnesota, Colorado, and South Dakota.

The necessity of accommodations for students with dyslexia has also been addressed in recent legislation across the United States. These accommodations often include extended time for reading tasks, not penalizing students for spelling mistakes, additional time for statewide assessments, and oral reading of questions during assessments. A specific bill in the state of Mississippi (HB 1031, 2012) even allows students with dyslexia to transfer to a different school or district if their home school does not provide programs specifically targeted for dyslexia. Other states offer specific accommodations for students with dyslexia during state exams, a trend that is also beginning to appear in recent bills and proposals. In Texas, for example, these accommodations include oral administration of questions and answer choices, periodic reading assistance on the math sections of the test, oral reading of writing prompts, and extending the testing time.

Overall Rights for Individuals with Dyslexia

With the goal of protecting and serving individuals with dyslexia, a number of states have passed legislation that spans across settings (i.e., K–12 schools, universities, and the workplace). Such laws target practices that involve, for example, transitions between institutions, the elimination of professional prerequisites and college entrance exams, and the overall respect of the limitations experienced by individuals with dyslexia. An example of such legislation is provided by an act that was proposed for the state of Kansas (SB 44; 2014), that if it had passed would have required Kansas schools to accept the diagnosis of dyslexia from any licensed psychologist, physician or psychiatrist, and to provide services for all children with a dyslexia diagnosis. Proposals such as this one promote communication between institutions and ensure equal treatment of individuals with dyslexia across settings. Another example is the Massachusetts General Law (Ch. 15A, §30, 1983), which waives the requirement of college entrance exams for students with dyslexia. For the most part, laws and regulations being passed in the U.S. have focused on procedures and services provided by public schools, but recent efforts have been mounted to increase awareness and address the needs of postsecondary students as well.

Dyslexia Legislation at the Federal Level

In July of 2015, the U.S. House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairman, Lamar Smith, introduced the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act (READ Act). The READ Act requires that the president's annual budget include five million dollars of National Science Foundation funds to be allocated to dyslexia research. Research must focus on the early identification of children and students with dyslexia, professional development about dyslexia for teachers and administrators, and curricula development. The READ Act illustrates that dyslexia has now become a nationally identified concern. Ideally, the federal government's action will lead to a more uniform approach to dyslexia research and support across states in the future.

More Work to Do

Since the publication of the article that led to the present summary of dyslexia legislation presented here (Youman & Mather, 2013), several additional states and the federal government have proposed or passed laws protecting the rights of individuals with dyslexia. This growing support for dyslexia laws is encouraging because, as Ohio State Representative Ted Celeste commented, “Many times the proper diagnosis of dyslexia is what holds students back from receiving the kind of

educational instruction most appropriate for their individual situations. Often times a student may fall through the cracks in which he or she is not “behind far enough” to qualify for special educational services.” Even so, many states still lack any guidelines for the education and treatment of individuals of dyslexia. If you are interested in taking proactive action to help dyslexia become a national concern, Table 2 provides suggestions for beginning the process of enacting dyslexia laws and promoting dyslexia awareness in your state.

Continued on page 18

TABLE 2. Proposing Dyslexia State Laws and Initiatives

LAW/INITIATIVE	SUGGESTIONS
Screening for Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form committee or task force of professionals knowledgeable about dyslexia. 2. Propose a pilot program to determine cost, time, and procedure for dyslexia screening in public K–12 schools. Example: OH HB 96 (2011–2012) 3. Determine timeline for pilot program and indicate date of final report. 4. Present findings of pilot program in report and draft bill for universal screening for dyslexia. 5. Include specifications for special populations (e.g., ELLs, students with multiple disabilities).
Dyslexia Training for Professionals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill requesting funds for in-school dyslexia training and dyslexia training in higher education programs. Example: CO SB 245 (2011) 2. Determine appropriate allocation of funds for dyslexia training. 3. Develop training standards. 4. Specify criteria for professionals working with students with dyslexia. Example: Texas Occupations Code Chapter 403
Eligibility for Accommodations and Services for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote awareness of dyslexia under IDEA-SLD or §504 or Rehabilitation Act. 2. Develop district or school policy for eligibility of services and accommodations under IDEA or §504 for students with dyslexia. Example: CA Education Code Section 56333–56338
Classroom Instruction for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill requesting instruction for students with dyslexia using research-based programs. Example: LA R.S. 17:7(11) 2. Provide a list of approved programs for implementation in the instruction of students with dyslexia. Example: Mississippi Dyslexia Handbook 3. Develop education programs for students with dyslexia. Example: Part XXXV. Regulations and Guidelines for Implementation of the Louisiana Law for the Education of Dyslexic Students
Interventions for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill requesting interventions for students with signs of dyslexia. Example: NM HB 230 (2010) 2. Provide list of approved intervention programs to districts. Example: Intervention programs listed in dyslexia handbooks 3. Update list every five years.
Dyslexia Handbook	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form committee or task force of professionals knowledgeable about dyslexia. 2. Develop dyslexia handbook. 3. Draft bill proposing adherence to dyslexia handbook (when state has specific dyslexia laws). Example: LA SCR 62 (2010) 4. Distribute dyslexia handbook to districts or require districts to develop a dyslexia handbook. Example: Texas Administration Code § 74.28
Students with Dyslexia in Higher Education Institutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill proposing exclusion of standardized college entrance exams for students with dyslexia. Example: MA Gen. Laws Ch. 15A, § 30 (1983) 2. Develop informational documents for students transitioning from K–12 education to institutions of higher education. Example: TX Dyslexia Handbook, Appendix K
Dyslexia Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill proposing declaration of dyslexia day, week, or month. 2. Provide dyslexia professional development for educators. 3. Develop dyslexia “Frequently Asked Questions – FAQs” for parents, teachers, and the community.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, 20 USC §1412 and 20 USC §1474 et seq. (2004).
- Moats, L. (2009). Still wanted: Teachers with knowledge of language. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 42*, 387–391. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022219409338735>
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups*. (NIH Publications No. 00-4753) Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Torgesen, J. K., Foorman, B. R., & Wagner, R. K. (2010). *Dyslexia: A brief for educators, parents, and legislators in Florida (FCRR Technical Report No. 8)*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Center for Reading Research.
- Youman, M., & Mather, N. (2013). Dyslexia laws in the USA. *Annals of Dyslexia, 63*, 133–153. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11881-012-0076-2>
- Young, C. A. (2011). *Educator training to enhance skills of students with dyslexia. Report to The Washington Legislature*. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2011documents/DyslexiaLegReportMar2011.pdf>

Martha E. Youman, Ph.D., is a school psychologist for the Jefferson Elementary School District in Daly City and a lecturer of English as a Second Language (ESL) at Stanford

University. She was born and raised in Ecuador and became interested in dyslexia after noticing similarities between her own difficulties learning English and the learning difficulties experienced by students with dyslexia. Her research and work at the University of Arizona focused primarily on the characteristics of dyslexia in different languages, the early markers of dyslexia, and dyslexia legislation across the United States and the world. You can write to Dr. Youman at meyouman81@gmail.com

Nancy Mather, Ph.D., is a Professor of Special Education at the University of Arizona in the Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies. She has served as a learning disabilities teacher, a diagnostician, a university professor, and an educational consultant. She has published numerous articles and books and conducts workshops on assessment and instruction both nationally and internationally. Her most recent books are: *Essentials of Dyslexia: Assessment and Intervention (Mather & Wendling, 2012)*, and *Learning Disabilities and Challenging Behaviors (Mather, Goldstein, & Eklund, 2015)*. You can write to Dr. Mather at nmather@u.arizona.edu



What is it like to have dyslexia?

A lively, thought-provoking group activity, **Experience Dyslexia®** is designed for anyone interested in better understanding the lives of individuals with a learning disability.

This popular simulation kit from the Northern California Branch of The International Dyslexia Association (NCBIDA) lets participants experience the challenges and frustrations faced each day by people with dyslexia.

Now with downloadable audio files.

Experience Dyslexia® is available at www.dyslexia-ncbida.org