

## **Dyslexia Legislation (SB 612) Additional Information for Districts**

During the 2015 legislative session, the general assembly passed new dyslexia legislation (SB 612) in Oregon that requires the Department of Education to develop a plan to ensure that all kindergarten and first grade students receive a screening for risk factors of dyslexia and that school districts ensure that at least one kindergarten through grade five teacher in each K-5 school has received training related to dyslexia.

In March of 2016, the Department convened a dyslexia advisory council to provide input and feedback in the planning process for implementing the requirements of the bill. The Oregon Dyslexia Advisory Council (ODAC), consisting of stakeholders from across the state, met regularly beginning in the spring of 2016 to develop a plan for universal screening for risk factors of dyslexia and to further delineate the process for teacher training. ODAC will continue to meet quarterly in the 2016-2017 school year. While the Department is still in the planning process to address SB 612 requirements, we want to provide the following information to assist school districts with planning for initial implementation efforts. The information is organized into two sections. The first section addresses frequently asked questions regarding the plan for universal screening for risk factors of dyslexia. The second section includes frequently asked questions specific to the teacher training requirements of SB 612.

### **SECTION I: Universal Screening for Risk Factors of Dyslexia: Frequently Asked Questions**

- **What is the status of the plan for universal screening of K/1 students for risk factors of dyslexia?**

A plan for universal screening of kindergarten and first grade students for risk factors of dyslexia was developed by the Department and submitted to the interim legislative committees on education in September of 2016. Districts can access the plan at: [http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms\\_BestPractice/Pages/Plan-for-Universal-Screening.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms_BestPractice/Pages/Plan-for-Universal-Screening.aspx). Rather than creating a separate delivery system for students with dyslexia, the plan focuses on working within and strengthening existing systems of screening and instructional support utilized by districts. The plan aligns with the Oregon Department of Education's strategic goals and key initiatives. The Department is in the process of soliciting feedback from the field on the plan. To provide feedback, districts can contact Carrie Thomas Beck, Dyslexia Specialist, at [carrie.thomas-beck@state.or.us](mailto:carrie.thomas-beck@state.or.us) or 503.947.5833. District feedback will be carefully considered and changes made to the plan as needed. The current recommendation is to begin implementation of the plan in the 2018-19 school year.

- **Based on the plan, what screening tools may districts select to screen for risk factors of dyslexia?**

The Department has identified criteria for districts to select screening tools. Systems for universal screening must (a) have strong predictive validity, classification accuracy, and

norm-referenced scoring; (b) include measures of phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondences, and rapid naming at least once per year; and (c) include progress monitoring measures aligned with the universal screeners. The Department will provide a list of approved systems for universal screening. Districts may select one of the approved systems or apply to select an alternative universal screening system that meets the criteria. Examples of universal screening systems with these characteristics that are currently administered in Oregon districts include AIMSweb, DIBELS 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, DIBELS Next, and easyCBM.

- **When must the universal screening in K and 1 be completed?**

At a minimum, the plan calls for districts to screen kindergarten students in the fall, winter, and spring and grade 1 students in the fall using measures of phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and rapid naming. In addition, districts are strongly encouraged to administer any other measures recommended in the adopted system for universal screening.

- **Why only screen for risk factors of dyslexia in the fall of first grade, and not in the winter and spring like in kindergarten?**

In the fall of first grade, measures of phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondences, and rapid naming that are specifically required in the legislation are still typically administered as part of universal screening systems and demonstrate strong predictive ability. In winter and spring of grade 1, measures of letter-sound correspondence continue to provide useful information in universal screening, but measures such as word reading fluency and oral reading fluency are better predictors of risk for reading difficulties at this time. While the legislation does not require districts to administer word reading fluency and oral reading fluency measures, it is highly recommended in the plan that these measures are administered in winter and spring of grade 1 along with measures of letter-sound correspondence. These additional measures should be administered in accordance with the guidelines of the test developers to ensure that students at risk for reading difficulties, including those with dyslexia, are identified and provided appropriate instruction and support.

- **What about screening for family history of difficulty in learning to read?**

SB 612 requires that the Department's plan for universal screening of K/1 students for risk factors of dyslexia also identify screening tests that screen for family history of difficulty in learning to read. There have been conversations in the legislature that this requirement may be changing based on feedback from the field. The Department has been involved in these conversations. As with all discussions regarding legislative changes, the Department remains neutral on the topic. The Department will keep districts updated on the status of this requirement.

- **Is there any funding available to help support districts with meeting the screening requirements of the bill?**

There is not any funding associated with the screening requirements of SB 612 that has been allocated for districts. The bill does, however, require that the Department identify screening tests that are cost effective when developing the plan. When screening for

phonological awareness, letter/sound correspondences, and rapid naming, it is important for districts to utilize screeners that accurately and reliably identify students who are at risk. There is no need to focus investments on introducing new screeners for districts to meet these requirements. As many as 90 districts across the state are currently using universal screening systems that have strong predictive validity and classification accuracy in identifying students who are at risk for reading difficulties and include the measures that are required in the legislation. Utilizing existing screening systems that have strong technical adequacy to meet the requirements of SB 612 will be cost effective for districts. For those districts that do not currently universally screen students in K and 1, there are universal screening measures (DIBELS 6<sup>th</sup> Edition and DIBELS Next) that are available for free download. Oregon districts may also access the DIBELS Data System (DDS) through the University of Oregon to enter screening and progress monitoring data to generate reports at the student, classroom, grade, school, and district level at no cost. None of the commonly used universal screening systems requires a large investment in time or resources. These screening systems consist of one-minute measures that can be administered by teachers as well as specialists with the appropriate training.

**• What if the universal screening process identifies a large proportion of the students as showing risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia?**

Many schools in Oregon serve high-risk populations and it is likely that a great number of students will enter school with limited literacy experiences. These students are often at risk for reading difficulties, but make good growth when provided with high quality instruction. The screeners required by SB 612 in K and 1 will not be sufficient to identify students with dyslexia. These screeners can, however, accurately identify those students who are at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Early intervention benefits the acquisition of reading skills for students who are at risk for reading difficulties regardless of the cause. Schools can use the information collected from universal screening to inform core reading instruction, matching instruction to student needs based on skill deficits. In addition, based on data collected, problem-solving teams at the school level can determine students to receive targeted intervention in addition to core instruction. A student's response to instruction may provide valuable information that can help determine students who are at risk for reading difficulties due to environmental disadvantage.

**• What about students who are English Learners who show risk factors for reading difficulties based on the screening?**

Many children with limited exposure to Standard English in their homes may manifest the same type of difficulties in kindergarten as those students who are at risk for reading problems for other reasons. Classroom instruction that utilizes evidence-based practices to explicitly and systematically teach reading and that focuses on English Language development are important for these children. As noted above, response to high-quality intensive reading instruction may be the best way to identify students with inherent phonological processing difficulties vs. those who demonstrate risk for other reasons. The Department recognizes this is a complex issue and will be providing guidance to districts specific to screening for risk factors of dyslexia and implementing instructional interventions for ELs.

- **What are the requirements for parent notification?**

SB 612 requires that the Department's plan for universal screening provide guidance for notifications sent by school districts to parents of students who are identified as being at risk for reading difficulties based on the screening. The proposed structure for notifying parents/guardians outlined in the plan is consistent with guidelines from the Department for districts in Oregon implementing a Response to Intervention (RtI) model. The guiding principle in communication with parents should be to provide information early and seek input often. Consent is not required for screening and progress monitoring that all students participate in as part of the general education program. It is best practice to share this data with parents, and the plan requires districts to notify parents of those students who demonstrate risk based on universal screening. In addition, parents should be made aware of any interventions that occur beyond the core curriculum and be invited to participate in the planning of any individual interventions. If there is a need to make a special education referral, parental consent is required. The Department will provide districts with examples of notification letters to parents of students who are identified as showing risk that can be adapted for district use.

- **Are districts now required to diagnose dyslexia?**

No. This bill does not call for any changes in the IDEA requirements for evaluating and determining eligibility for specific learning disabilities. The IDEA definition of specific learning disability (Part II 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301) has always included dyslexia as one of the possible causes of a learning disability. Specific learning disabilities and the assessment of them are defined in federal regulations and the corresponding Oregon Administrative Rules. The legislation does require the Department to develop a plan for districts to universally screen students for risk factors of dyslexia in grades K and 1. This screening will allow districts to determine those students who are at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia, in order to provide early intervention. Additional information, including a student's response to evidence-based intervention, will need to be collected over time to determine if a child may have a specific learning disability in the area of reading and require specialized instruction.

- **Won't the required universal screening for risk factors of dyslexia lead to an increase in the amount of special education referrals?**

No. In fact, the early screening may result in reduced special education referrals if evidence-based intervention is provided early to those students who show risk. Also, it is important to differentiate screening from identification. The screening in and of itself cannot indicate if a student has dyslexia. Every child identified as having risk factors for dyslexia would not necessarily need to be evaluated for possible special education services. Rather, screening would lead to numerous steps that would need to occur prior to an evaluation for special education services. The screening is simply the first step to determine if the student may have risk factors for reading difficulties, not that the student may have the disability itself.

- **How should districts support students who demonstrate risk factors for reading difficulties, including dyslexia?**

In terms of best practice, all reading difficulties, including dyslexia, are best addressed through implementing multiple tiers of support that provide appropriate instruction by qualified individuals. Within a multi-tier system of support (MTSS), students who are at risk for reading difficulties are identified early through universal screening and the data is used to develop appropriate intervention that incorporates evidence-based practices. This preventative intervention is provided within the context of the general education setting. The plan outlines steps for districts to take when a student shows risk for reading difficulties. Students who are identified with risk factors for reading difficulties through the universal screening process should be provided with targeted intervention support daily in the general education context (i.e., Tier 2 support) in addition to core instruction (i.e., Tier 1). Those students who do not make adequate progress as a result of Tier 2 support should be provided with a more individualized, intensified literacy intervention daily in the context of general education (i.e., Tier 3 support).

The plan does not identify specific instructional supports or interventions that districts must implement in Tiers 2 and 3, but rather outlines the standards for the support provided to students at risk for reading difficulties. Specifically, the plan states that the instructional support must (a) be aligned with the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading published by the International Dyslexia Association; (b) be systematic, explicit, and evidence-based; and (c) be delivered in collaboration with the teacher in the building who has completed the dyslexia-related training. The plan provides guidance for providing increasingly intensive and amplified instructional support to those students who are at risk and don't improve as a result of initial support. The decision about the particular interventions that are provided to students will be determined by the same district specialists and teachers that have been guiding those decisions currently, with the additional support of a teacher trained in dyslexia.

## **SECTION II: Teacher Training Requirements: Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Is it true that all teachers must receive dyslexia training?**

No. SB 612 requires that one K-5 teacher in each K-5 school complete the dyslexia-related training. A K-5 school includes any public school that enrolls students in kindergarten and grade one including, but not limited to, K-8 schools, K-12 schools, and primary schools serving students in grades K-2.

- **Do districts need to hire a new staff member or delegate FTE for a teacher to complete the dyslexia-related training and coordinate the dyslexia work at each school?**

No. Districts will work with building administrators to identify a teacher to complete the dyslexia-related training at each school. The teacher will complete the training as part of his/her professional development activities. This teacher may or may not help administer the screening measures, depending on the model the particular school uses to complete universal screening in K/1. It is recommended that the teacher participate as a member of the school level problem solving team to provide input when developing Tier 2 and Tier 3

interventions for students who demonstrate risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. It is not required for a district to assign FTE specific to the dyslexia work for this individual.

**• Can the K-5 teacher from each building who completes the training be a special educator or must this person be a general educator?**

The teacher who completes the dyslexia-related training must be a licensed or registered teacher serving in a position teaching students in any configuration of grades kindergarten through fifth grade and assigned to the building at least .50 FTE. The position may include, but is not limited to, that of classroom teacher, reading specialist, special educator or EL teacher.

**• Is selecting a teacher with a Title funded position to complete the required training allowable?**

Staff members paid solely with Title I-A funds may not complete the dyslexia-related training and coordinate activities that are required by the state. Since dyslexia-trained teachers are required under state law, a teacher solely paid out of Title I-A funds could not complete these duties during their normal work day because this would be considered supplanting. Supplanting occurs if the LEA uses federal funds to provide services that the LEA is required to make available under other federal, state, or local laws. An allowable strategy that districts may follow to enable staff members who are otherwise funded by Title I-A to complete the training and collaborate with others in the building to develop interventions for students at risk would be to pay for the portion of the teacher's salary dedicated to supporting the dyslexia work out of general funds rather than Title I-A funds.

**• What are the components of the required training?**

Based on the requirements as outlined in SB 612, the training will have three areas of focus:

1. understanding and recognizing dyslexia;
2. using evidence-based practices to systematically and explicitly teach the foundational skills in reading; and
3. intensifying the instruction to meet the needs of students with more severe reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

The training opportunities will be program-neutral. That is, the training will provide teachers with knowledge and skills necessary to present systematic, explicit, and evidence-based reading instruction, but not focus on providing specific training on a particular intervention or curriculum.

**• Are there flexible options for completing the training?**

Yes. The Department will provide a list of approved dyslexia-related trainings each year. Designated teachers from each K-5 school will have the opportunity to select a training opportunity or combination of training opportunities from the annual list based on his/her needs for scheduling, location, and cost to fulfill the requirements of the legislation. Each designated teacher must complete all three areas of the training as listed above. This can be accomplished by selecting one comprehensive training from a single vendor or by selecting trainings across vendors to collectively address all three areas. Depending on needs, a teacher may select face-to-face trainings, online training, or a combination of the two. SB

612 requires that at least one comprehensive training opportunity included on the list be provided entirely online.

**• How many hours will the training be?**

SB 612 does not specify a specific number of hours for the required training, but rather outlines the criteria for the content of the training. Specifically, SB 612 states that the training must:

- √ comply with the knowledge and practice standards of an international organization on dyslexia;
- √ enable the teacher to understand and recognize dyslexia; and
- √ enable the teacher to implement instruction that is systematic, explicit, and evidence-based to meet the educational needs of students with dyslexia.

As long as a teacher completes a single comprehensive training or combination of trainings that include the three focus areas as outlined above, he or she will have met the training requirements. Based on the requirements for the content, it is likely that the training may take about 30 hours total to complete.

**• Will a teacher receive certification as a “Dyslexia Specialist” upon completion of the required training?**

No. Individual vendors may offer some type of certification upon completion of the training, but ODE will not be awarding any type of dyslexia certification or specialization.

**• Will teachers receive PDUs for completion of the training?**

Yes. SB 612 requires that the department work collaboratively with the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to develop the list of dyslexia-related training opportunities to ensure that the training opportunities also satisfy professional development requirements for teachers. The Department will review training opportunities for alignment with the Professional Learning Standards as part of the vetting process. Districts can continue to award the PDUs upon completion of the training.

**• What is the cost for the training and who will pay?**

It is anticipated that the list of dyslexia-related training opportunities will include trainings with a range of price points. On average, a district can expect to pay about \$600 for a training, with potentially larger costs if a teacher signs up for a combination of trainings. The district is responsible for incurring the cost of the training(s) and will directly pay vendors offering training opportunities that are included on the Department’s list. The designated teacher from each K-5 school can work with their building administrator and district office to select training opportunities that best meet his/her needs and the district budget.

**• When will the list of training opportunities be available and where can I find the list?**

As soon as the OARs related to teacher training have been approved by the State Board of Education, the Department can begin the vetting process for dyslexia-related training opportunities. It is anticipated that an initial list of approved training opportunities will be released in April. The Department will continue to review training opportunities and add to

the list through July 31, 2017. The list will be posted on the dyslexia page of the ODE website: [http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms\\_BestPractice/Pages/Dyslexia.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms_BestPractice/Pages/Dyslexia.aspx)

- **When must the training be completed?**

SB 612 requires that a teacher from each K-5 school complete the training by January 1, 2018.

- **Will it be possible for an Education Service District to offer the trainings (i.e., provide the space, bring in a trainer whose training is included on the Department's list) and have the districts share the cost?**

Yes. Smaller districts can work with their Education Service District to bring in a trainer to provide a collective training session. This may be a more cost-effective option for many districts.

- **Is there a way to consider trainings that teachers have already completed to determine if they meet the requirements in SB 612?**

The Department does not have the resources to review individual teacher's training portfolios to determine if completed trainings meet the requirements outlined in SB 612. However, if a teacher has completed the same training that is included on the Department's annual list of dyslexia-related training opportunities, there is no need for the teacher to repeat that training. It can count toward meeting the requirements.

- **What will be the role of the dyslexia-trained teacher from each building?**

It is expected that the trained teacher in each building will have a good understanding of what dyslexia is and will learn to recognize signs of dyslexia manifested at each grade level. The trained teacher will act as a resource on dyslexia for others in the building as well as for parents and community members. This teacher can play an active role as a member of the building level problem solving team and can collaborate with designing Tier 2 and Tier 3 support for students identified as at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. The trained teacher is NOT expected to directly provide services to all students who demonstrate risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. The trained teacher will NOT be trained to evaluate for/diagnose dyslexia nor will the teacher who completes the training be expected to come back to the building to train colleagues. The training opportunities included on the Department's list will NOT incorporate a train the trainer model. This would require additional training time.

- **Our district is very small and rural. Are we still required to train a teacher in each K-5 school?**

A school district may petition the Superintendent of Public Instruction for a waiver from the teacher training requirements of SB 612 if the district serves 1 to 499 students, only includes one or two elementary schools with four or fewer licensed teachers per school, and the staff teach multiple grade levels, provided that the district receives services from an Educational Service District teacher who has completed the required training.

**• Will ODE be tracking the completion of the dyslexia training for teachers in each district?**

No. ODE is not required by law to track completion of the dyslexia-related training by teachers in each district nor does the Department have the resources to do so. Districts will demonstrate compliance with this requirement by signing the Division 22 Assurances. The Dyslexia Specialist from the Department will, however, contact district offices to request a list of names and contact information for the trained teachers in each district in order to create a group email distribution list for the purpose of networking and continued learning. The Dyslexia Specialist will provide additional resources and training opportunities related to dyslexia to this group as they become available.

Additional information regarding dyslexia, including the definition, OSEP Guidance Letters, and Oregon's legislation can be found on the dyslexia page of the Department's website: [http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms\\_BestPractice/Pages/Dyslexia.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms_BestPractice/Pages/Dyslexia.aspx)

Please email [carrie.thomas-beck@state.or.us](mailto:carrie.thomas-beck@state.or.us) with questions.