
3C

Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Discussion of the *California Dyslexia Guidelines* and Their Potential Use within Educator Preparation

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides information on the 2017 [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#) developed by the California Department of Education as required by Assembly Bill 1369, and suggests how the Commission on Teacher Credentialing might use these *Guidelines* in teacher preparation, induction, administrator preparation, and pupil personnel services preparation. Staff from the California Department of Education will be joining the meeting to present information about the guidelines and respond to questions.

Recommended Action: This item is intended to inform and support Commission discussion. Staff recommends that the Commission take action to endorse the inclusion of the *Dyslexia Guidelines* as described in the item.

Presenter: Roxann Purdue, Consultant, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability

- a) Develop and maintain rigorous, meaningful, and relevant standards that drive program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of the education workforce and are responsive to the needs of California's diverse student population

Discussion of the *California Dyslexia Guidelines* and Their Potential Use within Educator Preparation

Introduction

This agenda item provides information on the 2017 [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#) developed by the California Department of Education (CDE) as required by Assembly Bill 1369, and suggests how the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) might use these *Guidelines* in teacher preparation, induction, administrator preparation, and pupil personnel services preparation.

Background

[California Education Code section 56335 \(AB 1369, Stats. 2015\)](#) mandated the development of California's *Dyslexia Guidelines*, and the provision of technical assistance. The *Guidelines* were first published in September 2017 and modified in December 2018.

[California Education Code section 56335\(a\)](#) defines educational services for students with dyslexia as follows: "... 'educational services' means an evidence-based, multisensory, direct, explicit, structured, and sequential approach to instructing pupils who have dyslexia."

In September 2016, the United States Senate passed Senate Resolution 576, which called upon Congress, schools, and state and local educational agencies to "recognize the significant educational implications of dyslexia that must be addressed" and designated October 2016 as National Dyslexia Awareness Month.

Research indicates that Dyslexia is the most common learning disability, historically reported as affecting five to 17 percent of children (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; Shaywitz, 1998).

Definition of Dyslexia

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) provides the following definition of dyslexia, which was adopted by the United States National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development (Lyon, Shaywitz, and Shaywitz 2003). This definition is widely cited by researchers and educators:

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. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (International Dyslexia Association (IDA) 2002)

Discussion of the *Dyslexia Guidelines*

The following information regarding dyslexia in general and the state's *Dyslexia Guidelines* in specific was developed by Commission staff based on materials from the CDE. As the CDE notes, information provided in the *Guidelines* is not legally binding on local educational agencies. However, the CDE's goal in publishing the [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#) is to create a document that provides practical resources for identifying and educating students who are struggling academically because they cannot read (*California Dyslexia Guidelines*, p.1).

The CDE states that there is a great need for **all educators** and related service providers to be prepared at both the preservice and in-service levels to meet the needs of students with dyslexia, including speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, school counselors, school administrators, and paraprofessionals (*California Dyslexia Guidelines*, p.39).

The CDE Guidelines and other research on this topic suggests that general education teachers should play a role in administering universal screening for students at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia and providing high-quality Tier 1 instruction with supports prior to additional interventions by special education teachers and reading specialists in Tiers 2 and 3 of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) or Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTI2) framework. ([NCIL: Relationship between MTSS and Diagnosis of Dyslexia](#)) ([Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. \(2005\). Responsiveness-to-intervention: A blueprint for practitioners, policymakers, and parents. Teaching Exceptional Children, 38\(1\), 57-61.](#)

The [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#) were written based on the following principles:

- Students with dyslexia need a knowledge-based and active system of support that includes families, educators, and other professionals.
- Learning needs related to dyslexia exist on a continuum; therefore, systems of support must be designed to meet the diversity of students' needs.
- An educational system should address the needs of individual students within an integrated and tiered system of support.
- Students who have dyslexia are "general education students" first, can be educated in general education classrooms, and can benefit from a wide variety of supports. Those supports must include a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to reading and language instruction that is implemented by trained educators and that incorporate structured literacy instruction that is comprehensive, systematic, explicit, cumulative, and multisensory. Required supports may include various accommodations and assistive technology. Students with dyslexia sometimes require special education.
- An interdisciplinary team approach is most effective when it takes advantage of everyone's expertise and includes all team members in decision making, problem solving, and instructional leadership (*Dyslexia Guidelines*, p. 1-2).

Chapter 8 of the [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#) addresses the importance of teaching from evidence-based research on dyslexia; standards for reading teachers that have been developed by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA); the types of educators who can serve students with dyslexia; and online sources for more information.

As noted in the *Guidelines* (p. 38-39), the IDA (2010) developed professional [Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading](#) that provide recommendations for classroom educators and for dyslexia specialists. These standards include both content knowledge and information about the application of the standards.

Screening and Assessment for Dyslexia

As of 2015, 41 percent of fourth-grade students in California were reading below basic achievement levels compared with 32 percent nationally, according to the [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) (*National Center for Education Statistics 2015*). For the same year, 80 percent of fourth-grade students with disabilities in California were reading below basic achievement levels; nationally, that figure was 67 percent (*National Center for Education Statistics 2015*).

The purpose of universal *screening* for dyslexia risk is very different than the purpose of *diagnosing* dyslexia. Screening determines the level of risk for reading problems in general and the potential risk of having or developing dyslexia. ([National Center on Improving Literacy: Screening for Dyslexia](#)). One of the greatest contributing factors to lower achievement scores in reading is stated to be the lack of early and accurate identification of students with dyslexia. According to a study published in the *Journal of Pediatrics*, the achievement gap between students with dyslexia and typical readers is evident as early as first grade (*Ferrer et al. 2015*). The study underscores the importance of early identification of students with dyslexia and concludes by saying that “Implementing effective reading programs as early as kindergarten or even preschool offers the potential to close the achievement gap” (*Ferrer et al. 2015*); (*California Dyslexia Guidelines, p. 42*).

For these reasons, there is a need for early identification and intervention for students with dyslexia. It is important that universal screening for students at risk for dyslexia occur when students are in general education classrooms. The use of Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTI2) are key in the screening, identification, good first instruction, support and interventions (*California Dyslexia Guidelines, Chapter 9*).

Universal Screening in the General Education Setting

“Universal screening” means that *all* students are screened - the entire grade level or the entire classroom. Screening for children at risk for dyslexia is a critical first step in the identification of and effective intervention for students with dyslexia (*California Dyslexia Guidelines, p. 44*).

With regard to the assessment and identification of students with dyslexia, the assessments administered through a tiered intervention process can be completed in the general education

setting, before referral for a special education assessment, to determine whether a student may meet eligibility criteria for special education services under the category of a specific learning disability (SLD) (*California Dyslexia Guidelines*, p. 47).

Potential Approaches for Addressing the *Dyslexia Guidelines* within Educator Preparation

An initial step in increasing awareness about the *Dyslexia Guidelines* across the spectrum of educator preparation in California would be to provide all educator preparation programs, including teacher preparation, induction, administrator preparation, and pupil personnel services preparation, with the reference to the CDE's *Dyslexia Guidelines*. Staff suggests that all educator preparation programs should make candidates aware of the guidance document. The *Dyslexia Guidelines* could be used in each type of educator preparation as stated below:

- Preliminary teacher preparation programs would introduce the *Guidelines* during preparation coursework and fieldwork. Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) would address struggling readers including those with dyslexia. Such language is included in the draft TPEs in Agenda Item 3D of the November 2019 Commission meeting.
- Teacher induction programs would provide the *Guidelines* to candidates and mentors to support their use, as needed.
- Preliminary administrative services programs and pupil personnel services programs would make their candidates aware of the *Guidelines* and emphasize how their new job role(s) relate to the identification of dyslexia as well as the need for supports and interventions.
- Clear administrative induction programs would provide the *Guidelines* to new school administrators and guide coaches to support their use, as needed and as appropriate in the candidate's assignment.
- Reading and Literacy Added Authorization and Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist Credential programs would use the *Guidelines* as an integral part of their curriculum for candidates.

Staff Recommendation

This item is intended to inform and support Commission discussion. Staff recommends that the Commission take action to endorse the inclusion of the *Dyslexia Guidelines* as described above.

Next Steps

Staff will circulate the [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#) to educator preparation programs and will take additional next steps based on Commission discussion about potential staff direction. Based on Commission action, the statement, "The *California Dyslexia Guidelines* are an integral part of the curriculum for candidates." would be added to the both the current Reading Added Authorization and Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist program standards.