NEW YORK STATE DYSLEXIA AND DYSGRAPHIA TASK FORCE:

Report and Recommendations

December 2024

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Prepared by the New York State Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Task Force for submission to the New York State Governor, Commissioner of Education, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the Assembly, pursuant to legislation S.2599/A.133 of the 2023-2024 legislative session.

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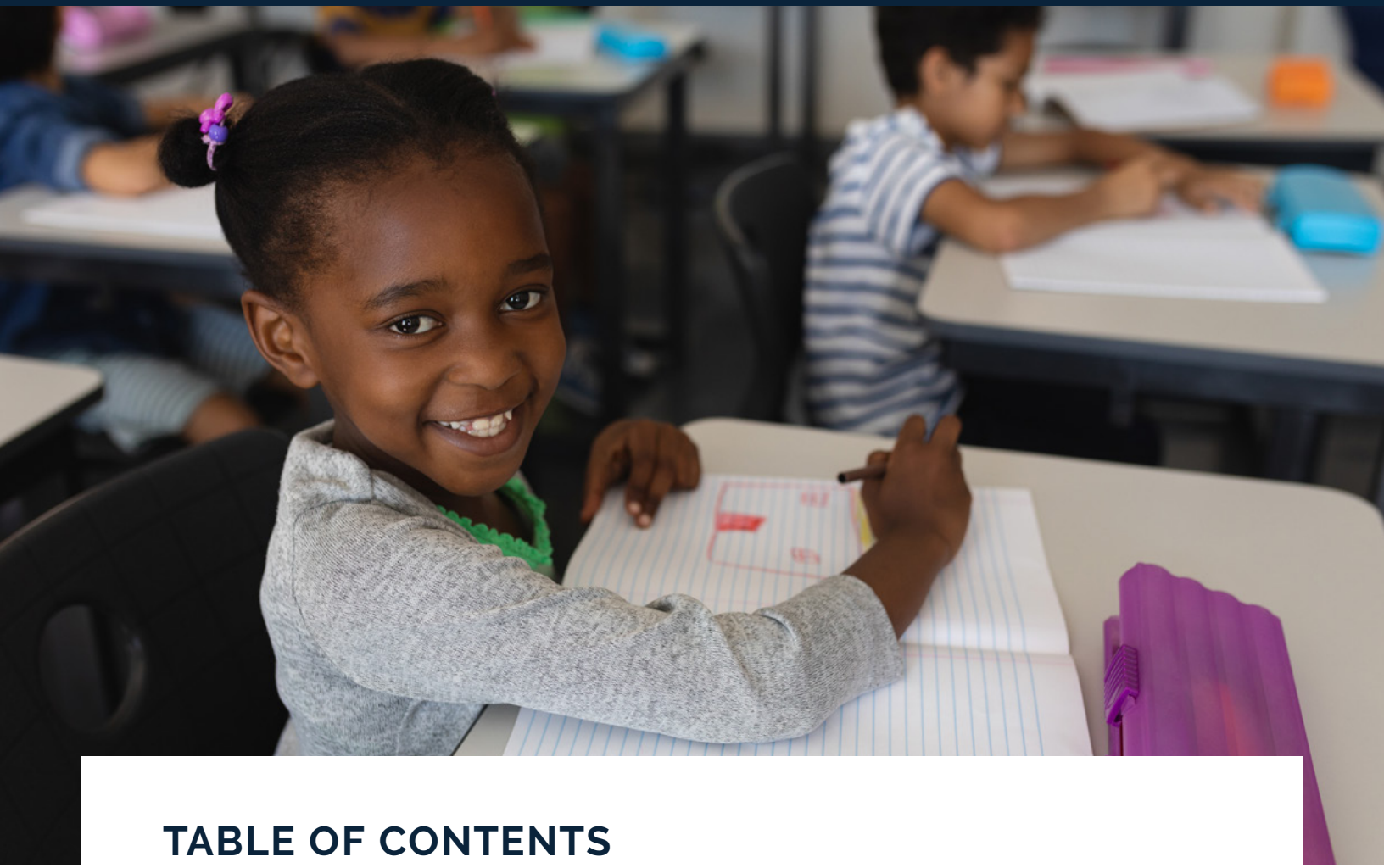

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings and recommendations from the New York State Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Task Force for submission to the New York State Commissioner of Education, the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly. The Task Force was established by Chapter 76 of the Laws of 2024. Its purposes were to "examine appropriate and effective evidence-based dyslexia and dysgraphia screening methods, reading interventions, and other educational supports" and to "prepare and submit a report of its findings and recommendations."

The Task Force consisted of 49 members with diverse professional roles, expertise, and lived experiences related to dyslexia and dysgraphia, and its activities were supported by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), representatives from Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and Policy Studies Associates (PSA). Members met virtually seven times from May to December of 2024 and communicated by email between meetings. In addition, three public hearings associated with the Task Force generated 99 oral testimonies and 12 written testimonies. Meeting discussions, public testimony, and research informed draft recommendations, which the Task Force collaboratively refined and prioritized into the final recommendations presented in this report.

This report is organized to present information relevant to policy discussions aiming to improve services for students who have been or may be diagnosed as having dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

1. **Task Force Background –** This section describes the Task Force's authorizing legislation, structure, activities, and process for developing findings and recommendations.

2. **State Context –** This section provides information about key state factors in policy and practice related to dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, including legislation and regulations, required procedures for identification and services, teacher certification and preparation, and state-level educational initiatives.

3. **Research Overview –** This section briefly summarizes research related to dyslexia and dysgraphia, addressing the following: definitions of dyslexia and dysgraphia, prevalence, assessments for identification and diagnosis, and instructional approaches and interventions.

4. **Recommendations –** The Task Force provides 14 recommendations for state-level policy makers. Each recommendation includes a brief discussion to clarify the recommendation's intent, address state context, and provide examples from other states.

5. **Appendices –** Appendices include: a list of Task Force members (Appendix A); aggregate Task Force member ratings for each recommendation (Appendix B); and a list of references and resources included in this report (Appendix C).

Table 1 summarizes each of the 14 Task Force recommendations.

Table 1: Recommendations of the Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Task Force

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO DEVELOPING A STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FOR IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING STRUGGLING READERS AND WRITERS

1. NYSED should adopt updated definitions of dyslexia and dysgraphia that reflect the current understanding of dyslexia and dysgraphia as a brain-based learning difference that is neurobiological in origin.
2. The Governor or Legislature should fund a position at the state level dedicated to oversight of policy and regulations related to reading and writing difficulties that may be associated with dyslexia and dysgraphia.
3. NYSED or the Board of Regents should create a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia.
4. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should collect data to inventory, synthesize, and publicize best practices for serving students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other related reading or writing difficulties.
5. The Board of Regents should set explicit standards and requirements for teacher preparation programs and certifications that address dyslexia and dysgraphia.

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO SCREENING AND PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION & SUPPORT

6. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require that LEAs implement universal screening of all students in grades K-5 and new entrants at least annually for reading and writing difficulties that may or may not be related to dyslexia or dysgraphia.
7. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require LEAs to then screen students identified as at risk for developing reading or writing difficulties (per recommendation #6) specifically for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.
8. NYSED should develop explicit and detailed guidelines for LEA selection of dyslexia and dysgraphia screeners that align with the updated definitions, include modifications or alternatives for diverse student groups (e.g., non-verbal learners, ELLs/MLLs, visually or hearing impaired), and meet best practices for the identification of potential dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, such as those best practices identified by the International Dyslexia Association.
9. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require LEAs or schools to notify and meet with the student's parent or guardian if a student meets the dyslexia and/or dysgraphia screeners' criteria for identifying the level of potential risk for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.
10. NYSED or the Board of Regents should identify opportunities to collaborate with other state agencies (e.g., the New York State Health Department) to improve access to comprehensive diagnostic evaluation for dyslexia and dysgraphia for students and parents or guardians, such as by supporting the "Dyslexia Diagnosis Access Act" (A.2898/S.5481).

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO FACILITATING LEA CAPACITY AND IMPLEMENTATION TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT STRUGGLING READERS & WRITERS

11. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should develop and disseminate informational tools and briefs on dyslexia and dysgraphia to immediately begin to increase awareness and inform action.
12. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should work with the MTSS-I initiative and other statewide partners (e.g., higher education institutions, literacy intervention training providers) to develop a framework for serving students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.
13. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should create a comprehensive guidebook on dyslexia and dysgraphia for pre-service and in-service professional development providers, LEA leaders, school administrators, educators, and specialists.
14. The Governor or legislature should allocate funds to support LEA implementation of screening and services related to dyslexia and dysgraphia, such as through a pilot initiative.

TASKFORCE BACKGROUND

LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE

The New York State (NYS) Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Task Force was established by Chapter 76 of the Laws of 2024. The charge of the NYS Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Task Force was to "examine appropriate and effective evidence-based dyslexia and dysgraphia screening methods, reading interventions, and other educational supports for students in kindergarten through grade five" and prepare a report with recommendations.

The Task Force was required to consist of at least 10 members, including the Commissioner of Education or their designee, and at least one representative from each of six categories: (1) individuals with dyslexia or dysgraphia; (2) parents of individuals with dyslexia or dysgraphia; (3) professionals who specialize in educating individuals with dyslexia or dysgraphia; (4) professionals who specialize in identifying, evaluating, and diagnosing individuals with dyslexia or dysgraphia; (5) experts in dyslexia or dysgraphia from an institution of higher education; and (6) public school teachers who specialize in teaching literacy and evidence-based reading instruction.

Additionally, the Task Force was required to hold at least two public hearings to gather information to inform its final report on findings and recommendations. This final report is required to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education, the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the Assembly.

TASK FORCE STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

The Task Force met **seven** times from **May to December of 2024**, and communicated by email outside of this meeting time. Representatives from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) managed the meetings, with support from Policy Studies Associates (PSA).

The Task Force consisted of **three subcommittees**; each subcommittee focused on one of three areas identified in the legislation:

SCREENING METHODS	READING INTERVENTIONS	EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS

Membership

The Task Force consisted of **49 members**, exceeding the requirements of the legislation in total and by membership category. This included the Commissioner of Education's designee to serve as the Chair of the Task Force. Additionally, three BOCES representatives, five NYSED staff, and seven PSA staff supported Task Force activities, but they were not considered members. Table 2 summarizes the number of Task Force members by the primary category in which they self-identified, and the number of Task Force members required for each category as established by legislation. A full list of Task Force members can be found in Appendix A.

Table 2: Task Force Membership

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	NUMBER ON TASK FORCE	NUMBER REQUIRED BY LEGISLATION
Individuals with dyslexia or dysgraphia	3	1
Parents of an individual with dyslexia or dysgraphia	9	1
Professionals who specialize in educating individuals with dyslexia or dysgraphia	14	1
Professionals who specialize in identifying, evaluating, and diagnosing individuals with dyslexia or dysgraphia	10	2
Experts in dyslexia or dysgraphia from an institute of higher learning	10	1
Public School teachers who specialize in teaching literacy and evidence-based reading instruction	2	1
Commissioner of Education or designee, serving as the Chair of the Task Force	1	1

Meetings

Seven Task Force meetings were held virtually, each lasting 1.5-2 hours and occurring between May and December 2024. Members engaged in whole group and subcommittee work through discussion and virtual chat during each meeting. Task Force members joined one of three subcommittees based on their self-identified area of expertise. Each subcommittee had between 14-17 members, and at least two NYSED staff members participated in subcommittee discussions. NYSED assigned one BOCES representative to chair each subcommittee.

PSA was contracted by NYSED to facilitate the monthly Task Force meetings from September through December, and to support the Task Force in developing recommendations and preparing the report. PSA created an online Padlet hub, which served as a repository for Task Force members to share resources, comments, and feedback beyond subcommittee meeting discussions.

TASK FORCE MEETINGS WERE HELD:

- May 13, 2024;
- July 10, 2024;
- August 13, 2024;
- September 11, 2024;
- October 8, 2024;
- November 7, 2024; and
- December 11, 2024

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The legislation required the Task Force to hold at least two public hearings to obtain input from members of the public; NYSED organized three public hearings. Each hearing lasted 3 hours or until every speaker had testified. Two hearings were held in person (in Albany and in New York City) and one hearing was virtual. Members of the public were also encouraged to submit written testimony at any point in time if they were unable to make any of the hearings. In total, **99 oral testimonies** were given across the three public hearings, and **12 written testimonies** were submitted to NYSED. Table 3 provides further detail regarding the public hearings.

Table 3: Public Hearings

DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING	FORMAT & LOCATION	NUMBER OF ORAL TESTIMONIES
September 16, 2024	In-person at the State Education Building in Albany	**15**
September 23, 2024	Virtual (Zoom)	**51**
October 1, 2024	In-person at The Windward School in NYC	**33**

PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

Drafting Recommendations

In meetings and subcommittee discussions, the Task Force reviewed and discussed current New York State policies related to dyslexia and dysgraphia, research and practice literature, similar work in other states, and written and oral testimony from the public hearings. Drawing on these sources and members' own experiences and expertise, the Task Force identified themes and challenges related to serving the needs of students with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, and they identified policy levers to inform recommendations.

PSA synthesized information gathered through Task Force discussions, hearing testimony, and review of literature to draft preliminary Task Force recommendations for review and discussion in the October meeting. The draft recommendations were shared with members prior to the meeting and discussed in detail in each subcommittee. Task Force members were also encouraged to provide additional feedback using Padlet or by email to ensure the perspectives of all members were captured.

PSA revised the draft recommendations based on the October Task Force subcommittee discussions and written feedback. The revised recommendations were provided to the Task Force members prior to the November meeting. During the November meeting, Task Force members were assigned new groups—rather than subcommittees— to review, discuss, and provide input on all recommendations.

Finalizing Recommendations

PSA finalized the recommendations incorporating Task Force member feedback from the November meeting. The final 14 recommendations were emailed to Task Force members along with a survey that asked members to indicate the extent to which they believe each recommendation is a priority, and to offer any final comments or concerns related to the recommendations. These survey responses are included in Appendix B of this report.

This full report, including recommendations, was presented to the Task Force members to review at the December meeting prior to submission to the Commissioner of Education, the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly.

STATE CONTEXT

LEGISLATION RELATED TO DYSLEXIA/DYSGRAPHIA AND LITERACY

State Insurance Law

In December 2024, Governor Kathy Hochul signed the Dyslexia Diagnosis Access Act (S5481A/A.2898A) into law, requiring commercial health insurance policies to cover comprehensive neuropsychological exams for dyslexia. These exams have the purpose of diagnosing dyslexia and determining an individual's psychological, emotional, and educational wellness.

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education

Part 200 of the Commissioner's Regulations addresses special education, with implications for the education of students identified with dyslexia and dysgraphia. Section 200.1 of the Regulations defines learning disability as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken and/or written." Conditions that include dyslexia and dysgraphia may be included as a learning disability in special education evaluation and services. Section 200.1 does not explicitly define "dyslexia" or "dysgraphia."

Section 200.4 of the Regulations specifies procedures for special education referral, evaluation, individualized education programs (IEPs), placement, and review. These procedures are relevant for students who may be eligible for special education services due to a suspected condition of dyslexia or dysgraphia.

Current State Definition of Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

In Chapter 216 of the Laws of 2017, Governor Andrew Cuomo amended New York State Education Law, authorizing NYSED to issue guidance for school districts on the specific educational needs of students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. In response, NYSED produced several documents for district and public use:

- **Students with Disabilities Resulting from Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia: Questions and Answers –** A twelve-page resource that draws on law and regulation to answer common questions and provides the following "working definitions of the terms dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia":

"**DYSLEXIA** refers to a learning disorder affecting a student's reading skills. It is often characterized by difficulties in areas including (but not limited to) phonological processing (e.g., the ability to efficiently identify, blend, and manipulate speech sounds and syllables in words), decoding, reading fluency, and/or spelling. Reading for a student with dyslexia may be inaccurate and/or slow and effortful. Many students with dyslexia perform better on tasks involving listening comprehension than tasks involving reading comprehension. Dyslexia is associated with brain-based phonological impairments, not intellectual functioning or visual problems."

"**DYSGRAPHIA** refers to a learning disorder affecting a student's writing skills. Dysgraphia is often characterized by difficulties impacting areas including (but not limited to) legibility and automaticity. Students with dysgraphia may have difficulty writing in a clear, legible, and organized manner."

- **Meeting the Needs of Students with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia –** A two-page flyer that specifies characteristics of dyslexia and dysgraphia and includes information about how to request an initial evaluation for an IEP.

- **Identification of Students with Learning Disabilities within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) –** A flowchart that specifies the processes through which students can be identified for special education services in coordination with a local MTSS and Response to Intervention (RTI) framework.

IEP Procedure and Due Process Complaints

Section 200.4 of the Commissioner's Regulations specifies procedures related to special education evaluation and services. Under New York State law, dyslexia or dysgraphia may be included in a student's IEP. If a local Committee on Special Education (CSE) or Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) includes dyslexia and/or dysgraphia in a student's IEP, recommendations may prescribe supports specifically addressing dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

Parents and school districts may file a Due Process Complaint Notice or a Request for Impartial Hearing to resolve disagreements about the identification, evaluation, or placement of a student with a disability or suspected of having a disability. Section 200.5 of the Commissioner's regulations specify due process procedures, and NYSED provides additional guidance on dispute resolution options. Forms of complaint include:

- **Impartial Hearings and Mediations** between trained third parties, parents, and school districts. These meetings may conclude with binding, written agreements enforceable under state law.
- **State Complaints** to NYSED for alleged violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), state laws and/or regulations. NYSED may then conduct investigations of alleged violations, and if applicable, provide corrective actions.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND PREPARATION

Teacher certification and teacher preparation program requirements, for the most part, do not specifically address dyslexia or dysgraphia. Nearly all certification types only require generalized preparation in reading, writing, and learning disabilities, with the exception of specialized graduate programs providing certification in Literacy.

Teacher Preparation Program Requirements

New York State defines core requirements for different types of teacher preparation programs.

- **Program requirements for certification in Early Childhood Education (Birth through Grade 2) and Childhood Education (Grades 1-6)** include the study of teaching of literacy skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, programs are required to provide field experience in understanding the needs of students with disabilities. However, the terms "dyslexia" and "dysgraphia" do not appear in program requirements for Early Childhood Education and Childhood Education Certification.

- **Program requirements for certification in Literacy (All Grades)** include instruction on teaching and assessing literacy performance, including identifying dyslexia. Candidates cannot enroll in Literacy certification preparation programs unless they have already completed requirements for an initial classroom certification (such as Early Childhood Education and Childhood Education), and Literacy programs lead to a master's or higher graduate-level degree.

- **There are other certification types for which there are educator preparation requirements** that could but do not explicitly address dyslexia and dysgraphia, such as English to Speakers of Other Languages (All Grades) and Students with Disabilities (All Grades).

Teacher Certification Examinations

To acquire a New York State certificate for employment in the state's public schools, educators typically must pass the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations, including the Educating All Students (EAS) Test as well as Content Specialty Tests (CST) relevant for their certification area and grade level. The EAS and some CSTs assess aspects of teaching literacy using research- or evidence-based methods. However, these exams address literacy and disabilities broadly and do not test specifically for competencies in identifying or supporting students with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia specifically.

CURRENT STATE POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The Governor's office, New York State Legislature, and NYSED are engaged in proposing and implementing a variety of initiatives and policies to address literacy across New York State, each having potential implications for services related to dyslexia and dysgraphia. There is an opportunity to coordinate and align various state efforts to ensure that students with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia receive the education they need.

Back to Basics Reading Plan

In April 2024, Governor Kathy Hochul announced the Back to Basics Reading Plan and a commitment of $10 million to the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) to train 20,000 teachers across New York State using best practices grounded in the science of reading. NYSUT was required to submit a plan for executing this professional learning to NYSED prior to launching the initiative. NYSED will provide school districts with instructional best practices, and districts will be required to certify their curriculum's alignment with those best practices annually starting in September 2025. The 124 NYS Teacher Centers (a NYSED-approved professional development provider), along with the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) will administer pre-service and in-service professional development and microcredentialing programs.

New York Path Forward Initiative

Since Fall 2023, New York State has partnered with the Hunt Institute to enact The Path Forward Initiative, with the goals of transforming teacher preparation in literacy instruction and integrating the science of reading into preparation program curricula and certification requirements. NYSED, the Hunt Institute, and Literacy Academy Collective (LAC), an organization committed to addressing illiteracy for students with dyslexia, are leading the initiative with regular engagement from a broad range of stakeholders, including higher education leaders, district administrators, teachers, BOCES, and community advocates. The New York State Action Plan: The Path Forward was released in October 2024.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports Integrated (MTSS-I) Center

Through a U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs State Personnel Development Grant, NYSED established the statewide MTSS-I Center to support education organizations to deliver evidence-based practices within a tiered system of support. The Center will select and support 29 public school districts to implement MTSS-I through funding, professional development, and technical assistance. Statewide, the Center is a hub for pre-service and in-service supports and professional development in implementing MTSS interventions.

Literacy Initiative and Curriculum Review Guidance

NYSED and the Board of Regents created a series of resources aligned to the science of reading. In June 2024, NYSED published a K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide on its Literacy Initiative webpage as an optional resource for districts to use in choosing and implementing K-3 curricula aligned to evidence-based practices. NYSED also published on its webpage a series of seven Science of Reading Literacy Briefs to strengthen educator understanding of the principles of evidence-based literacy education (a Roadmap for briefs can be found here). NYSED hosts conferences to discuss research-based practices for literacy in Prek-12 education.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Task Force collected and examined research-based evidence related to: (1) screening for dyslexia and dysgraphia, (2) reading interventions, and (3) educational supports. This section provides a summary of the research and current scientific understanding of dyslexia and dysgraphia; screening methods; diagnostic/comprehensive evaluations; literacy and reading instruction; and interventions for dyslexia and dysgraphia. This research informed the development of the recommendations in this report.

DEFINITIONS AND PREVALENCE OF DYSLEXIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DYSGRAPHIA

Dyslexia

The definition of dyslexia has been debated and there is not one universally accepted definition. However, researchers have identified three core dimensions across nationally and internationally recognized definitions. As summarized by the National Center on Improving Literacy, those core dimensions are:

1.

ORIGIN

Dyslexia is a brain-based disorder that is frequently associated with difficulties in phonological processing, cognitive processing, or both.

2.

ATTRIBUTES

Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties in foundational skills that involve the ability to read and spell words accurately and fluently. It also involves unexpected difficulties in reading in relation to other cognitive abilities.

3.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACTORS

Dyslexia and the reading difficulties associated with it are not the result of lack of access or exposure to phonics instruction.[1]

One of the definitions included in the analysis comes from The International Dyslexia Association (IDA), a widely recognized organization that provides advocacy, resources and services related to dyslexia and other related learning differences. The IDA convened dozens of expert researchers and practitioners to adopt the following consensus definition in 2002, which has been adopted by many states in education codes:

> **"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."**

[1] Miciak, J., & Fletcher, J. M. (2020). The critical role of instructional response for identifying dyslexia and other learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 53*(5), 343-353. https://www.improvingliteracy.org/brief/commonalities-across-definitions-dyslexia/index.html

People with dyslexia exhibit brain activity when reading that differs from that of other readers, including readers with other learning issues. Estimates of dyslexia's prevalence range from less than 5 percent to 20 percent of the population.[2] An estimated 50 percent of children with dyslexia also have family members with dyslexia.

Developmental Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a lesser-known condition than dyslexia. The IDA defines developmental dysgraphia as "a specific learning disability that affects how easily children acquire written language and how well they use written language to express their thoughts."[3] This report uses the term dysgraphia to refer to developmental dysgraphia. Dysgraphia can also manifest following some type of head or brain trauma; this is called acquired dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is commonly misdiagnosed or undiagnosed entirely. The causes of dysgraphia remain unidentified, but experts believe there is a genetic link as dysgraphia often runs in families. Writing is a complex task, and several areas of the brain are involved in the process.

Symptoms of dysgraphia are often misattributed to problems with a motor skill development; however, there is evidence that dysgraphia is a brain-based condition instead. Dysgraphia impacts orthographic coding, or the ability to "store unfamiliar written words in working memory while the letters in the word are analyzed during word learning or the ability to create permanent memory of written words linked to their pronunciation and meaning."[4] Dysgraphia may occur in isolation or alongside dyslexia and/or other learning disabilities such as attention-deficit disorder (ADHD).

Estimates of the prevalence of dysgraphia range from 10 percent to 30 percent of the population.[5] Current research indicates a genetic link, as dysgraphia often runs in families.

ASSESSMENTS FOR DYSLEXIA AND DYSGRAPHIA

Children with dyslexia and dysgraphia benefit from early intervention and specialized instruction, elevating the importance of identification and formal diagnoses. There are recognized methods for this identification backed by empirically based research. Assessment is a multi-step progressive set of procedures, beginning with universal screening, followed by additional classroom supports that when unsuccessful lead to formal diagnostic testing. Each of these have specific purposes. The IDA recommends universal screening for all students in the primary grades.

Dyslexia and dysgraphia can be screened for in the general classroom setting, but at times additional testing is required by specialists such as developmental psychologists. Importantly, screening processes have particular requirements to return accurate results. These specificities are noted below, alongside information about specific methods of dyslexia and dysgraphia identification.

[2] Wagner, R. K., Zirps, F. A., Edwards, A. A., Wood, S. G., Joyner, R. E., Becker, B. J., Liu, G., & Beal, B. (2020). The Prevalence of Dyslexia: A New Approach to its Estimation. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 53*(5), 354–365. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219420920377
[3] International Dyslexia Association (IDA). (2020). *Understanding Dysgraphia*. https://dyslexiaida.org/understanding-dysgraphia-2/
[4] IDA, 2020.
[5] Kushki, A., Schwellnus, H., Ilyas, F., & Chau, T. (2011). Changes in kinetics and kinematics of handwriting during a prolonged writing task in children with and without dysgraphia. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 32(3), 1058–1064. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2011.01.026

The IDA outlines four purposes for assessment:[6]

- **Universal Screening** determines a student's risk for reading difficulty and the need for intervention;
- **Intervention Planning** to make data- based decisions for instruction informed by results of testing;
- **Progress Monitoring** to determine if progress is adequate or if more (or different) intervention is required; and
- **Diagnostic Evaluation** to identify an individual's learning strengths and weaknesses and likely source of academic problems—and to determine if the profile fits the definition of a learning disorder (diagnosis)

Universal Screening

Universal screening is used to determine risk for reading difficulty and the need for intervention. These screeners are easy to administer and take little time. Their purpose is to identify students with warning signs of reading problems, including, but not limited to dyslexia and dysgraphia. Universal screeners identify students in need of additional supports and can signal the need for diagnostic testing for dyslexia and dysgraphia. In their own right they are not meant to diagnose either condition.

UNIVERSAL SCREENERS:

- » Are quickly and easily administered;
- » Are accompanied by a standard set of directions for administration, scoring and interpretation of results;
- » Vary by grade level; and
- » Should be administered in a student's dominant language in the case of Multi-Language Learners.

Screening can occur as early as preschool, but no later than kindergarten. All students should be screened, not just students flagged as "at risk" or already demonstrating "reading failure." Screeners identify students who are in need of additional supports through RTI or MTSS systems. When students receive but do not respond to these additional supports it is recommended that they be further tested for dyslexia (and by extension other learning disabilities such as dysgraphia), gathering additional information to guide subsequent supports, instruction, and monitoring.

The IDA recommends screening for K-2 students at least three times a year. Twenty states have already adopted this practice in state policy or exceeded it. An additional 16 states have adopted a universal screening policy that partially meets these criteria. For example, these states may specify required screening in fewer grades (e.g. grades K-1) or fewer times per year (e.g., once or twice per year), while others may not specify when screeners must be administered.[7,8] New York State has not adopted this recommended screening practice to date.

[6] International Dyslexia Association. (2019). *Universal Screening : K-2 Reading*. https://dyslexiaida.org/universal-screening-k-2-reading/
[7] Olson, L. (2023, June). *The reading revolution: How states are scaling literacy reform*. Washington, DC: Future Ed. https://www.future-ed.org/teaching-children-to-read-one-state-at-a-time/
[8] Oregon Department of Education, Chapter 581 Division 22 Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools. https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/viewSingleRule.action?ruleVrsnRsn=251498
[9] International Dyslexia Association. (2023) *English Learners and Dyslexia*. https://dyslexiaida.org/english-learners-and-dyslexia/

Further, students who are English Language Learners/Multilanguage Learners (ELLs/MLLs) should be included in assessment. However, careful consideration must be made for ELLs/MLLs when determining best practices for screening and assessing for dyslexia.[9]

A comprehensive list of universal screeners for reading and math, with information on accuracy, reliability and validity, format of administration and the time required for administration is available from the National Center on Intensive Intervention. Some of these screeners take as little as two minutes to administer. Some states specify a list of approved screeners for local education agencies (LEAs), though not all. For example, Oregon provides a list of approved universal screening tools for risk factors of dyslexia with information on cost, professional development, administration guidelines, and considerations for use.

Diagnostic/Comprehensive Evaluation

Comprehensive evaluation is needed for formal diagnosis of both dyslexia and dysgraphia. Under the federal IDEA, students officially classified as having a learning disability are entitled to "free and appropriate education." Further, IDEA guarantees that students with disabilities receive special education and related services. Students who do not respond to graduated interventions under RTI/MTSS, should receive comprehensive evaluation to formally ascertain whether they have dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or other learning disabilities.

Comprehensive evaluation and formal diagnosis of dyslexia and dysgraphia are typically caried out by a professional, such as a licensed psychologist or neuropsychologist who specializes in the assessment and diagnosis of learning disabilities. School psychologists may also diagnose dyslexia, dysgraphia, or other learning differences. However, not all schools have a psychologist on staff or the capacity to provide comprehensive evaluation services, in which case external expertise may be warranted. Other professionals, such as social workers, counselors, teachers, or reading specialists may also be involved in the evaluation process.

MEETING THE ACADEMIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA AND DYSGRAPHIA

With early identification followed by the right instruction, nearly all dyslexic children can learn to read. In fact, research demonstrates that students who are provided with high-quality direct instruction at an early age, will often exhibit repatterning of the brain, such that scans look like typical reading brains.[10] Similarly, individuals with dysgraphia can overcome many of the impediments presented by the condition, with proper intervention. Below is an overview of the building blocks of instructional interventions for students with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

Direct Instruction

The National Institute for Direct Instruction defines this approach as an "explicit, carefully sequenced and scripted model of instruction…based on a landmark empirical research study and numerous follow-up studies over the last thirty years about how children actually learn."[11] The Science of Reading and Structured Literacy both build upon Direct Instruction, which benefits all children, particularly those with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

Science of Reading

The science of reading is not a specified program, but rather an approach to teaching reading, based on a large, continuously evolving body of research about how children learn to read and effective practices that incorporate that research. The National Center on Improving Literacy denotes five elements of teaching in accordance with the principles of science of reading:[12]

- **Phonemic Awareness –** the ability to "identify and play with individual sounds in spoken words";
- **Phonics –** teaching reading so students understand how letters and groups of letters created sounds to form words;
- **Fluency –** students' ability to read words, phrases, sentences and longer text with accuracy and "enough speed, and expression";
- **Vocabulary –** knowing the meaning of words and how to properly pronounce them; and
- **Comprehension –** the ability to understanding the meaning of what is read.

[Direct Instruction] is an "explicit, carefully sequenced and scripted model of instruction… based on a landmark empirical research study and numerous follow-up studies over the last thirty years about how children actually learn."

[10] Huber, E., Donnelly, P. M., Rokem, A., & Yeatman, J. D. (2018). Rapid and widespread white matter plasticity during an intensive reading intervention. *Nature Communications, 9*(1), 2260. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-04627-5
[11] National Institute for Direct Instruction. https://www.nifdi.org/what-is-di/di-vs-di.html
[12] National Center on Improving Literacy (2022). *The Science of Reading: The Basics.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Center on Improving Literacy. https://www.improvingliteracy.org.

Structured Literacy

Structured Literacy is an umbrella term for various approaches to literacy instruction rooted in the science of reading. Structured Literacy approaches "emphasize highly explicit and systematic teaching of all important components of literacy," including both "foundational skills (e.g., decoding, spelling) and higher-level literacy skills (e.g., reading comprehension, written expression)."[13] According to the IDA, ***explicit teaching*** is marked by explaining and modeling key skills, rather than expecting students to infer these skills from exposure. ***Systematic*** teaching is marked by an organized sequence of instruction, with foundational skills taught before those that are more advanced. An additional component of Structured Literacy is ***diagnostic teaching***, which is individualized instruction tailored to the student's specific needs, driven by ongoing formal and informal assessment. These approaches benefit all students, but the lack of them can be detrimental to students with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

For example, although there is strong empirical evidence demonstrating the benefits of Structured Literacy, other literacy instruction approaches broadly classified as *whole language* approaches are widespread. These approaches (e.g., Balanced Literacy, which combines whole language with phonics instruction) share a common assumption that reading is an innate ability and that students learn to read and write from repeated exposure to words. Practices such as the use of word walls and "cueing," (e.g., showing a picture alongside its written word) do not teach students to decode words. Whole language instruction is less structured, and uses activities such as reader's workshops, and writer's workshops to encourage independent literacy development through experience.

Interventions for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

Students with dyslexia and dysgraphia require additional supports that typically extend beyond whole-class instruction. These students benefit from interventions that specifically address their learning differences. Orton-Gillingham-based approaches such as Wilson Reading Systems have been shown to benefit students with dyslexia.[14] These and other interventions can also focus on spelling and writing and thus benefit students with dysgraphia. Some states have vetted and compiled lists of approved interventions. For example, the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce provides a list of approved of evidence-based reading intervention programs aligned with the science of reading and strategies for effective literacy instruction, which can guide school districts' adoption of interventions.

For students with dysgraphia, combining these reading and writing instructional interventions with motor tasks such as tracing letters, practicing good grip control, and hand exercises can be especially beneficial.[15] Finally, the use of assistive technologies for students with these conditions is a rapidly developing field. Little evidence exists to suggest that current tools are particularly helpful, although this is typically attributed to the development of technologies rather than to their potential.[16]

[13] International Dyslexia Association. (2019). *Here's Why Schools Should Use Structured Literacy.* https://dyslexiaida.org/heres-why-schools-should-use-structured-literacy/
[14] NYSED recognizes that there are evidence-based reading intervention programs that have proven effectiveness but does not endorse specific programs and methodologies.
[15] Berninger, V. W., Rutberg, J. E., Abbott, R. D., Garcia, N., Anderson-Youngstrom, M., Brooks, A., & Fulton, C. (2006). Tier 1 and Tier 2 early intervention for handwriting and composing. *Journal of School Psychology, 44*(1), 3–30.
[16] Thapliyal, M., & Ahuja, N. J. (2023). Underpinning implications of instructional strategies on assistive technology for learning disability: A meta-synthesis review. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology, 18*(4), 423–431. https://doi.org/10.1080/17483107.2020.1864669

RECOMMENDATIONS

Task Force members advocated for the development of a cohesive system of effective literacy instruction with targeted interventions that explicitly address the specific needs of students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. Public hearing testimony was in alignment with this call to action.

CONCERNS UNDERLYING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following concerns were consistently raised across Task Force discussions and public hearings:

1. **There is a general lack of understanding and awareness of dyslexia and dysgraphia among educators, administrators, and families.** This lack of understanding fosters confusion and misinformation that leads to students with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dysgraphia not getting the appropriate screening, intervention, and services that would help them succeed and prevent reading difficulties.

2. **There is a lack of transparency and enforcement of federal IDEA regulations and state regulations concerning students with specific learning disabilities** that further prevents these students from receiving appropriate screening, intervention, and services.

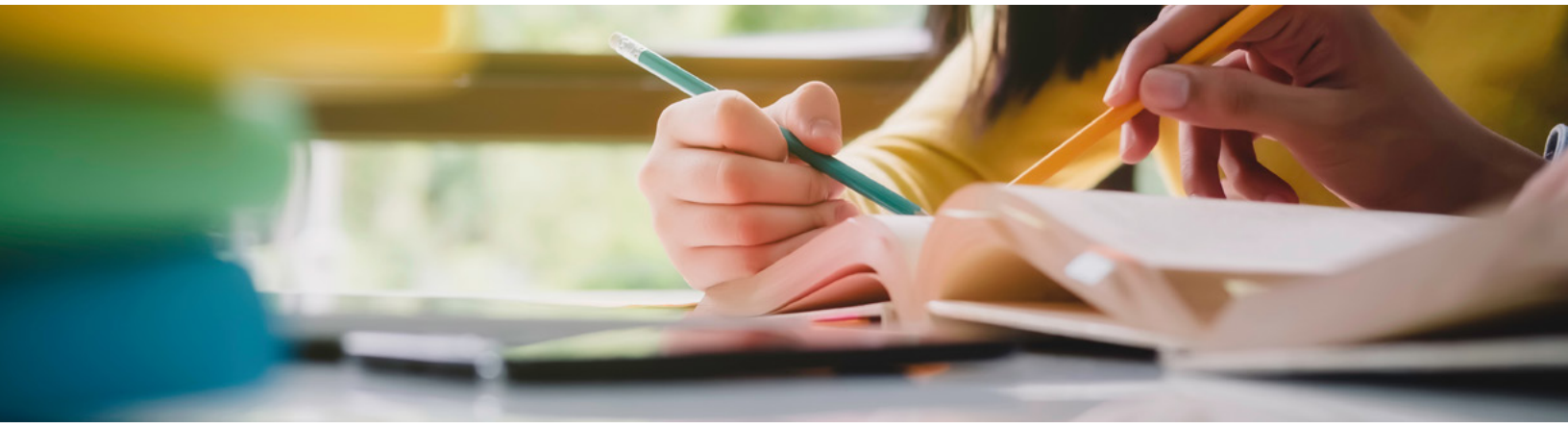
3. **This lack of awareness, understanding, and enforcement of regulations** often leads parents and guardians to seek private diagnostic evaluations that are costly and often unnecessary.

4. **General education instructional and intervention practices** widely used across New York State are ineffective for students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other related learning differences.

5. **There are no universal screening policies in New York State** for identifying potential reading difficulties early, when intervention is most beneficial.

6. **LEAs and schools lack the capacity and trained staff** to address the needs of students with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dysgraphia.

7. **New York State does not have certification, re-certification, pre-service, or in-service requirements** for candidates or teachers to have training specific to dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.



The following recommendations address the concerns of Task Force members and the public who advocated for the need for strong general education instruction. Task force members and the public shared their belief, backed by research, that strong Tier 1 instruction based in the science of reading has the potential to improve reading and writing outcomes for all children and is essential for children with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. The recommendations also address the unique instructional needs of students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

The recommendations focus on: (1) developing a statewide comprehensive system for identifying and supporting students with reading and/or writing difficulties that may or may not be associated with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia; (2) screening and subsequent parent/guardian notification and support for students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia; and (3) facilitating LEA capacity building and effective implementation of evidence-based practices that meet the needs of students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

Consistent with the charge of the Task Force, the recommendations are targeted at **state-level policymakers**, including NYSED, the Governor, and the Board of Regents. The recommendations are within the scope of these state-level actors to collaborate and initiate change within the context of current state and local policy initiatives aimed at improving literacy instruction. Because the Task Force's charge is to provide recommendations to the state, practices in Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are addressed through recommendations on state guidance, support and accountability for LEAs. The recommendations build on existing state initiatives (e.g., the New York Path Forward Initiative, the MTSS-I Center initiative) to ensure that the needs of students with dyslexia and dysgraphia are explicitly part of the policy context in New York State moving forward.

Appendix B presents the results of a survey in which Task Force members indicated the extent to which each of the following recommendations should be a priority for New York State.

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO DEVELOPING A STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FOR IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING STRUGGLING READERS AND WRITERS

1. NYSED should adopt updated definitions of dyslexia and dysgraphia that reflect the current understanding of dyslexia and dysgraphia as a brain-based learning difference that is neurobiological in origin.

Updated definitions will facilitate the accurate identification of reading and writing difficulties and the selection of appropriately aligned interventions. Definitions must address the impacts of dyslexia on reading fluency, decoding, and spelling that are often associated with phonological processing, processing speed, working memory, and/or other cognitive functions; and the impacts of dysgraphia on spelling and writing skills that are often associated with spatial perception, working memory, orthographic coding, and/or other cognitive functions.

The definitions must clarify that dyslexia and dysgraphia are not related to factors such as a lack of access to adequate instruction, IQ, or the English language proficiency of ELLs/MLLs. The definitions should clarify how dyslexia and dysgraphia may present with different symptoms at different ages and may not manifest in the same way from one child to another, depending on other factors.

The definitions should further note that reading and writing difficulties that stem from brain-based learning differences are inherently different from reading and writing difficulties resulting from other factors such as lack of access to adequate instruction and require instruction and interventions that specifically address these learning differences.

Task Force members on the screening subcommittee agreed on the need for the state to revise the current definitions for dyslexia and dysgraphia, to reflect the current evidence-based understanding of the nature of these learning differences. The subcommittee reviewed the IDA definition, the definition in the First Step Act, and the core dimensions of dyslexia summarized by the National Center on Improving Literacy for elements to be included in an updated state definition.

> **It is essential to create a standard definition on which screeners, professional development, training, and interventions will be based. It is essential to highlight that these conditions are neurobiological in origin as this aligns with decades of research and highlights that these differences are not just a result of inadequate instruction or other factors such as ELL status.**
>
> *- Task Force member*

2. The Governor or Legislature should fund a position at the state level dedicated to oversight of policy and regulations related to reading and writing difficulties that may be associated with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

This position should be charged with the role of overseeing the state approach and policy for screening, interventions, accommodations, professional development, parent and community engagement, data collection, and accountability related to supports for students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or other related reading or writing difficulties that originate from brain-based differences. Position qualifications must include prior experience working in schools to support students with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

Task Force members were clear about the need for accountability. For example, one said, "Lack of accountability is a barrier. We need more direction not just "recommendations" of best practice. LEAs are interpreting this as permission to continue with their status quo."

A person or team at the state level is needed to ensure that any new policies and guidance are implemented and enforced. Although this recommendation is for a position, the state could also consider funding a team or office that works directly with Regional Partnership Centers and BOCES. For example, in 2021 Connecticut created the Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities in the Talent Office of the State Department of Education. The office was tasked with implementing recently enacted structured literacy laws and other regulations and policies related to meeting the needs of students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

Several Task Force members believed that this position or team should oversee all aspects of literacy, not just dyslexia and dysgraphia. Task Force members believed it was important to include strong Tier 1 general education reading and writing practices that benefit all students as part of the recommendation. Some Task Force members also voiced the need for expertise in multilingualism.

> **This position needs to include Tier 1 accountability in order to provide for the needs of all students that will be part of typical, every-day general education classrooms. Use of methods and programs that are not aligned with cognitive science with regards to reading and writing will continue to create increases in learning gaps, lack of progress for a majority of students and are discriminatory for use with students that show characteristics of dyslexia and dysgraphia since they cannot meaningfully access the curriculum for attainment of expected grade level standards.**
>
> *- Task Force member*

3. NYSED or the Board of Regents should create a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia.

The purpose of the Center or Division should be to research and disseminate evidence-based practices aligned with the science of reading and structured literacy. The Center or Division should provide regional, school-based, and virtual professional development and training support for Regional Centers, LEA and school leaders, specialists (e.g., reading specialists, school psychologists, occupational therapists and speech/language pathologists), and general and special education teachers to support implementation of state policy and guidance related to screening, interventions, accommodations, and supports for students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia and their parents or guardians.

The Center or Division must also collaborate with other NYSED divisions; research, support, and practice experts; and state and local literacy initiative leaders (e.g., the Governor's Back to Basics Reading Plan, New York Path Forward Initiative, MTSS-I Center, etc.) to ensure that all guidance and professional development related to literacy across the state is consistent and inclusive of evidence-based practices aligned with the science of reading and structured literacy that meet the needs of students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or other related reading or writing difficulties (including MLLs).

States often fund Centers that serve as a central body for providing technical assistance and disseminate research and best-practice information on a topic of importance. For example, NYSED funds a Professional Development Resource Center for Religious and Independent Schools and regional Community Schools Technical Assistance Centers that offer support to educators, leaders, and others around the state.

Other states have created Centers with a focus on dyslexia and/or other related literacy topics that could serve as a model for New York State. Tennessee's Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia aims to "promote understanding of dyslexia and remove obstacles to reading and writing for children with dyslexia" by producing and disseminating research, providing professional development to educators, and supporting students and their families with knowledge to self-advocate. The Center website lists services including in-service workshops for schools, public workshops for parents and community stakeholders, instructional trainings for educators, regional conferences to raise awareness of dyslexia and causes of reading failure, assistance to parents and educators to aid school-based identification of dyslexia and related learning differences, and testing services to inform the understanding of dyslexia and related learning differences.

4. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should collect data to inventory, synthesize, and publicize best practices for serving students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other related reading or writing difficulties.

State-level collection of data on best practices will facilitate research and dissemination of evidence statewide. The inventory should include data from across all LEAs in New York State as well as non-public schools with a record of successful outcomes serving students with dyslexia and dysgraphia. At a minimum, the inventory should include evidence-based practices aligned with the science of reading and structured literacy related to screening, Tier 1 instruction, Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, progress monitoring, accommodations, staffing, training, IEPs and special education services, adaptations for ELLs/MLLs, and MTSS/RTI procedures that are inclusive of serving the instructional needs of students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia that differ distinctly from practices designed to meet the instructional needs of students who do not have brain-based learning differences that are neurobiological in origin.

As discussed in the Research Overview section of this report, students with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dysgraphia need reading instruction that targets their specific learning differences. Task Force members and members of the public who provided testimony shared examples of effective strategies and practices that are currently in place throughout the state, including practices at the Windward School in New York City and Orton-Gillingham-based approaches.

An inventory of the current practices that are working and not working throughout the state will provide NYSED with the needed information to develop policies to fill statewide gaps in screening, intervention, and services by building on locally developed practices.

This recommendation also responds to a theme among Task Force members that transparency is needed about what is being used in the classroom, and that ineffective practices should not be allowed to continue.

5. The Board of Regents should set explicit standards and requirements for teacher preparation programs and certifications that address dyslexia and dysgraphia.

These standards and requirements should include a focus on (1) understanding and awareness of what dyslexia and dysgraphia are and what they are not; (2) detection of potential issues associated with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia; (3) appropriate screener administration practices; (4) instructional practices aligned with the science of reading and structured literacy; and (5) recommended interventions and accommodations that are direct, explicit, multi-sensory, and responsive for diverse population including ELLs/MLLs.

Several members of the Task Force and public shared their concern about the lack of educator requirements pertaining to identifying and instructing students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and related reading difficulties. One Task Force member shared, "None of the NYSED current teacher licensure [requirements] include any mandatory course work or licensure exam credentials [related to dyslexia and dysgraphia]. This needs to change from top down, starting at colleges of education and NYSED oversight of licensure exam questions and college of education coursework requirements."

A parent described the inexperience and lack of understanding from her child's teacher: "All of these indicators are very common among dyslexic students, but no one at her school identified any of these symptoms as being related to dyslexia. Her second-grade teacher, who is a veteran teacher … disclosed to me that until she looked up dyslexia after I requested the evaluation, she had no idea that it could be related to dyslexia. She had no idea how to identify any of those symptoms."

I urge the Department of Education to increase the required undergraduate and graduate credits in the science of reading and/or literacy science. … Currently, the burden of training teachers in this critical area falls disproportionately on school districts, leading to reading inequities due to varying professional development resources.

– Written Public Testimony

Specific requirements are not outlined in this recommendation. Members of the Task Force and of the public believed that the requirements need to be specific to the role of the educator and administrator. Public testimony emphasized:

> Be specific on the teacher licensing exams regarding what you want teachers to know about literacy instruction when they start their career so that teacher prep programs address that in their instruction. Be specific about what administrative certification programs should include about dyslexia, dysgraphia, and understanding data. Be specific about what a school psychologist should in their coursework about dyslexia and dysgraphia. Be specific about what an Occupational Therapist, a Speech Language Pathologist, and a Social Worker should know about dyslexia and dysgraphia.

Literacy initiatives such as the New York Path Forward Initiative are already focused on ensuring teacher preparation programs integrate the science of reading into program curricula and certification requirements. The intention of this recommendation is that the Board of Regents should explicitly include requirements related to dyslexia and dysgraphia in teacher preparation programs in addition to requirements related to the science of reading.

For example, the Connecticut State Legislature has passed legislation that requires teacher candidates to complete a program of study in the detection and recognition of dyslexia and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for students with dyslexia. Requirements differ slightly depending on the specific endorsement; however, all teachers are expected to be well-versed in structured literacy practices as well as practices aligned with the science of reading.

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO SCREENING AND PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION AND SUPPORT

6. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require that LEAs implement universal screening of all students in grades K-5 and new entrants* at least annually for reading and writing difficulties that may or may not be related to dyslexia or dysgraphia.

Universal screeners should be appropriate for chronological age and Language Learner status. The requirement should be for LEAs to, at a minimum, screen for:

a. Phonological awareness (including phonemic awareness)

b. Letter-sound correspondence (K); Word or sentence reading (grades 1-5)

c. Rapid automatized naming (RAN) (which can include letters, numbers, or pictures)

d. Word or pseudo word reading fluency (grades K-1); Oral reading fluency (grades 2-5)

e. Written expression (e.g., handwriting, spelling, writing fluency)

**Regulation 117.2.d. defines a new entrant as a student entering the New York State public school system, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, for the first time, or reentering a New York State public school with no available record of a prior screening.*

The NY Board of Regents currently has regulations for screening of students with suspected disabilities, ELLs/MLLs, and giftedness. However, there are no regulations for universal screening for students in grades K-2 that would identify a student as potentially at risk for developing reading difficulties that may or may not be related to dyslexia or other related learning differences. The regulations do not require reading assessments until the grade 3 English Language Arts state test, nor do the regulations provide guidance concerning screening for specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia or dysgraphia.

Members of the Task Force screening subcommittee were vocal about the need for a universal screener for any potential reading difficulties and that any student identified as "at risk"[17] should then be referred for further screening specifically for potential dyslexia and/or dysgraphia (see Recommendation 7).

Some members noted that many LEAs already implement their own reading assessments in grades K-5 to determine which students need Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading interventions. However, these may be limited in the skills assessed and therefore may not provide the comprehensive picture of skills that would allow educators to identify the nature of reading or writing difficulties with greater accuracy and more effectively target interventions.

This recommendation does not preclude LEAs from continuing to administer currently used screeners if they align with the guidelines in the recommendation. However, where current assessments do not meet the full criteria, LEAs may need supplementary screeners that target less frequently assessed reading tasks such as letter-sound correspondence, rapid automatized naming (RAN), or written expression.

As noted in the Research Overview, these universal screeners can be administered quickly and easily in a cost-effective manner, typically by any trained educator. For example, mCLASS with DIBELS 8th Edition includes optional assessments of RAN, spelling, and vocabulary that are included at no additional cost. The assessment, available in both English and Spanish, is validated as an all-in-one universal and dyslexia screener and includes several one-minute measures that meet the criteria in the recommendation.

Screening subcommittee members were largely in favor of allowing LEA flexibility with respect to the selection of screeners so long as they meet the criteria in this recommendation. For example, an LEA that uses iReady or DIBELS could continue to do so and add tools or modules to screen for all skills in this recommendation. It should also be noted that the specific tasks within each component of the screening criteria may differ by grade level.

[17] The definition of "at risk" will vary by assessment or tool used, and by the cut off scores for those tools use that are determined by the screener publisher or LEA.

LEAs should also be required to select screeners that are appropriate for the accurate screening of ELL/MLL students and of students with disabilities that impact oral language development and/or graphomotor skills. One Task Force member explained:

> Modifications or different screeners for multilingual students should be available at all schools regardless of program type (e.g., traditional vs. alternative school program types). ... It would be a critical innovation to assert that the type of screener and modification can be different based on the type of program students are in.

Another cautioned that special considerations are also needed with respect to screening for dysgraphia:

> Children with dysgraphia often have visual-motor and visual-perceptual deficits. There are measures to assess these issues, but they tend to be more time consuming to give and score than is a good screener which works efficiently with large groups of children. A checklist for teachers to use may therefore be a better screener than a direct measure of handwriting for all students. The smaller portion of at-risk children can be administered further screeners as needed to assess true risk and guide intervention. Areas to assess in a handwriting checklist include (1) handwriting speed (2) legibility or readability judged globally and (3) specific features that characterize readability (e.g., letter formation, spacing between letters and words, and line targeting).

Lastly, it should be noted that consensus was not reached on the frequency of universal screening. The recommendation to screen at least once per year is a middle-ground resolution between Task Force members who thought that screening should take place three times each school year, as recommended by IDA, and others concerned about the burden on schools and feasibility of implementation. At least one Task Force member also emphasized the need to screen in preschool.

Annual screenings throughout elementary school are important to identify students who may initially compensate for challenges but struggle as reading demands increase in later grades, allowing for timely intervention.

– Public Hearing Testimony

7. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require LEAs to screen students identified as at risk for developing reading or writing difficulties (per Recommendation #6) specifically for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

Dyslexia and/or dysgraphia screening should be conducted annually, from the time of detection of the potential reading or writing difficulty through at least grade 5. Screening processes should include further screening of targeted skills where weaknesses were detected and take into account teacher observations, family history, adequacy of instruction in one's home language, appropriate assessment in one's home language, and other environmental factors. The requirement should be for LEAs to continue to screen students annually for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia beyond grade 5 if reading and/or writing struggles persist or new reading or writing struggles develop beyond grade 5, or if there is no prior record of screening in a child's academic history.

Task Force members suggested that students identified as "at risk" for developing reading or writing difficulties after taking a universal screener (Recommendation 6) should then be referred for additional screening specifically for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. This may include additional screening of reading and/or writing tasks and other cognitive factors such as working memory that are designed to detect potential dyslexia or dysgraphia risk factors and account for environmental factors and family history. Ideally, the additional screening should be conducted by a trained specialist.

8. NYSED should develop explicit and detailed guidelines for LEA selection of dyslexia and dysgraphia screeners that align with the updated definitions, include modifications or alternatives for diverse student groups (e.g., non-verbal learners, ELLs/MLLs, visually or hearing impaired), and meet best practices for the identification of potential dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, such as those identified by the International Dyslexia Association.

LEAs and schools will need guidance to carry out the requirements in Recommendations 6 and 7. Some Task Force members suggested that NYSED should develop a list of approved screeners such as the list created by Oregon to support enforcement of the state's legislation related to the universal screening for risk factors of dyslexia. Others suggested creating a checklist or tool that LEAs and schools can use to assist with selecting and implementing appropriate tools for students based on their chronological age, ELL/MLL status, disability status, and other factors.

The Early Literacy Screening Guidance developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) can serve as a model that would meet the criteria for New York State to provide guidance to LEAs and schools to implement Recommendations 6 and 7. The detailed guide includes the rationale for universal screening, the Dos and Don'ts of universal screening, recommendations for selecting screeners, a list of DESE-approved screeners that meet expectations and partially meet expectations, recommendations for timeline and scheduling, considerations for multilingual learners and students with disabilities, guidance specific to screening for dyslexia, guidelines for family communication, and guidance on providing professional development to educators.

9. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require LEAs or schools to notify and meet with the student's parent or guardian if a student meets the dyslexia and/or dysgraphia screeners' criteria for identifying the level of potential risk for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

The requirement should be that appropriate personnel (e.g., reading specialist, school psychologist, teacher, occupational therapist, translator, etc.) meet with parents to discuss dyslexia and dysgraphia screening results, next steps (e.g., further screening or comprehensive diagnostic evaluation), and possible interventions both within and outside of school. NYSED should develop guidance and tools for engaging in discussions with parents or guardians, including parents or guardians who speak languages other than English, and tracking and reporting on the occurrence of these meetings and their outcomes.

Task Force members unanimously noted the importance of communicating with parents and guardians and providing direct, transparent information about potential specific learning disabilities, options for further evaluation, and next steps regarding potential interventions that may include an IEP. Some Task Force members believed that simply providing a letter and leaving it in the hands of parents or guardians to take the initiative to make decisions is an inadequate approach.

A recurring theme in public hearing testimony is that families often do not know what options are available to them should they want a comprehensive evaluation for their child, or wish to learn what supports their child needs. In public hearing testimony, one parent shared, "We had the financial means to seek out private evaluations and specialists, but what about the families who can't afford these resources? What happens to the children whose families don't know what to look for or don't have the means to pursue private evaluations that can cost thousands of dollars? And even after diagnosis, the challenge remains. How do we support these students long-term?"

10. NYSED or the Board of Regents should identify opportunities to collaborate with other state agencies (e.g., the New York State Health Department) to improve access to comprehensive diagnostic evaluation for dyslexia and dysgraphia for students and parents or guardians, such as by supporting the "Dyslexia Diagnosis Access Act" (A.2898/S.5481).

NYSED should also provide information or guidance to parents or guardians on how to access diagnostic and intervention support.

Hearing testimony was largely provided by parents of children who were diagnosed with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia or who were dyslexic or dysgraphic themselves. Many parents testified that after years of inadequate support from their child's school, they sought a private comprehensive evaluation to find their own solution. Parents reported that the journey to diagnosis was often a lengthy and costly process. Meanwhile, their children suffered mental-health and social-emotional challenges from feelings of frustration and low self-esteem after years of not being able to catch up to peers in reading despite extra interventions, tutoring, and supports that were ineffective in supporting students with specific learning disabilities.

Parents and guardians should be informed of their legal rights and the policies that support identification and diagnosis of dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. For example, parents and guardians should be informed that school psychologists are legally allowed to identify dyslexia and dysgraphia, and that these conditions should be identified, discussed, and included in IEPs and evaluation documents. Ensuring that parents and guardians know their legal rights to evaluation and services, and have the means and knowledge to advocate for their child to get both the academic and social and emotional support they need, is essential to prevent children with undiagnosed reading difficulties from continuing to fall through the cracks.

The following testimonies are a few of the many stories shared by parents in public hearings.

> "As a father, I think we all can relate that our job is to protect and educate our children. When I had the conversation with my son that he's not going to make it to second grade and he broke down crying, I didn't know how to act. There's no manual for that. ... It has been really tough on our family emotionally and mentally. As a parent, all you want to do is provide security, safety for your child.

> "We as a family have had to fight every year for services, even after having a diagnosis, as most of his teachers and the administration were unaware of dyslexia (even though it was discovered in the 1880s). We urge New York State to support students and ensure they do not suffer the same consequences our son and family had. We are a solid middle-class family and have had to dip into our savings several times over the years to have the resources to have our son tested.

> "If you are often told to just try harder and you can't do something and never learn to do it proficiently, that leaves a mark. We cannot spend time in school teaching social and emotional learning while simultaneously ignoring what is most likely a huge contributor to kids' behavioral and emotional struggles. Kids who cannot read become adults who cannot read. It is unacceptable and impacts our whole society. It reaches far beyond our classrooms. Based on our experience, we need early and universal screening.

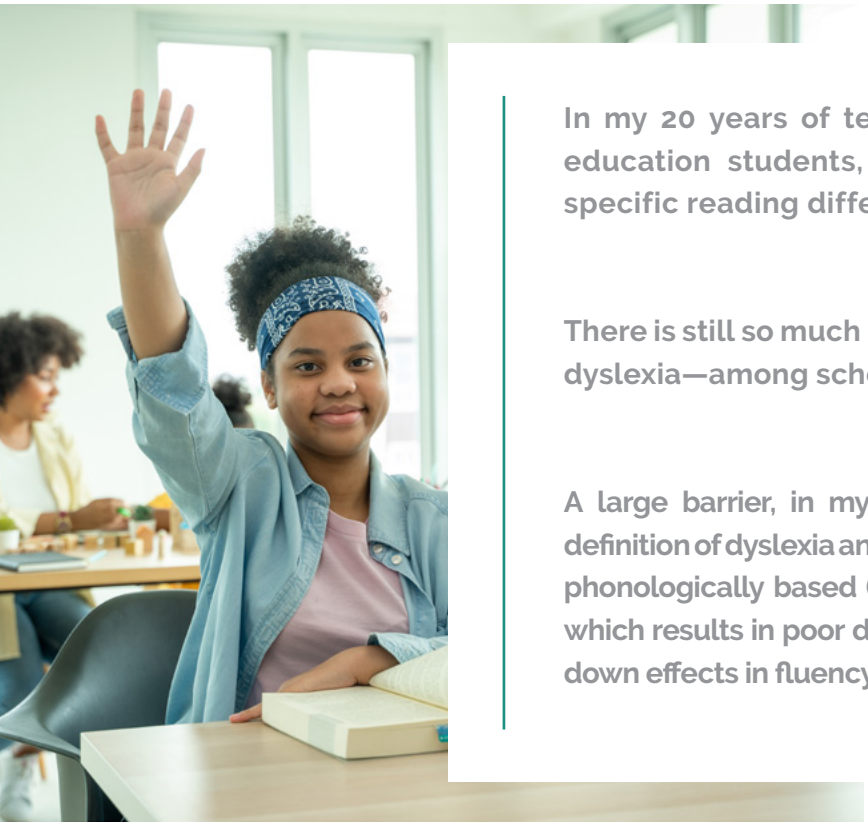
> "Our daughter was miserable. She exhibited school refusal, aggression at home and at school, depression and anxiety, a loathing of learning and a loathing of herself for being stupid. ... We spoke to teacher after teacher asking for help in those early years.

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO FACILITATING LEA CAPACITY AND IMPLEMENTATION TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT STRUGGLING READERS AND WRITERS

11. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should develop and disseminate informational tools and briefs on dyslexia and dysgraphia to immediately begin to increase awareness and inform action.

These resources should: (1) be tailored to a variety of different audiences; (2) be available in multiple languages for parents or guardians; and (3) address updated definitions, state policy, and local responsibilities regarding identification, intervention, and supports for students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

Task Force members and members of the public identified the pervasive lack of awareness and understanding about dyslexia and dysgraphia as one of the greatest barriers to addressing the needs of students with these learning differences:



> **In my 20 years of teaching primary and elementary and special education students, I was never formally trained to remediate specific reading differences like dyslexia.**
>
> *– Public Hearing Testimony*

> **There is still so much misinformation about identifying students with dyslexia—among school psychologists, leaders, and teachers.**
>
> *– Task Force member*

> **A large barrier, in my opinion, is a general misunderstanding of the definition of dyslexia and not understanding that these issues are primarily phonologically based (not visually based, not a broad language deficit) which results in poor decoding and spelling and which then have trickle down effects in fluency, comprehension and written expression.**
>
> *– Task Force member*

Developing resources and tools to educate all stakeholders would be a first step in stopping the spread of misinformation that prevents students from getting the services they need. Task Force members also indicated that resources and tools should be tailored and disseminated to a variety of audiences, including general and special education teachers, teachers of ELLs/MLLs, school administrators, specialists (e.g., school psychologists, reading specialists, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists), and parents or guardians.

12. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should work with the MTSS-I initiative and other statewide partners (e.g., higher education institutions, literacy intervention training providers) to develop a framework for serving students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.

The framework should be integrated into MTSS and RTI practices statewide and provide guidance to ensure that:

a. Tier 1 reading curricula and instruction is grounded in the science of reading;

b. MTSS and RTI practices statewide and LEA guidance include Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions specifically for students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia and related reading and/or writing difficulties that (1) align with structured literacy instruction and (2) are direct, explicit, multi-sensory, and responsive;

c. Appropriate accommodations and supports are provided to align with a student's specific reading and/or writing difficulties throughout K-12 in Tier 1 instruction and Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions (including ELLs/MLLs); and

d. Appropriate accommodations and supports are provided to those students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, yet who may never meet the criteria for MTSS or RTI intervention due to compensation from other cognitive strengths (e.g., students who are both gifted and dyslexic).

Across subcommittees, Task Force members spoke passionately about the need to ensure that Tier 1 general education is grounded in the science of reading and that students with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia—including students without a diagnosis but who are suspected of having similar reading or writing difficulties—receive evidence-based instruction and interventions that are tailored to their specific needs. The specific needs of dually-identified students (MLLs with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia) must also be addressed, including providing interventions in the students' home language while attending to language development. Task Force members stressed that ineffective methods that are unaligned with what is known about cognitive science, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other specific learning disabilities have caused harm for too long and that strong explicit guidance and regulations are needed to eliminate disproven methods. Public hearing testimony illustrated the harm that has been done and that could have been prevented with early intervention:

> "My son had suicidal ideations at age 10. He was lucky. He fit the profile of The Windward School, got to Windward in fifth grade, learned how to read, went to high school, early college, and now he's in college doing really well. But as I advocated for him, I realized this is not a dyslexia issue. This is a Tier 1 reading issue. If we don't fix Tier 1 reading, we can't find our dyslexic kids. They just blend in with all the other struggling readers.

> "My whole life I have been plagued with academic struggles not totally understanding the written material. Reading, math, spelling, constant confusion. Lack of comprehension in written form. Math is and always has been a lifelong struggle. I had to work hard in order to receive a "C" grade. … My recollections about kindergarten were looking at the word books and trying to make them out. Putting together puzzles was an effort. … I continued to struggle with my academic work all through my school years, early elementary, elementary, secondary, high school, and college.

13. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should create a comprehensive guidebook on dyslexia and dysgraphia for pre-service and in-service professional development providers, LEA leaders, school administrators, educators, and specialists.

This comprehensive guidebook should address the role of each of these actors in the identification, intervention and support of students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, be updated at least every five years, and include information related to:

a. Definitions;

b. Legal responsibilities of the LEA and school to address the needs of students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia;

c. Universal screening policies, procedures, and evidence-based practices;

d. Dyslexia and dysgraphia screening policies, procedures and evidence-based practices;

e. Screening modifications and adaptations for ELL/MLL students and students with disabilities that impact oral language development and/or graphomotor skill development;

f. Appropriate use of data to determine next steps;

g. Regulations, guidance, and support for communicating and meeting with parents or guardians to share and discuss screening results, options for next steps, and making data-based decisions about interventions aligned with identified reading and/or writing difficulties;

h. Classroom instruction (Tier 1) and interventions (Tiers 2 and 3) grounded in the science of reading and structured literacy;

i. Development of effective IEP goals, progress monitoring, and accommodations for students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia and related reading and/or writing difficulties;

j. Professional development opportunities; and

k. Decision criteria and steps from universal screening through Tier 3 supports and progress monitoring (e.g., a checklist or flow chart).

At least 36 states have some form of a guidebook or handbook to provide comprehensive and explicit guidance to LEAs and schools regarding implementation of state policies on dyslexia and dysgraphia. Recommendation 13 captures the specific areas of guidance where Task Force members voiced the need for clear and explicit guidance. In particular, various members voiced the need for explicit guidance on progress monitoring. As one articulated, the recommendations need "something about progress monitoring, because they screen and screen, and screen, and they don't ever ask themselves if the interventions they are providing are actually working; and if they are, how are they working."

14. The Governor or Legislature should allocate funds to support LEA implementation of screening and services related to dyslexia and dysgraphia, such as through a pilot initiative.

Funds would support staff time and expertise related to: (1) LEA selection and implementation of universal screeners and screeners for dyslexia and dysgraphia; (2) in-service professional development on dyslexia and dysgraphia policies and procedures; and (3) adoption of best practices in classroom instruction, intervention, and accommodations for students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia and related reading and/or writing difficulties.

Task Force members strongly agreed that funding is needed to implement the recommendations in this report. One shared, "As an administrator, I have to emphasize that teacher training and ongoing consultation is time-consuming and expensive. Getting teachers to change past practices is challenging and requires consistent oversight by administrators."

Funding could be used for a pilot initiative, incentives for early adopters, or large-scale implementation. Funding opportunities exist that New York State could pursue to support the recommendation, such as the Federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant.

Stakeholders from across New York State, including the Governor, Institutes of Higher Education, and teachers' unions, have already shown signs of support and readiness to act on literacy initiatives that will strengthen reading instruction. There is opportunity to facilitate buy-in and leverage funds to build on growing momentum and ensure support for students with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

However, it should be noted that in addition to funding, policy and structural challenges may need to be resolved at state and local levels to deliver professional development. For example, teacher contracts, LEA-directed professional development policies and plans, school schedules, and staff capacity can all constrain LEA professional development efforts.

SUBMISSION AND INTENT OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

With submission of these recommendations to state-level policy makers, the Task Force intends for the recommendations to be addressed collectively to inform a coherent state approach to improving literacy education services for all students, particularly those with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. The Task Force expects that implementation of the recommendations will benefit from collaborative efforts across agencies and stakeholders, as well as from integration with relevant initiatives and policies underway in the state (e.g., NYSED's Literacy Initiative, New York Path Forward Initiative, MTSS-I Center, the Back to Basics Reading Plan, the Dyslexia Diagnosis Access Act, etc). Lastly, the Task Force recommends that implementation of the recommendations will benefit from continued input from a broad constellation of stakeholders, representing experiences, knowledge, positions, and perspectives similar to those of the Task Force membership.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MEMBERS OF THE DYSLEXIA AND DYSGRAPHIA TASK FORCE

The following individuals served as Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Task Force Members.

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Bennett Shaywitz, *Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity*

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Jamie Williamson, *The Windward Institute, The Windward School*

Evelyn G. Whitebay, M.Ed., *Dyslexia and Literacy Consultant*

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Tracy Young, *Greenville Central School District*

Dana L. Ziegler, *Liverpool Central Schools, SAANYS Government Relations*

The following individuals supported Task Force activities but were not voting members of the Task Force:

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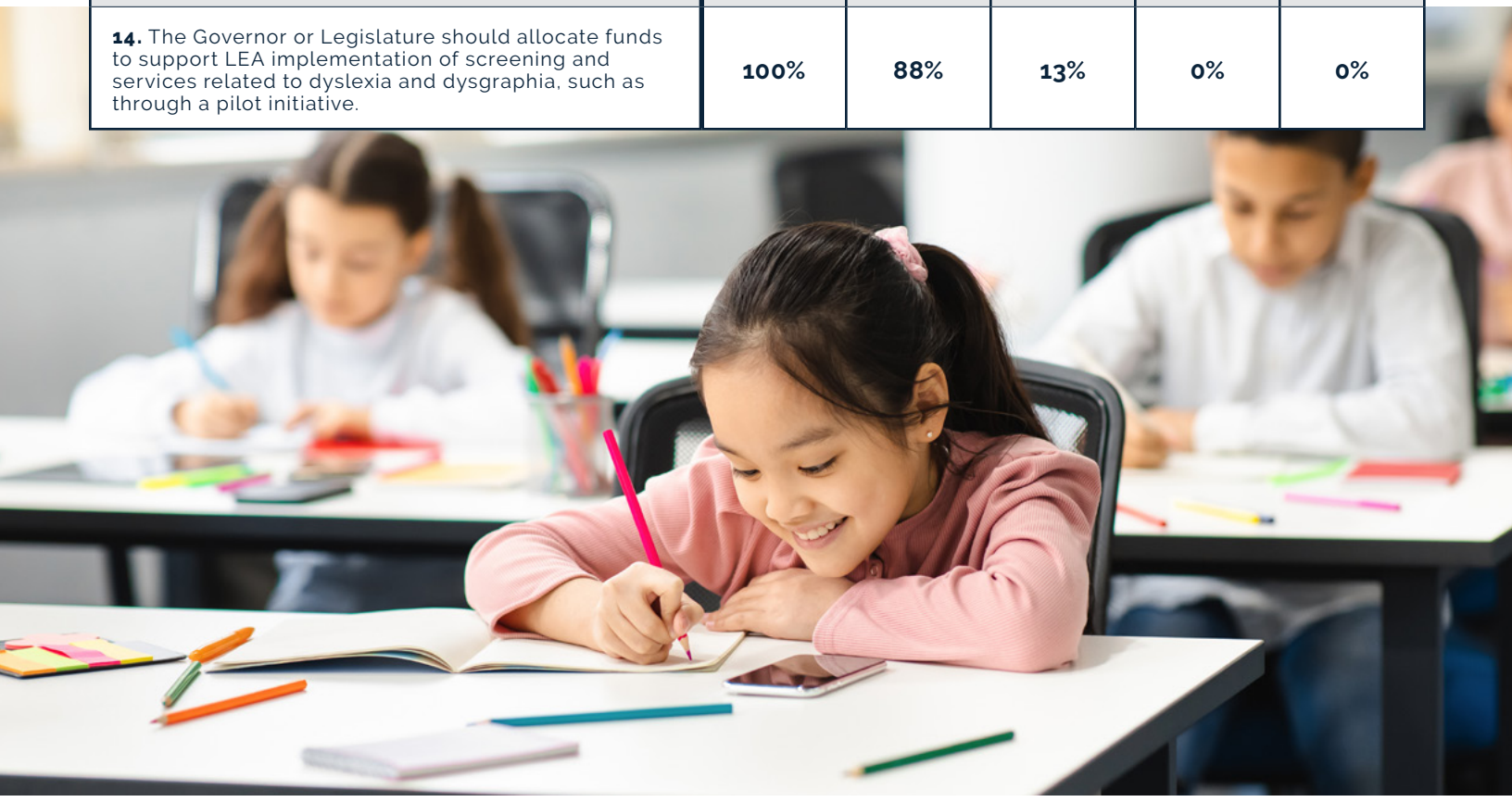
Yvonne Woods, *PSA*

APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDATION PRIORITIES FROM SURVEY OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Each member of the Task Force was invited to complete a survey to indicate the extent to which they believe each recommendation is a priority for New York State. Forty members completed this survey. The findings are presented in the table below. Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

RECOMMENDATION	HIGH OR MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY
Recommendations Related to Developing a Statewide Comprehensive System for Identifying and Supporting Struggling Readers and Writers					
1. NYSED should adopt updated definitions of dyslexia and dysgraphia that reflect the current understanding of dyslexia and dysgraphia as a brain-based learning difference that is neurobiological in origin.	95%	80%	15%	3%	3%
2. The Governor or Legislature should fund a position at the state level dedicated to oversight of policy and regulations related to reading and writing difficulties that may be associated with dyslexia and dysgraphia.	88%	45%	43%	10%	3%
3. NYSED or the Board of Regents should create a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia.	91%	58%	33%	8%	3%
4. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should collect data to inventory, synthesize, and publicize best practices for serving students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other related reading or writing difficulties.	98%	73%	25%	3%	0%
5. The Board of Regents should set explicit standards and requirements for teacher preparation programs and certifications that address dyslexia and dysgraphia.	95%	80%	15%	5%	0%
Recommendations Related to Screening and Parent/Guardian Notification and Support					
6. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require that LEAs implement universal screening of all students in grades K-5 and new entrants at least annually for reading and writing difficulties that may or may not be related to dyslexia or dysgraphia.	98%	80%	18%	3%	0%
7. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require LEAs to then screen students identified as at risk for developing reading or writing difficulties (per recommendation #6) specifically for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.	93%	70%	23%	8%	0%
8. NYSED should develop explicit and detailed guidelines for LEA selection of dyslexia and dysgraphia screeners that align with the updated definitions, include modifications or alternatives for diverse student groups (e.g., non-verbal learners, ELLs/MLLs, visually or hearing impaired), and meet best practices for the identification of potential dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, such as those identified by the International Dyslexia Association.	93%	73%	20%	8%	0%
9. The NY Board of Regents should amend Part 117 Regulations for Diagnostic Screening to require LEAs or schools to notify and meet with the student's parent or guardian if a student meets the dyslexia and/or dysgraphia screeners' criteria for identifying the level of potential risk for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.	96%	78%	18%	5%	0%

RECOMMENDATION	HIGH OR MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY
Recommendations Related to Screening and Parent/Guardian Notification and Support *(continued...)*					
10. NYSED or the Board of Regents should identify opportunities to collaborate with other state agencies (e.g., the New York State Health Department) to improve access to comprehensive diagnostic evaluation for dyslexia and dysgraphia for students and parents or guardians, such as by supporting the "Dyslexia Diagnosis Access Act" (A.2898/S.5481).	81%	48%	33%	18%	3%
Recommendations Related to Facilitating LEA Capacity and Implementation to Effectively Support Struggling Readers and Writers					
11. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should develop and disseminate informational tools and briefs on dyslexia and dysgraphia to immediately begin to increase awareness and inform action.	96%	53%	43%	5%	0%
12. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should work with the MTSS-I initiative and other statewide partners (e.g., higher education institutions, literacy intervention training providers) to develop a framework for serving students with diagnosed or suspected dyslexia and/or dysgraphia.	98%	80%	18%	3%	0%
13. NYSED (either directly or through a Center or Division for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) should create a comprehensive guidebook on dyslexia and dysgraphia for pre-service and in-service professional development providers, LEA leaders, school administrators, educators, and specialists.	96%	78%	18%	3%	3%
14. The Governor or Legislature should allocate funds to support LEA implementation of screening and services related to dyslexia and dysgraphia, such as through a pilot initiative.	100%	88%	13%	0%	0%



APPENDIX C: RESOURCES INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

This appendix lists select resources that appeared in this report as hyperlinks or footnotes, including relevant organizations, research reports, materials from NYSED and other states, and legislation.

Legislation Establishing this Task Force

Chapter 76 of the Laws of 2024

- https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/S8089

Legislation and Regulations Related to Dyslexia and Dysgraphia in New York

Part 200 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education of New York State

- 200.1 specifies definitions in special education: https://www.nysed.gov/special-education/section-2001-definitions
- 200.4 specifies procedures for special education referral, evaluation, individualized education program development, placement, and review: https://www.nysed.gov/special-education/section-2004-procedures-referral-evaluation-iep-development-placement-and-review
- 200.5 specifies due process procedures in special education: https://www.nysed.gov/special-education/section-2005-due-process-procedures

NYSED Guidance Regarding Dispute Resolution Options Related to Special Education

- Specifies dispute options consistent with state law and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): https://www.nysed.gov/special-education/dispute-resolution-options

Chapter 216 of the Laws of 2017

- Amended state law to specify that school districts may use the terms dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia in special education evaluations, eligibility determinations, or in developing an individualized education program under IDEA: https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/special-education/chapter-216-of-laws-of-2017-advisory.pdf

NYSED Literacy and Dyslexia Resources

Students with Disabilities Resulting from Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia: Questions and Answers

- Answers frequently asked questions and provides definitions related to dyslexia and dysgraphia: https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/special-education/q-and-a-students-with-dyslexia-dysgrahia-dyscalculia.pdf

Meeting the Needs of Students with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia

- Provides brief guidance on characteristics of dyslexia and dysgraphia, and on how to request an initial evaluation for an individualized education program: https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/special-education/meeting-the-needs-of-students-with-dyslexia-dysgraphia-dyscalculia.pdf

Identification of Students with Learning Disabilities within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

- Provides a flow chart of processes for the identification and service of students who are or may be diagnosed with dyslexia or dysgraphia: https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/special-education/identification-of-students-with-disabilities-flowchart.pdf

K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide

- Released in 2024, provides option guidance for districts to use in reviewing literacy curriculum to ensure they are evidence-based: https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/standards-instruction/literacy-curriculum-review-guide.pdf

Science of Reading Literacy Briefs

- Includes seven Science of Reading Literacy Briefs available on the NYSED Literacy Initiative webpage: https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/literacy-initiative

Teacher Preparation and Certification in New York

Core Requirements for Teacher Preparation Programs

- Specifies program requirements for each of the Teacher Preparation Program certification categories: https://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/core-requirements-teacher-preparation-programs

New York State Teacher Certification Examinations

- NYSED Overview of Certification Exams provides link to the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (NYSTCE) website: https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/certexam.html
- Educating All Students (EAS) Test Design and Framework specifies content of the EAS: https://www.nystce.nesinc.com/Content/Docs/NY201_OBJ_FINAL.pdf
- Content Specialty Tests (CSTs) provide overview of the myriad CSTs required for specific certification areas including Literacy, Early Childhood, Childhood, and Students with Disabilities: https://www.nystce.nesinc.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN_Tests.html

New York State Initiatives Relevant to Services for Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia

Back to Basics Reading Plan

- Requires school districts to certify to NYSED by September 2025 that their curricula and teacher professional development align with evidence-based reading instruction.
- Includes $10 million to NYSUT to train 20,000 teachers in the science of reading: https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/back-basics-reading-plan

Path Forward Initiative

- A collaborative effort to transform New York teacher preparation in literacy instruction and to integrate the science of reading into preparation program curricula and certification requirements: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vzZYdm6SyENBLP82BVX1F7nMNsJaUbUX/view
  - » *Supported by the Hunt Institute: https://hunt-institute.org/programs/the-path-forward/*
  - » *Supported by the Literacy Academy Collective (LAC): https://www.literacyacademycollective.org/*

MTSS-I Center

- Supports education organizations to deliver evidence-based practices within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports-Integrated (MTSS-I) approach, including for struggling readers: https://osepartnership.org/mtss-i

New York Literacy Initiative

- Provides resources on literacy curricula and the science of reading, under the leadership of NYSED and the Board of Regents, at: https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/literacy-initiative
  - » *Includes the June 2024 K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide and Science of Reading Literacy Briefs referenced above.*

Organizations Focused on Issues Relevant to Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia

International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

- An organization focused on improving services for individuals experiencing dyslexia, including through resources for professionals, families, and decision-makers at: https://dyslexiaida.org/

National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL)

- A federally-funded partnership of literacy experts, researchers, and technical assistance providers to increase use of evidence-based practices for students with literacy-related disabilities: https://www.improvingliteracy.org/about/index.html

National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII)

- A federally-funded technical assistance provider focused on building state and local capacity to support intensive intervention for students persistent learning needs: https://intensiveintervention.org/
  - » *Incudes ratings chart for academic screening tools: https://charts.intensiveintervention.org/ascreening*

Examples from Other States

Connecticut Department of Education Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities

- An office established through state legislation in 2021 to support K-12 general and special educators in serving students with dyslexia and other reading disabilities: https://portal.ct.gov/sde/office-of-dyslexia-and-reading-disabilities

Ohio Department of Education: Approved List of Evidence-Based Reading Interventions

- Identifies approved reading intervention programs for prekindergarten through grade 12: https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/English-Language-Art/Resources-for-English-Language-Arts/High-Quality-Instructional-Materials-in-ELA/Approved-List-of-Evidence-Based-Reading-Interventi

Oregon Department of Education Approved List of Universal Screening Tools for Dyslexia

- Identifies approved universal screening tools for risk factors of dyslexia at: https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms_BestPractice/Documents/approveduniversalscreeners.pdf

Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia

- A university-based center to promote understanding of dyslexia and remove obstacles for students through research, research translation, and dissemination resources: https://dyslexia.mtsu.edu/

Research Relevant to Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

Berninger, V. W., Rutberg, J. E., Abbott, R. D., Garcia, N., Anderson-Youngstrom, M., Brooks, A., & Fulton, C. (2006). Tier 1 and Tier 2 early intervention for handwriting and composing. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44(1), 3–30.

Huber, E., Donnelly, P. M., Rokem, A., & Yeatman, J. D. (2018). Rapid and widespread white matter plasticity during an intensive reading intervention. *Nature Communications, 9*(1), 2260. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-04627-5

International Dyslexia Association. (2019). *Here's Why Schools Should Use Structured Literacy*. https://dyslexiaida.org/heres-why-schools-should-use-structured-literacy/

International Dyslexia Association. (2019). *Universal Screening: K-2 Reading*. https://dyslexiaida.org/universal-screening-k-2-reading/

International Dyslexia Association. (IDA). (2020). *Understanding Dysgraphia*. https://dyslexiaida.org/understanding-dysgraphia-2/

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