MEMORANDUM

TO: County and City Superintendents of Education

FROM: Michael Sentance  
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Dyslexia Awareness Month

October has been designated as “Dyslexia Awareness Month” in Alabama by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). Dyslexia impacts between 10 percent and 20 percent of students in Alabama schools. Literacy skills—reading, writing, and spelling are essential to all learning in school and beyond. Students who do not develop these skills early on are at risk for school failure and limited life opportunities.

In our on-going efforts to prepare all students to graduate college, career, and life ready, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), working in collaboration with the Dyslexia Advisory Council (DAC), has established these goals for Dyslexia Awareness Month:

• To bring awareness at the school, family, and community level to the needs of students with dyslexia.
• To encourage year-round school, family, and community engagement in events to celebrate and embrace students with dyslexia.
• To make available support and resources for schools, families, and communities.

In order to meet these goals, a list of suggested activities for schools, families, and communities is included in Attachment 1. New resources and a new online course for dyslexia have been added to the ALSDE Web site, www.alsde.edu. Dyslexia resources may be accessed by typing “dyslexia” in the main search box and then selecting the link “Dyslexia Webpage.” The Dyslexia home page includes two new tabs: Family Resources and Dyslexia Awareness Month.

In order to facilitate on-going communication and sharing of resources with your district and schools, we ask that you designate a district dyslexia contact for ARI. Please complete Attachment 2 under the Dyslexia Awareness Month Tab (Dyslexia Contact Information) and return to ARI by October 25, 2016.

Please join us in promoting “Dyslexia Awareness Month” in Alabama by supporting an environment of awareness and understanding for dyslexia in your district, schools, and community. We have provided a sample resolution for use by your local board of education, Attachment 3.

If you have questions, please contact Mrs. Karen Porter, ARI Program Coordinator, by telephone at 334-353-1389 or via e-mail at dyslexia@alsde.edu.

MS:KP:TH
Attachments
cc: Dyslexia Advisory Council Members; Dr. Mark Kirkemier; Mrs. Shanthia Washington; Mrs. Karen Porter

FY16-2113
Please join us in promoting awareness of dyslexia during October by utilizing the suggested activities provided in this attachment.

**Activities for Dyslexia Awareness Month**

- **Dyslexia Awareness Month Kick-off Week, October 3-7, 2016**
  Create awareness in schools and communities in your district with “dyslexia day/night,” social media events, school casts, morning messages, etc. Utilize Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE) trained teachers, school reading specialists, coaches, partners, parents, and community experts to host mini- workshops/seminars and open house community events. Create awareness of resources for support of dyslexia by promoting the International Dyslexia Association-Alabama Branch (IDA-AL) [www.idaalabama.org](http://www.idaalabama.org) and the Alabama State Department of Education [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu) Websites.

- **Dyslexia Support Week, October 10-14, 2016**
  Wear red or silver to demonstrate awareness and support in your school and community. Encourage teachers and students to demonstrate support for dyslexia by wearing the colors and offering school/class proclamations. Encourage district communication/media personnel to create public service announcements, local news articles, and district communication posts for local school Websites promoting awareness.

- **Community Awareness Week for Dyslexia, October 17-21, 2016**
  Coordinate with local partners and stakeholders to develop community awareness of dyslexia by providing facts, resources, and support to families. Encourage groups to reach out to local experts and develop on-going partnerships to support dyslexia. Work to develop year-round communication, support, and resources for families, school, and communities in your district.

- **“Famous Dyslexics” Week, October 24-28, 2016**
  Students show support for dyslexics through class projects featuring “famous dyslexics” (Go to [www.idaalabama.org](http://www.idaalabama.org) Website for a listing).

**Resources for Dyslexia Awareness Month**

New! Online Dyslexia Awareness Course for Educators
Dyslexia Resource Guide
ALSDE Dyslexia

*These resources can be found through the following link:*
[http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ari/Pages/dyslexia-all.aspx?navtext=Dyslexia](http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ari/Pages/dyslexia-all.aspx?navtext=Dyslexia)
IDA-AL Resource Link
[http://idaalabama.org/](http://idaalabama.org/)
ARI 2016-2017 LEA DYSLEXIA CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

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Please use this template to complete information for your ARI LEA Dyslexia contact designee in your district. Send the completed form electronically to Ms. Tamica Harris via e-mail at tharris@alsde.edu.

Please, no handwritten submissions. If you have questions regarding this form or the memorandum, please contact Mrs. Reeda Betts or Mrs. Donna Harper via e-mail at dyslexia@alsde.edu or by calling 334-353-1389.
SAMPLE LOCAL BOARD RESOLUTION

Dyslexia Awareness Month October 2016

WHEREAS, Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities; and

WHEREAS, these difficulties typically are caused by a deficit in the phonological component of language that is unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and to the provision of effective classroom instruction; and

WHEREAS, secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge; and

WHEREAS, Dyslexia occurs on a continuum of severity affecting between 10 and 20 percent of the population according to the National Institutes of Health; and

WHEREAS, our district and community will benefit from an increased awareness of the nature of Dyslexia, the early warning signs of Dyslexia, and the value of multisensory structured language interventions for students with Dyslexia; and

WHEREAS, greater recognition and understanding are necessary to ensure that individuals with Dyslexia living in Alabama and all other Americans with Dyslexia are accurately identified and provided with appropriate services so that they might lead maximally productive lives:

NOW, THEREFORE, THE, _____________, _____________, do hereby proclaim October 2016, as Dyslexia Awareness Month in (insert LEA) and encourage all teachers, parents, and community stakeholders to learn more about dyslexia and to offer support to parents, educators and individuals affected by Dyslexia.