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# Decoding Dyslexia-MD

## E-News ~ Fall 2014

News, Information & Events for Parents, Families and Supporters of Decoding Dyslexia Maryland (DD-MD)



## DD-MD Turns 2!

## Our Story is Your Story

Dear DD-MD Friends,

Welcome to the first DD-MD e-News! We'd like to share with you our Decoding Dyslexia story to keep you informed AND to **inspire** you to reach out to others in your part of Maryland. First, let's begin with how we got started with DD-MD.

Lisa Blottenberger and I founded Decoding Dyslexia MD because our kids' reading, writing and spelling performance was significantly below grade level. Our area doesn't have ready access to private dyslexia schools or trained academic language therapists. We looked for groups where we could learn more but found nothing.

in 2012, we started a tri-county support group for families of students with dyslexia. We also attended the International Dyslexia Association Conference in Baltimore to find other parents and solutions. At IDA we met parents from [Decoding Dyslexia PA](#) and learned about the budding dyslexia parent movement. We liked the [mission and goals of Decoding Dyslexia](#), especially the effort to require public schools to identify, educate and support students with dyslexia.

Today, with friends and families like yours, DD-MD continues to grow and is committed to changing MD public schools for all struggling readers based on [New Jersey's model](#). We know that teachers and school districts want to educate students with dyslexia. We also know that they don't have the tools they need.

Reading failure is a systemic problem common to all states and isn't particular to Maryland. No matter where we've lived, be it [California](#), [Virginia](#) or Maryland, these states didn't recognize dyslexia--they didn't know how. [Decoding Dyslexia](#) is now active in 48 states and 2 Canadian Provinces precisely because we know that students with dyslexia can learn to read if schools use [structured literacy methods](#).

States like Texas, Ohio, Connecticut and New Jersey have dyslexia laws and/or legislation to identify, educate and support students with dyslexia. DD-MD will continue to work with literacy and education specialists to prepare dyslexia legislation. We invite each of you to be a part of this process.

One of the best ways to get involved is to tell your personal dyslexia story. Policy makers want to know about your child's journey in public school. There are several stories posted on our website along with a form so you can [tell your story](#).

Another simple and easy way to get involved is to start a [Parent Support Group](#) in your area and/or volunteer to be a [Regional/County DD Leader](#). If you would like to meet with policy makers, please see "[Getting Started: Your Dyslexia Advocacy Toolbox](#)."

To make a difference can mean as little or as much effort as you can afford, but every little bit moves all students closer to reading, writing and spelling the way WE know they can!

Thank you for supporting **Decoding Dyslexia Maryland** and we look forward to a productive 2014-2015 and hope to meet you all at the [IDAMD meeting on Dec. 6](#).

*Laura Schultz & Lisa Blottenberger*

**Tell Your Story**

# Dyslexia Resources & Information

## International Dyslexia Association (IDA) & the IDAMD Branch Annual Meeting

DD-MD supporters, please join the [IDA-Maryland Branch](#) on **December 6** for their annual meeting. The [International Dyslexia Association](#) and IDA-MD both support parents and families in their efforts to educate children with dyslexia. Please join us to talk more about dyslexia and about our movement's march to the future!

Some new resources for families and teachers from the IDA include:

- [Dyslexia in the Classroom: What Every Teacher Needs to Know](#)
- [The Dyslexia Handbook: What Every Family Should Know](#)
- [The IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading](#)

## International Dyslexia Association Maryland Branch Annual Members Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 6

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Towson University at Van Bokkelen Hall**

Parking available in Glen Garage Comm 3 & 4

Free and open to the public

### **A LOOK TO THE FUTURE**

Paula Moraine, President, IDAMD

**Dyslexia Across the Lifespan: What Happens When School is Over?**

Emma Bixler & Jonathan Grimmel, Treasurer, IDAMD

***Boots on the Ground – the March Forward***

Decoding Dyslexia MD, Laura Schultz & Lisa Blottenberger

**Dyslexia Tutoring Program**

Marcy Kolodny, CEO Dyslexia Tutoring Program

## A Look to the Future

Dr. Nancy Grasmick, Ed.D., Presidential Scholar, Towson University  
Educational Advisor to Governor-elect Larry Hogan

Annette Fallon, Vice President, IDAMD, Baltimore Lab School

## DD-Advocacy

Part of [Our Mission](#) is Boots on the Ground Advocacy ~

- Do you have a student with dyslexia who struggles to read and write the way MD public schools teach?
- Are you a parent who has to purchase tutoring, homeschooling or private school because your child with dyslexia is not learning to read, write and spell?
- Are you a teacher who sees bright kids struggling to read and write no matter how well you teach or how much time you give them?
- Are you a tutor, coach or educational consultant who knows exactly why students with dyslexia in public schools are not learning to read?
- Do you want to help change Maryland education to recognize dyslexia, educate teachers about dyslexia and provide appropriate interventions and accommodations?

If you answered YES, please take [ACTION](#) and help change Maryland public education for all students with dyslexia! Invite your friends, family and teachers to join DD-MD -- public schoolers, private schoolers, home schoolers -- together we CAN make a difference!



## Getting Started:

### Your Dyslexia Advocacy Toolbox

Another simple way to get involved with DD-MD is to meet with your state legislator in his/her district office. Tell your story and explain that you are a member of Decoding Dyslexia Maryland. Share the one-pagers listed below and use them as talking points. Visit the DD-MD [legislative page](#) and check it often for updates (the MD legislature will update its members soon).

Meet with other officials to create dyslexia awareness: County School Board members, County Commissioners and County Executives, present to your teachers during a training event, run a [dyslexia simulation](#), and/or use the public participation segment of your school board/governing boards, to introduce yourself.

- [Who is My Legislator](#)
- [Tell My Story](#)
- [Join](#)
- [Mission & Policy Goals, One Pager](#)
- [Who We Are, One Pager](#)
- [Take Action Today!](#)
- [Guide to Starting a Parent Support Group](#)
- [Attend and Speak at the State Special Education Advisory](#)
- Participate in your county Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

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## DD-MD Holds Statewide Meeting

The first meeting of Decoding Dyslexia Maryland was held at the [Summit School](#) in Edgewater, MD last Spring. Supporters from across the state joined to brainstorm legislation, outreach and parent support practices and to share experiences. Thank

you to the Summit School for hosting our group!

During the meeting Decoding Dyslexia MD established its statewide goals and priorities for 2014-15, as follows:

1. Support DD-MD's [statewide advocacy goals](#)
2. Support and develop [parent outreach](#)
3. Inform DD members about [events & activities](#)
4. Reach out to the media
5. Support a statewide awareness effort (2015) with a [Gubernatorial Proclamation](#) and a Dyslexia Awareness Event.

We have opportunities for DD supporters to help with the website, post and curate for social media including Pinterest, Facebook and Twitter, write, edit and distribute the quarterly newsletter (this is the first newsletter), and develop and maintain publications. Please email [Decoding Dyslexia MD](#) if you would like additional information.

The next scheduled meeting will be a statewide conference call for regional leaders in January to discuss legislative participation and to share information. Stay tuned!

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## **Decoding Dyslexia Families Advocate on Capitol Hill, 6/24/14**

In June, DD-MD families visited Washington, D.C. to advocate for [House Resolution 456 on Dyslexia](#). Several Maryland Members of Congress are members of the [House Dyslexia Caucus](#) and also co-sponsor HRes 456. Those Members include: Reps. Delaney, Ruppertsberger, Edwards & Harris. Rep. Van Hollen is a member of the Caucus but did not sign on to HR 456.

To learn more about HR 456 and how to ask your Member of Congress to co-sponsor or to thank them for their co-sponsorship, please visit [DD-MD's website](#). HR



456 will be re-introduced in January when the 114th Congress convenes.

DD-MD would also like to thank everyone who participated in the Capitol Hill meetings -- we appreciate your time and dedication to changing education for all students!





## Congressional Hearing on the "Science of Dyslexia" 9/18/14

In September, the [House Science, Space and Technology Committee](#) held a hearing on the Science of Dyslexia. Decoding Dyslexia groups from Maryland, Virginia, Texas, New Jersey and Pennsylvania were represented and mentioned in remarks by Congressman Lamar Smith. DD supporters were also invited to stay for a luncheon featuring presentations from DD-VA, the National Center for Learning Disabilities and the launch of [Understood.org](#).

Decoding Dyslexia families and supporters are the "boots on the ground" to deliver the message that educational change is needed now. Thank you to all the DD-MD supporters who "pulled on their boots" on Capitol Hill--and a special thanks to all the



students who represented Maryland at the hearing.



Download your  
FREE copy of the  
*Dyslexia in the  
Schools* eBook !

## Featured Dyslexia Resource:

[Dyslexia Training  
Institute](#)

## Webinars & Resources

- [Spotlight on Dyslexia](#), Virtual Conference by Learning Ally
- [Why It's Important to Help Kids Own Their Dyslexia](#), Understood.org Webinar
- [A Series of Articles on Reading & Reading Research](#), Wright's Law



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