State Dyslexia Policy: What Drives It, How It’s Developed, and What Makes it Work (Or Not)

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a changing policy landscape
SREB States With Dyslexia Policies, 2010
Considering new legislation in the 2019 session

SREB States With Dyslexia Policies, 2019

Teacher training

Screening

State and local dyslexia interventionists

Accountability for dyslexia requirements

Screening, intervention, state handbook, more

Screening, preservice training, teacher training, state handbook, more
Current Legislation in Georgia

- Pilot screening and intervention programs in 3 school districts
- Universal screening in kindergarten (eff. 2020)
- Screening for struggling readers in grades 1-3
- Training for preservice teachers
- Optional training for current teachers
- Dyslexia handbook
- Dyslexia endorsement for teachers
- District reporting
Current Legislation in Georgia

- Universal screening in kindergarten
- Screening for some students in grades 1-2
- Screening for struggling readers in grades 3-12
- State dyslexia consultant

House Bill 40
How a Bill is Passed in the Georgia Legislature

1. Legislator sees need for a new law or changes in existing law and decides to introduce a bill.
2. Legislator goes to Office of Legislative Counsel. There, attorney advises legislator on legal issues and drafts bill.
3. Legislator files bill with the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate.
4. On legislative day after filing, bill is formally introduced. In chamber, bill's title is read during period of first readings.
5. Immediately after first reading, presiding officer assigns bill to a standing committee.
6. In the House only, on next legislative day, Clerk reads bill's title (second reading) in chamber, although actual bill is now in committee. In Senate, second reading comes after bill is reported favorably from committee.
7. Bill is reported favorably by committee and returned to Clerk or Secretary.
8. Bill is considered by committee. Author and other legislators may testify. If controversial, public hearings may be held.
9. The Rules Committee of each house meets and from bills on General Calendar prepares a Rules Calendar for the next day's floor consideration.
10. Clerk or Secretary prepares a General Calendar of bills favorably reported from committee.
11. Once presiding officer calls bill up from Rules Calendar, Clerk or Secretary reads bill's title (third reading). Bill is now ready for floor debate, amendments, and voting.
12. After debate, main question is called and members vote. If bill is approved by majority of total membership of that house, it is sent to the other house.
13. If second house passes bill, it is returned to house where bill was introduced. If changes are accepted....
14. If first house rejects changes and second house insists, a conference committee may be appointed. If committee report is accepted by both houses....
15. Bill is enrolled and sent to the Governor (if requested). Otherwise, all enrolled bills sent to Governor following adjournment sine die.
16. Governor may sign bill or do nothing, and bill becomes law. Governor may veto bill, which requires two-thirds of members of each house to override.

Acts and other laws enacted at the session are printed in the Georgia Laws series. Also, act is incorporated into the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Act becomes effective the following July 1, unless a different effective date is provided in act.
The Policy Process, Simplified

1. Identify Problem
2. Gather Information
3. Identify Solution
4. Build Support
5. Pass Policy
A Forgotten Part of the Policy Process

Pass Policy → Implement Policy
Please go to the following URL on your smart device:

PollEv.com/samanthadurr652
The Heavy Lift: Implementation Challenges

• Interpretation
• Resources
• Infrastructure
• Fidelity
(c) Students will be screened for characteristics of dyslexia using screening instruments currently in place for use in public schools.

Kindergarten students who fail the reading screening in the fall should be provided with tiered intervention as determined by the Problem Solving Team. Dyslexia-specific screening for students in kindergarten should not be conducted prior to December of the kindergarten year (winter benchmark period). Dyslexia-specific screening for students in kindergarten will provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate:

1. Letter naming skill
2. Letter sound skill
3. Phoneme segmentation skill
4. Nonsense word fluency skill
Dyslexia-specific intervention shall mean evidenced-based, specialized reading, writing, and spelling instruction that is multisensory in nature equipping students to simultaneously use multiple senses (vision, hearing, touch, and movement). Dyslexia-specific intervention employs direct instruction of systematic and cumulative content. The sequence must begin with the easiest and most basic elements and progress methodically to more difficult material. Each step must also be based on those already learned. Concepts must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory. Components of dyslexic-specific intervention include instruction targeting phonological awareness, sound symbol association, syllable structure, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
Implementation Challenges: Interpretation

Law

GaDOE

RESAs

Districts

Public

GaPSC

Ed Prep

Districts

Schools

Administrators

Teachers

Schools

Administrators

Teachers
• **Clarify or report interpretation problems**
  – May depend on your relationship with a teacher or school
  – Report compliance problems to GaDOE so it can assist

• **Convey continuing problems to state board member**
  – Policy may need to be tweaked or clarified
Implementation Challenges: Resources

- Money
- Staff
- Training
- Materials

Good access to resources
Example Elementary School in Rural Georgia

Enrollment: 231 students

Teaching Staff: 17
- Pre-K: 2
- Kindergarten: 3
- 1st Grade: 2
- 2nd Grade: 2
- 3rd Grade: 2
- 4th Grade: 2
- 5th Grade: 2
- Special Education: 2

Support Staff: 2
- Media Specialist
- Counselor

Administrative Staff: 3
- Principal P-8
- Assistant Principal P-8
- Administrative Assistant

68% economically disadvantaged
What is the biggest resource challenge this school might face in implementing requirements for dyslexia screening and intervention?
Implementation Challenges: Resources

- Money
- Staff
- Training
- Materials
Resources: How You Can Help

**Advocates:** Advise schools of any grant or scholarship opportunities, free or low-cost training, etc.

**Parents:** Work with teachers in your local school or social circle; share knowledge and resources

**Teachers:** Serve as dyslexia resource for your school; work with principal to identify resources

**Students:** Help your teachers understand resources you may already use, like assistive technology
Implementation Challenges: Infrastructure

Knowledge
Leadership
Agency Coordination
Clear Guidance
Implementation Fidelity: Is something being put into place as it was designed?
Implementation is Still Not the End of Policy

Pass Policy

Implement Policy

Still not the finish line!
The Living Policy Process

Implement Policy → Evaluate Efforts → Collect Feedback → Revise Policy → Implement Policy
More information is available at: www.sreb.org/dyslexia

Questions? Email Samantha.Durrance@SREB.org