

Legislative Action 2017

Decoding Dyslexia Maryland



In 2015 and 2016 the Maryland General Assembly and Governor Hogan authorized a [Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program in Maryland](#) (Dyslexia Task Force). On December 31, 2016 the Dyslexia Task Force submitted its report and findings to the MD General Assembly & the Governor. Task Force participants, including legislators, MABE, PSSAM, MSPA, MSEA, MSDE, private dyslexia schools, speech language pathologists, Decoding Dyslexia MD, and three current teachers, created six overarching recommendations to improve reading instruction.

Summary of “Dyslexia Task Force” Recommendations

1. **Recognize dyslexia as a condition of Specific Learning Disability** in all Maryland public schools and facilitate best practices in schools and systems for the identification, assessment, and intervention of dyslexia; and
2. **Implement Universal Kindergarten Screening** for dyslexia; and
3. **Use a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for struggling readers** to support the development of grade level reading and include as one of the tools to support a child through the identification process for special education eligibility as appropriate; and
4. **Use a Structured Literacy approach for reading instruction for struggling readers** including students who have dyslexia, as well as for all beginning readers in grades K-3; and
5. **Transform teacher preparation programs in reading** at the undergraduate (pre-service), graduate levels of university preparation and in professional learning and development for current teachers and administrators; and
6. **Implement a Pilot Dyslexia Education Program** that includes teacher preparation, universal screening, use of a Structured Literacy approach to reading instruction, accommodations, and fidelity measures and reporting.

Actions to Support Students with Dyslexia & Reading Difficulties

1. Work with Decoding Dyslexia MD to draft legislation and build consensus for **Universal K-2 Screening legislation** for the 2018 session.
2. **Request the House Ways & Means Committee and the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee** hold a joint hearing or work session on the Dyslexia Task Force findings and recommendations.
3. **Request that the Governor's 2018 Budget include funding for a dyslexia/reading demonstration program** as outlined in the Task Force Report. Additional funds can be obtained through public education grants.
4. **Request that the Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) invite the Chair of the Dyslexia Task Force to present the findings and recommendations to the Commission.** The Task Force recommendations bear directly on the Commission's mandate, which was summed up by Chairman Kirwan: "*The task at hand is essentially to make recommendations on how to make our schools better and that we owe it to students to develop a system that is as good as the best in the world.*"

About Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

[Decoding Dyslexia Maryland](#) is a parent-led, grassroots movement concerned with the limited access to educational interventions for dyslexia within the public education system. www.DecodingDyslexiaMD.org