

DECODING DYSLEXIA MARYLAND



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Legislature Unanimously Approves Universal Kindergarten Reading Screening

Senate Bill 734 will enable Maryland schools to detect and prevent reading failure

Annapolis, MD (April 10, 2019): After a two-year push, the Maryland General Assembly on April 2, passed the [Ready to Read Act](#), a reading screening and early intervention bill that will help prevent reading failure. The bill now awaits Governor Larry Hogan's signature.

"I introduced this legislation with Delegate Eric Luedtke because all kids should have a fair shot at learning to read," said Senator Craig Zucker, the Senate bill sponsor. "In my own experience, if I had been screened for reading difficulties early, my academic struggles could have been addressed rather than progressing into a disability," the Senator explained.

Delegate Eric Luedtke agreed. "I sponsored the House version of the Ready to Read bill because preventing reading difficulties is just common sense -- if we can reduce or eliminate a student's reading struggles by providing early intervention and reduce special education referrals, it's a win-win for the student and the school district," he said.

Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, SB 734 will enable Maryland's twenty-four school districts to provide reading screening to **all** Kindergarten students to determine if they are at risk for reading difficulties. If screening results indicate a student is at risk, supplemental reading instruction must be provided. The bill also includes parent engagement, reporting requirements and funding through the Education Blueprint for Maryland's Future (SB 1030).

"Research has identified which pre-reading skills are predictive of later reading difficulties," said Dr. Nadine Gaab, Director of the Gaab Lab at the Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital. Young children can be screened for their likelihood of developing dyslexia or reading challenges and effective interventions can change their outcomes as well as improve the achievement of struggling readers and students with dyslexia," she explained.

"Camilia Whitehead, co-founder of Decoding Dyslexia Maryland Baltimore City, is optimistic that the new law will help children in Baltimore City. "This is an exciting time for children in Baltimore City where so many struggle to learn to read. Families of color, students with reading difficulties

like dyslexia and students who may not have strong literacy support at home, desperately need access to prevention -- this bill is a step in that direction," she said.

The Ready to Read bills (Senate Bill 734/HB 690) are sponsored by Senator Craig Zucker and Delegate Eric Luedtke. The bills are supported by the education community including the [Maryland School Psychologists Association \(MSPA\)](#), the [Maryland Psychological Association \(MPA\)](#), the [Maryland Education Coalition](#), the Education Advocacy Coalition and the [Maryland State Educators Association \(MSEA\)](#). The legislation awaits signature by Governor Larry Hogan.

About [Decoding Dyslexia Maryland](#)

Decoding Dyslexia Maryland (DDMD) is a grassroots organization driven by parents, educators and students concerned about reading instruction and interventions for all students, including those with dyslexia, in Maryland Public Schools. [3 minute video that includes parent, student, expert and educator reflections on the Ready to Read Act](#)

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