



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

September 19, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: County and City Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey *EGM*
State Superintendent of Education

RE: *Dyslexia Awareness Month*

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) recognizes that reading, writing, and spelling are essential skills for all literacy 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 an effort to bring attention to students with reading difficulties, the ALSDE recognizes October as *Dyslexia Awareness Month* in Alabama.

To kick off *Dyslexia Awareness Month*, we encourage you to remind your schools of the dyslexia resources available (Attachment 1) to assist teachers and administrators in supporting the needs of struggling students and students with the characteristics of dyslexia. These resources may be accessed by clicking [ARI Dyslexia Landing Page](#). Also, in an effort to maintain our Local Education Agency (LEA) Dyslexia Contact and Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE)-trained teacher database, please complete Attachment 2 and return it by November 1, 2018.

We also encourage interested educators to consider attending the International Dyslexia Association–Alabama Branch, [IDA Alabama CODE REAd: IDA Fall Reading Conference](#), on October 18-19, 2018, at the University of Mobile. Information for the conference is found by clicking on the highlighted link above.

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 communities. We have provided a sample resolution (Attachment 3) for use by your local board of education.

For questions regarding dyslexia, you may contact Mrs. Karen Porter, ARI Program Coordinator, or Mrs. Reeda Betts, ARI Dyslexia Administrator, by calling 334-694-4632 or by emailing dyslexia@alsde.edu.

EGM:KWP:TH

Attachments

cc: ARI Central Office Dyslexia Contacts
Dyslexia Advisory Council Members
Dr. Daniel Boyd
Mrs. Karen Porter
Mrs. Reeda Betts

FY18-2155

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of Education

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OCTOBER 2018 - DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH IN ALABAMA

Awareness and Support

- Create awareness in your schools and communities for dyslexia by encouraging district communication/media personnel to create public service announcements, and promoting local news articles and district communication posts for local school websites.
- Utilize social media, school casts, morning messages, etc., using #CodeREaD-AL, the ARI hashtag for Alabama's *Dyslexia Awareness Month*.
- 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 \(IDA-AL\)](#) and the [Alabama Reading Initiative Dyslexia Websites](#).
- Encourage groups to reach out to local experts and coordinate with local partners and stakeholders to develop year-round community awareness of dyslexia by providing facts, resources, and support to families.
- Encourage teachers and students to wear red to demonstrate awareness and support for dyslexia in your school and community and offer school/class proclamations.

Instruction and Professional Learning

- Encourage teachers to participate in ongoing professional learning related to evidence-based foundational reading strategies and effective multisensory strategies that support struggling readers and those with characteristics of dyslexia. **Encourage attendance at the IDA-AL State Dyslexia Conference** [IDA Alabama CODE REaD: IDA Fall Reading Conference](#), October 18-19, 2018, University of Mobile.
- Utilize MSLE-trained teachers in your district to provide professional learning and in-class coaching and intervention support.
- Ensure that rigorous and relevant instruction and intervention in reading, writing, spelling, speaking, and listening align with the Alabama English Language Arts Course of Study grade-level standards.
- Bring technology into the classroom to highlight the many ways in which students with dyslexia can express themselves and communicate by means other than writing. Consider a "No Pencil/Pen Day" storytelling competition by utilizing technology solutions such as text to speech, audio and/or video recordings, and recording through pictures so that all students can enjoy expressing themselves.

Additional Resources for Teachers, Administrators, and Parents:

- [The International Dyslexia Association](#)
- [The International Dyslexia Association – Alabama Branch \(IDA-AL\)](#)
- [The Alabama Dyslexia Resource Guide](#)
- [The Alabama Reading Initiative \(ARI\) Web site, Dyslexia Tab](#)
- [eLearning Alabama: Dyslexia Course, REA6451](#)
- [Dyslexia in the Classroom: What Every Teacher Needs to Know](#)



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2018-2019 LEA DYSLEXIA CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

SCHOOL DISTRICT/LEA	
SUPERINTENDENT	
Name of PRIMARY LEA DYSLEXIA Contact(s)	
Work Email	
Work Telephone with Area Code	
Name of ADDITIONAL LEA DYSLEXIA Contact	
Work Email	
Work Telephone with Area Code	
Name of MSLE Trained Teacher(s)	
Work Email	
Work Telephone with Area Code	

Please use this template to complete information for your **primary** LEA Dyslexia Contact and any additional contacts in your district. Please include any **MSLE-trained teachers** in this information. Feel free to duplicate this form. Send the completed form electronically to Ms. Tamica Harris, via email at tharris@alsde.edu. Please, no handwritten submissions. If you have questions regarding this form or the memorandum, please contact Mrs. Reeda Betts, Mrs. Donna Harper, or Ms. Denise Perkins by email at dyslexia@alsde.edu or by telephone at 334-694-4632.

SAMPLE LOCAL BOARD RESOLUTION

Dyslexia Awareness Month October 2018

WHEREAS, Dyslexia is a specific learning challenge, that is neurological 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 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 increased awareness of the nature of Dyslexia, the early warning signs of Dyslexia, and the value of multisensory structured language instruction 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 2018, 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.