



News Advisory w/ correction

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Maryland Families & Educators Call for Changes to Reading Instruction in MD Public Schools

“We Know What Works – It’s a Matter of Education”

Annapolis, MD (March 13, 2015) - On Wednesday, March 18, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland (DD-MD) will host a [Dyslexia Advocacy Day in Annapolis](#) at Maryland Legislature, Lowe House Office Building, Room 145, Baltimore City Delegation Room. The goal of Dyslexia Advocacy Day is to educate legislators about reading failure and dyslexia, interventions, and the need for teacher training. Parents, teachers and students are participating.

There are three bills in the MD Legislature on dyslexia and [House Bill 278/Senate Bill 15](#) have passed their respective chambers and are now awaiting hearings in the opposite chambers. SB 15 is scheduled for a hearing on April 2 in the House Ways and Means Committee. Both bills would establish a Task Force to Study Dyslexia Education Programs in Maryland and create a public school pilot program. **House Bill 763** would establish a Task Force to study Effectiveness of Teacher Education Programs in the Instruction of Reading. Barbara Donick, head of The Committee for Change and a member of Decoding Dyslexia MD, emphasized, “After years of research we know the nature, causes and treatment of reading difficulties. There is a big void in teacher training standards which have not been aligned with scientific research.”

Lisa Blottenberger, founding member of Decoding Dyslexia Maryland, former teacher and advocate for children with disabilities noted that “teachers and administrators want to know why there is such a gap between student performance and expected outcomes--they want to know why certain programs don’t work. It’s time to provide teachers with scientific data that shows evidence-based structured literacy programs work—and just as important, it’s time to provide professional development to our teachers so they can implement these programs,” Blottenberger said.

[Too many kids are not learning to read](#): The Maryland School Assessments Data for 2014 show that 51.1% of students in special education are at or below basic in reading as are 28.3% of African Americans. (Source: Maryland School Assessments, MDK12.org) The National Assessment for Education Progress’ (NAEP) 2013 data shows that 58% of all 8th grade students, 76% of socio-economically disadvantaged students, 78% of black students and 72% of students with disabilities, read below proficient levels. Dyslexia Advocacy Day is the time where parents, students and educators come to Annapolis to talk about solutions.

Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy, Executive Director of The Summit School said, “The Summit School supports Dyslexia Advocacy Day because we know that there are thousands of students in Maryland who would benefit from a dyslexia education program in the public schools. At Summit, we provide our faculty with the most current research-to-practice professional development for teaching students with dyslexia. We believe all teachers would benefit from these professional development opportunities. Dyslexia Advocacy Day will provide parents, educators, and legislators information about dyslexia and how dyslexia can be addressed in all schools.”

For additional information on Dyslexia Advocacy Day please visit:

www.dyslexiasomd.weebly.com/dyslexia-advocacy-day.html

Dr. Fran Levin Bowman, Educational Specialist and Director of Bowman Educational Services in Howard County believes that early identification of children with dyslexia is another key to turning this problem around. "I have seen thousands of children who receive early intervention in Kindergarten, with systematic, multisensory programs like Orton-Gillingham, who never have to suffer. We can help kids BEFORE they fail by treating symptoms of dyslexia when they are very young."

Decoding Dyslexia MD (DD-MD) is part of a national, grassroots movement in 50 states that advocates for students with dyslexia and reading struggles. www.decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com

Community Sponsors for Dyslexia Advocacy Day include: The Maryland Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, The DC Capital Area Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, Baltimore Lab School, The Odyssey School, Glenwood Academy, Wye River Upper School, Bowman Educational Services, Barbara Donick, Educator and Tutor, The Dyslexia Tutoring Program & Chair of the Committee for Change, ReadVentures, and Lindamood Bell Learning Center.

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Branch of
the International Dyslexia
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