

Dyslexia Working Group

2024 Annual Report

Submitted to:
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By:
Dyslexia Working Group

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Introduction

House Bill 19-1134 (HB 19-1134) was passed during the 2019 legislative session, which called for the creation of a Dyslexia Working Group (DWG). See section 22-20.5-103, C.R.S. According to the statute, the Commissioner of Education was required to convene a working group to improve the educational outcomes for students with dyslexia. The DWG is statutorily authorized through September 1, 2029. The DWG has seven tasks outlined in statute:

- Analyze current national and statewide data related to students identified as having dyslexia, including but not limited to identification rates and achievement rates.
- Analyze the implementation and demonstrated effectiveness in other states of statewide legislation for dyslexia screening, educator training, and other dyslexia related laws.
- 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.
- 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.
- Identify and recommend components of dyslexia awareness training for Colorado educators, including the content, target audience, time frame for training, and projected cost.
- 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.
- Provide recommendations to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) concerning the design and implementation of the pilot program.

In addition to these activities, the Dyslexia Working Group must, “analyze and integrate, as appropriate, the work and recommendations of other previous and ongoing state initiatives 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 a 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.
- A member of the local chapter of the international dyslexia association.

The CDE solicits nominations and applications for service on the DWG to determine appointment recommendations for the Commissioner of Education. Each member's determination is taken into consideration from the quality of application packet, how the applicant meets the statutorily defined role, and the applicant's ability to serve through the duration of the working group. In addition, the CDE makes it a priority that members are representative from across the state, including small rural and rural districts, urban and suburban districts. Table 1 below shows the membership of the DWG during the 2023-24 year.

At the end of the 2023-24 school year, the following member completed their service in the DWG, for which the department extends its gratitude:

- Sierra Loar, a parent of a child identified with dyslexia.

Table 1: Dyslexia Working Group Membership by Region and Role

Member	Region	Role
Jamie Brackney	Pikes Peak	A parent of a child who is identified as having dyslexia and a disability
Marcie Eichmann	Pikes Peak	Elementary teacher
Sarah Huffman	Southeast	Elementary teacher who is employed at an elementary school in a rural or small rural school district
Jennifer Imel	Southwest	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
Cindy Kanuch	Metro Area	A member of the local chapter of an international dyslexia association
Sierra Loar	Metro Area	A parent of a child who is identified as having dyslexia
Patrick McGinty	Northwest	A school district director of special education
Dyann Powell	Metro Area	A state or national dyslexia expert



Member	Region	Role
Michelle Qazi	Metro Area	A state or national literacy expert
Brian Rose, Ph.D.	North Central	A faculty member of an institution of higher education who teaches in an approved educator preparation program for elementary grade teachers
Laura Swanson	North Central	A school district literacy specialist
Jess Yost	Metro Area	A parent of a child who is identified as having dyslexia and a disability

Facilitation of the Dyslexia Working Group

For the 2023-24 school year, the department scheduled the DWG meetings for the following dates:

- Friday, September 22, 2023
- Friday, December 1, 2023
- Friday, January 19, 2024
- Friday, March 8, 2024
- Friday, May 10, 2024

The DWG conducted their work through online virtual meetings, except for two hybrid (in-person and virtual) meetings. All meetings of the DWG were open to the public; however, only working group members had an active role in the meeting. The CDE has a DWG webpage (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/codyslexiaworkgroup>) where all of the meeting dates, locations, materials, and summaries are posted for transparency.

The DWG had two working groups that focused on the different components of the DWG's charge. The working groups for the 2023-24 school year were: (1) Quality Research/Resources and Dissemination and (2) Pool of Experts/Rubric/Standards. Both groups were charged with:

- Revisiting prior DWG reports to identify opportunities, challenges, and outcomes related to the topic of their working group.
- Identifying, within the scope of the DWG, some realistic wins that could be achieved in 2024, key activities to help them achieve those wins, and a timeline for implementation of those activities.

Implementation Updates

Following recommendations from the DWG's previous annual reports, along with discussions during the current year, CDE has continued to work on:

- The CDE continues to work collaboratively with READ Assessment vendors on providing professional development to the field on how to use available resources and a body of evidence to screen for indicators of dyslexia.

- The CDE continues to improve website design and structure so that information about dyslexia is both accessible and visible to respective audiences including teachers, families, and the public.
- The CDE continues to review pre-service teacher training programs to ensure that they are informed by the science of reading and include training in awareness of dyslexia and appropriate instruction and intervention.
- In 2023, the CDE worked collaboratively with Public Consulting Group, Inc. in updating the K-3 READ Act Training to include additional instructional and assessment considerations specific to teaching older students in grades 4-12. The updated training now includes a K-12 lens and has a new title: *Building a Strong Foundation for Lifelong Literacy Success*.
- The CDE-provided READ Act Trainings continue to include information on the definition of dyslexia, indicators of dyslexia, what to look for, and information on screening and assessing students for reading deficiencies including dyslexia.
- During the 2023-2024 school year, the CDE launched a Science of Reading Literacy Series of professional development to serve as an extension of the 45-hour READ Act required training. This optional, asynchronous series is broken down by the five components of reading, including oral language, and is designed for districts to use for job-embedded professional development that focuses on implementation and using research based instructional strategies to improve best first instruction. Train the Trainer companion sessions for the series were hosted by the CDE to aid administrators, literacy coaches, and similar roles in how to implement and facilitate the Science of Reading Literacy series sessions at the school and district levels. The training includes materials, facilitation guides, presenter notes and resources for turnkey implementation and are publicly available on the CDE website (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/sorliteracyseries>).
- The Office of Elementary Literacy and School Readiness appointed a CDE Senior Literacy Consultant with dyslexia expertise as a point-person to serve as a liaison between the Dyslexia Working Group and to address the intersectionality of the CDE's work on dyslexia. This role includes focusing on the continued alignment of CDE Dyslexia resources and continued efforts to disseminate CDE resources to key stakeholders and the public.
- Materials created and provided by the University of Oregon throughout the entirety of the Dyslexia Pilot Program are available on the Colorado Dyslexia Pilot Program website (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/coloradodyslexiapilotprogram>).

2023-24 DWG Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Dyslexia Screener Benchmark Requirement

In order to be responsive to HB 19-1134, the DWG continues to recommend that the dyslexia screener be added to the benchmark expectations for all school districts. With that, the READ Act should be amended to include a requirement that all K-3 students undergo an additional dyslexia screener. This should start in the 2025-26 school year, beginning with kindergarten. In each additional school year, add the next grade level, and screen all students who have not been screened previously until all students in grades K-3 have been screened. The dyslexia screener shall have a “Strong Evidence” rating by the Institute of Education Science (IES) and comprehensively evaluate the following components of literacy:

- Phonological processing
- Letter-sound correspondence

- Encoding
- Fluency
- Oral language
- Rapid automatized naming

Recommendation #2: Adopted Definition of Dyslexia

The DWG continues to recommend that the READ Act be amended to include the term dyslexia as a subcategory of Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD) and to define it consistent with the CDE adopted definition of dyslexia for the purpose of universal screening, identification, and appropriate intervention.

Recommendation #3: Make Indicators of Dyslexia More Accessible

The DWG continues to recommend that CDE develop guidance on how to more effectively assess for the indicators of dyslexia. We suggest the development of a chart that shows each of the recommended assessments and appropriate times for administration by grade level in conjunction with the READ Act procedures in place. The chart should be posted next to the READ Act approved interim assessments list on CDE's website (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readactassessments>).

Recommendation #4: Pre-Service Teacher Training Programs

The DWG supports CDE and the State Board of Education in continuing to review pre-service teacher training programs to ensure that they are informed by the science of reading and include training in awareness of dyslexia with appropriate instruction and intervention. Specifically, in the 4.02 elementary education endorsement (Grades K-6), the explicit mention of dyslexia should be included, along with the following:

- Definition of dyslexia
- Specific indicators and what to look for
- Assessment tools
- Need for screening

The DWG recommends identifying other ways in which the trainings can be implemented to further and more effectively support teachers/personnel with the implementation and application of instruction grounded in the Science of Reading and Best First Instruction.

Recommendation #5: Training for K-12 Educators

The DWG recommends expanding training for educators in K-8 and even K-12 and/or other school personnel. Included in the training should be an explicit mention of dyslexia. In ongoing training for K-12, include:

- Definition of dyslexia
- Specific indicators and what to look for
- Assessment tools
- Need for screening
- Trained interventionist/s within middle & high schools to support and/or deliver services and professional development

With this, the DWG also recommends identifying other ways in which the trainings can be implemented to further and more effectively support teachers/personnel with the implementation and application of instruction grounded in the Science of Reading and Best First Instruction.

Recommendation #6: Dissemination of Dyslexia Resources

The DWG recommends identifying avenues for disseminating information and resources to stakeholders regarding dyslexia and related topics (e.g., pilot school materials, and the CDE Dyslexia Handbook). Specifically, share the CDE Dyslexia Handbook/resources across Colorado with:

- CoKID & CoKID Regional and City Affiliates
- Colorado District Literacy Leaders
- The Reading League-Colorado
- International Dyslexia Association-Rocky Mountain Branch
- School Districts

Recommendation #7: Formation of Additional Working Groups

The DWG recommends that the General Assembly form three additional groups (working group, task force, or other committee) of essential stakeholders pertaining to each group outside of the work of the DWG:

- The first group would be charged to investigate and utilize the existing research and body of evidence on the impact of in-district, in-school, and outside tutoring resources on student achievement and growth.
- The second group would be charged to investigate and utilize the existing research and body of evidence on the impact of SoR aligned with Best First Instruction in Tier 1 instruction on student achievement and growth.
- The third group would be charged to integrate instruction grounded in the Science of Reading within the classroom, instructional, pedagogical knowledge, and performance evaluation rubrics where all components of supervision and evaluation come together.

Recommendation #8: Dyslexia Therapist/Specialist Endorsement

The DWG recommends that a dyslexia therapist/specialist endorsement (pool of specialists) through accredited college or university or national accreditation/certification such as ALTA CALT, CALT-QI or OGA Fellow be established.

Next Steps for the Dyslexia Working Group

For the 2024-25 school year, the focus for the DWG will be to:

- Review the Dyslexia Pilot Program final report and establish recommendations for the CDE based on the lessons learned.
- Continue to work with the CDE, the State Board of Education, and Colorado General Assembly to implement universal screening of dyslexia in the state of Colorado.
- Provide updates with new research and resources annually.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with other dyslexia-focused groups to expand leverage and maximize impact.



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- Engage with Colorado state legislators, especially members of the Joint Budget Committee, to better understand the process required to change policy and use that knowledge to develop more strategic, impactful recommendations.