

November 2024

Legislative Report Iowa Dyslexia Board



Department of Education

State of Iowa
Department of Education
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Legislative Authority

[Iowa Code 256.32A](#) was signed into law in 2020. This legislation states:

1. An Iowa Dyslexia Board is established to guide, facilitate, and oversee the implementation of dyslexia instruction in Iowa and make recommendations for continued improvement of such instruction.

The Iowa Dyslexia Board shall also submit recommendations as follows:

- a. To the department regarding the required and preferred qualifications for a dyslexia consultant position required in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 60.
 - b. To the area education agencies regarding the required and preferred qualifications for dyslexia specialists required in accordance with section 273.2, subsection 11.
2. The Iowa Dyslexia Board shall consist of the following members: (as listed in Appendix A).
 3. The term of membership is three years. The terms shall be staggered so that at least four of the terms end each year, but no member serving on the initial board shall serve less than one year. The governor shall determine the length of the initial terms of office.
 4. The Iowa Dyslexia Board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly by November 15 annually.
 5. This section is repealed July 1, 2027.

Board Report Annual Summary

This section details the work of the Iowa Dyslexia Board for the 2023-2024 academic year. This is in response to Iowa Code 256.32A, which applies to the Iowa Dyslexia Board as listed above, and states, “The Iowa dyslexia board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly by November 15 annually.”

In response to this section of the code, the following actions were taken during the 2023-2024 academic year.

- The Board reviewed and continued to discuss the various groups within the State of Iowa who support students with characteristics of dyslexia, mapping the various interconnections to clarify who is doing what work across the state.
- The Board continued discussions on measuring its impact in guiding, facilitating and overseeing dyslexia in Iowa. It determined outcomes to measure its success.
- The Board received several updates related to the work of the IRRC, including:
 - the parent caregiver hub
 - the Science of Reading survey
 - eLearning Modules for teachers and parents

- o professional learning provided in a variety of formats for Iowa educators
- o several other resources to support educators and families impacted by dyslexia
- In partnership with Sterling Literacy Consulting, the Board began to develop Iowa's Dyslexia Handbook.
- The Board shared updates and support regarding the Science of Reading definition for the State of Iowa, LETRS professional learning, Dyslexia Awareness month, and individual board members contributions related to dyslexia across the State of Iowa.

Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement

This section of the report updates the availability of the dyslexia endorsement at Iowa's Institutes of Higher Education. This is in response to [Iowa Code 272.2\(22\) 22](#), which applies to the Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement. The specific Iowa Code is listed below.

272.2(22)22 By July 1, 2021, adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A, developed in collaboration with the Iowa Reading Research Center, establishing an advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement. The endorsement shall require a strong understanding of structured literacy instruction; the neurobiological nature, cognitive-linguistic correlates, developmental indicators, compensatory behaviors, potential psychological factors, and co-occurring disorders of dyslexia; demonstrated skill in administering informal and formal assessments related to dyslexia; demonstrated skill in delivery of explicit, systematic literacy intervention; demonstrated skill in developing and supporting services for students with characteristics of dyslexia including those who are eligible for services under chapter 256B or section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794, as amended; demonstrated skill in the design and implementation of accommodations and modifications; demonstrated competence in creating a dyslexia-friendly learning environment; and demonstrated skill in the use and integration of assistive technology. This endorsement shall, at a minimum, require three years of prior teaching experience and completion of a supervised practical experience.

In response to this section of the code, the following actions were taken during the 2023-2024 academic year:

- Grand View University and the University of Iowa programs did not endorse a specific instructional program.
- Grand View University and the University of Iowa have aligned their programs.
- The University of Iowa's second cohort graduated in December 2023, and its third cohort will graduate in December 2024.
- Grand View University's first cohort graduated in August 2024.

Area Education Agencies Dyslexia Specialist

This section of the report updates the employment of dyslexia specialists at every Area Education Agency (AEA). This is in response to [Iowa Code 273.2\(11\)](#) that applies to area education agencies established services and programs. The specific Iowa Code is listed below.

273.2(11) Subject to an appropriation by the general assembly for such purpose, the area education agency board shall, by July 1, 2024, dedicate at least one full-time equivalent position to maintain a dyslexia specialist. The area education agency board may hire such a specialist or may provide appropriate training to qualify an existing employee as a specialist on dyslexia. The specialist shall provide technical guidance and assistance, including but not limited to professional development, strategies, and materials to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools relating to identification of and instruction for students with characteristics of dyslexia. The specialist shall be highly trained in dyslexia and have a minimum of three years of field experience in screening, identifying, and treating dyslexia and related disorders. In the absence of an appropriation, each area education agency board is encouraged to employ a highly qualified dyslexia specialist.

In response to this section of the code, the following actions were taken during the 2023-2024 academic year:

- Iowa's AEAs and the Department of Education collaborated on the development of Iowa's Dyslexia Professional Learning Plan.
- During the 2023-2024 school year, eight of the nine AEAs employed a staff member who had completed the dyslexia specialist endorsement.
- Each AEA had a literacy staff member on the statewide literacy team.
- AEA dyslexia specialists provided parent and teacher support and training throughout the state.

Educator Preparation Programs

This section of the report updates the inclusion of dyslexia specific information in educator preparation programs. Three sub standards within [Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 79](#) that apply to all teacher preparation programs regardless of their endorsements, are included below.

1. 79.15(3) Teacher Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions standard. "Each teacher candidate demonstrates competency in literacy, to include reading theory, knowledge, strategies, and approaches; and integrating literacy instruction into content areas. The teacher candidate demonstrates competency in making appropriate accommodations for students who struggle with literacy. Demonstrated competency shall address the needs of all students, including but not limited to students with disabilities; students who are at risk of academic failure; students who have been identified as gifted and talented or English learners; and students with dyslexia, whether or not such students have been

identified as children requiring special education under Iowa Code chapter 256B. Literacy instruction shall include evidence-based best practices, determined by research, including that identified by the Iowa Reading Research Center.”

2. 79.17(5)c Administrator knowledge, skills, and dispositions standard. “The unit shall provide evidence that administrator candidates develop the ability to meet the needs of all learners, as well as ensuring teachers meet the needs of diverse learners, including:
Students who are struggling with literacy, including those with dyslexia.”
3. 79.20(2)c Other candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions standard.* “Candidates shall demonstrate the content knowledge and the pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn in accordance with the following provisions:
Students who are struggling with literacy, including those with dyslexia.”

Dyslexia-based activities are supported in educator preparation. Furthermore, unit compliance with the standards, outlined in Chapter 79, is ensured through Iowa Department of Education processes. Along with the Educator Preparation Team, the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) and the Iowa Reading Research Center support dyslexia-related efforts in educator preparation.

- Staff from the Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Higher Education and Postsecondary Readiness, presented to the Iowa Dyslexia Board on the ten-year review process with Iowa’s Higher Education Institutions. One of the items reviewed includes how each institution prepares its students to support learners with dyslexia in the classroom.
- Also discussed was the EPP Accreditation Review (seven-year cycle) Checkpoints, including:
 - Review curriculum (syllabi, activities and assessments) for Chapter 79’s Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions Standard
 - Iowa BOEE reviews curriculum exhibits, in addition to the Iowa Department of Education educational preparation team review, as a separate process from the above work (occurs at the same time - every seven years alongside the program review)
 - Analyze survey responses from current candidates and graduates in level of preparation for identifying and meeting the needs of students struggling with literacy, including dyslexia
 - Conduct interviews with faculty, students, advisory committees and graduates to verify and validate the evidence of dyslexia preparation content
- The following professional development support was provided throughout the year for instructors of teacher preparation programs.
 - Professional learning workshops related to a “Dyslexia Resource for Educator Preparation” resource guide.
 - The resource guide included important information and resources instructors from Institutes of Higher Education could use with their in-service teachers.

- Participants in the professional learning workshops included 36 attendees from 19 institutions and three agencies.

Required and Recommended Dyslexia Trainings

This section of the report updates the Dyslexia Overview Module training for Area Education Agencies (AEAs) and School Districts. This is in response to [Iowa Code 273.3\(25\)](#) AEA Training on Dyslexia and [Iowa Code 279.72](#) Teacher Training on dyslexia. The specific Iowa Codes are listed below.

273.3(25) Require, by July 1, 2024, any person employed by the area education agency who holds a license, certificate, statement of recognition, or authorization other than a coaching authorization, issued by the board of educational examiners under chapter 272, to complete the Iowa Reading Research Center dyslexia overview module. Such persons employed after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year of the employee's initial date of hire.

279.72 By July 1, 2024, the board of directors of a school district shall require all persons employed by the school district who hold a teaching license with an endorsement for prekindergarten, prekindergarten or elementary special education, or prekindergarten through grade three levels issued under chapter 272, all practitioners and paraprofessionals assigned as Title I teachers and Title I paraprofessionals under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, and all practitioners endorsed to teach English as a second language to complete the Iowa Reading Research Center dyslexia overview module. Such persons employed by the school district after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year of the employee's initial date of hire.

In response to this section of the code, the following data was collected.

DYSLEXIA OVERVIEW MODULE ENROLLMENT & COMPLETION:

Year	Enrollment Count	Completion Count
Oct '18 – Oct '19	847	594
Oct '19 – Oct '20	3,947	3,570
Oct '20 – Oct '21	3,311	3,024
Oct '21 – Oct '22	3,550	3,332
Oct '22 - Oct '23	6,798	6,416
Oct '23 - Present	17,696	16,739
Dyslexia Overview Module Grand Total	36,149	33,675

Iowa Department of Education Dyslexia Legislative Response

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Iowa Department of Education addressed many of the recommendations of the dyslexia legislation and those made by the Iowa Dyslexia Board. These items are listed below.

- Iowa is training 6,600 teachers and administrators in the foundational concepts of reading and reading instruction with the LETRS professional learning.
- A Science of Reading statement was published by the Department of Education on the Literacy webpage to clarify the Department's stance on literacy instruction.
- During Dyslexia Awareness month in October, the Governor signed a proclamation. In addition, headline stories and other social media awareness posts were sent by the Iowa Department of Education.
- Work began on the development of a dyslexia handbook.
- The Department of Education completed a review and revision of state literacy standards, including enhancements to the foundational reading skills.

Iowa Dyslexia Board Priorities 2024-2025

In conjunction with the Iowa Department of Education, the following priorities were established for the 2024-2025 academic year.

- **Priority 1:** Communicate the dyslexia handbook to parents/families/teachers upon completion.
- **Priority 2:** Expand educator understanding and practices with the Science of Reading.
- **Priority 3:** Develop guidance, tools and resources for a dyslexia professional development plan to be used by the Iowa Department of Education, AEAs, and school districts across Iowa.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Department will actively seek feedback and guidance from the Iowa Dyslexia Board on each of these priorities.

Appendix A: Iowa Dyslexia Board Membership List

Member	Term Serving	Represents
Bambi Boggs Ottumwa CSD	1st Term 12/1/2023-6/30/26	Representative of Decoding Dyslexia Iowa as an individual with dyslexia
Dr. Kim Buryanek Denison CSD	1st Term 7/1/24 - 6/30/27	School superintendent
Kristen Craig Waukee CSD	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/25	Elementary core literacy teacher
Matt Cretsinger Marshalltown CSD	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/25	Special education administrator
Director Shawn Datchuk IRRC	Standing Beginning 7/1/24	Representative of the Iowa Reading Research Center
Michelle Geistkemper NICC	1st Term 7/1/24 - 6/30/27	Representative of an institution of higher education in Iowa
Katie Greving Decoding Dyslexia Iowa	1st Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/24	Representative of Decoding Dyslexia Iowa as a parent of a child/children with dyslexia
Megan Hunemuller Decoding Dyslexia Iowa	1st Term 7/1/24 - 6/30/26	Representative of Decoding Dyslexia Iowa as a parent of a child/children with dyslexia
Nina Lorimor-Easley	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/25	Provider certified in structured literacy reading program
James Northwick Atlantic CSD	2nd Term 8/30/22 to 6/30/27	School administrator
Katy Severe Grand View University	1st Term 7/1/24 - 6/30/27	Representative of an institution of higher education in Iowa
Director McKenzie Snow	Standing Beginning 7/1/24	Director, Department of Education
Wanda Steuri	Standing Beginning 7/1/23	Department of Education (Iowa Department of Education Dyslexia and Science of Reading Consultant)
Kay Stork CAM CSD	2nd Term 6/30/22 to 6/30/25	Reading specialist
Dr. Tammy Wilgenbusch University of Iowa, Stead Family Dept of Pediatrics	1st Term 9/7/22 to 6/30/25	Psychologist or speech language pathologist licensed in the state of Iowa with experience in diagnosing dyslexia
Shane Williams Mississippi Bend AEA	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/27	Representative of an area education agency

