

Decoding Dyslexia Maryland



Our Mission

1. To raise awareness about reading and dyslexia;
2. To empower parents, educators and students to support struggling readers and students with dyslexia;
3. To advocate for best practices to support struggling readers and students with dyslexia.

Legislative Priorities, 2020 Session

- ❑ **Reading and Dyslexia Handbook Legislation:** SB 575 and HB 718 are sponsored by Senator Hester & Delegate Luedtke, **respectively** DDMD supports the 2017 recommendation by the Maryland Dyslexia Task Force to create a Dyslexia Handbook to support parents, students and local school systems.
- ❑ **Implementation of the Ready to Read Act of 2019.** DDMD supports implementation of the Ready to Read Act to screen all students in Kindergarten for risks of reading difficulties including dyslexia. DDMD requests to be part of the stakeholder group that MSDE must consult with “on or before June 2020” to develop and update resources for use by local school systems and to be accessible to all. (Source: Ready to Read Act, 2019)
- ❑ **Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, Funding & Accountability, SB1000 and HB1300.** DDMD supports the Kirwan Commission’s recommendations including the accountability and oversight measures to ensure instruction improves student outcomes for reading. Curriculum, instruction, professional learning, and assessments that are aligned to the science of reading will help close academic gaps for all students. *See our coalition partner’s website for information on the science of reading:* [The Reading League, Advancing Evidence in Practice](#)

Policy Goals 2020-2021

- ❑ **Reading Instruction.** We support local school systems that provide students with equitable reading instruction & interventions that a) meet state and federal requirements, b) are explicit and systematic, and c) include phonemic awareness, phonic decoding, vocabulary/knowledge building, language structure, reading fluency and comprehension ([Section 2221, ESSA, 2015](#), IDEA and [MD College and Career Readiness Standards](#)).
- ❑ **Prevention Framework for Reading.** DDMD supports a Response to Screening, Instruction & Intervention Model and a Multi-tiered System of Support framework for reading (MTSS-r) that includes reading screening, informal diagnostics, progress monitoring, explicit and systematic core instruction, effective intensification of core instruction to address both decoding and language comprehension along with intensive, evidence-based structured literacy interventions for students with reading disabilities like dyslexia.
- ❑ **Students at Risk for Dyslexia & Students with Dyslexia.** We support interventions and access to structured literacy instruction and interventions for students with dyslexia or reading disabilities ([Structured Literacy defined, MD Dyslexia Technical Assistance Bulletin](#)).¹ Students with dyslexia should be provided structured literacy interventions that are specific to the individual child’s needs, consistent with curriculum and instruction, and are explicit, systematic and based on scientific research.

¹Spear-Swerling, Louise. “[Structured Literacy & Typical Literacy Practices.](#)” *Teaching Exceptional Children*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2019, pp. 37-48., doi: 10.1177/0040059918820435.

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Policy Goals continued



- ❑ **Educator Preparation, Pre-Service.** We support Maryland Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) that provide teacher candidates with the knowledge and practice to teach all students to read. Whereas poverty, English language status, disability status and race are often used as predictors of reading failure, pre-service teachers should be trained to intensify instruction and interventions and provide accommodations for students at-risk for poor reading outcomes based on a strong Response-to-Screening & Intervention model.
 - ❑ A recent [NCTQ study found that teacher preparation](#) programs often omit the critical foundational reading skills of phonological awareness and phonic decoding when preparing pre-service educators to teach reading.
 - ❑ Programs should emphasize explicit, systematic approaches for foundational reading in conjunction with knowledge and vocabulary building and the science supporting these approaches. **Teachers require a fundamental understanding of the psychology of development and learning prior to entering the classroom.**
 - ❑ We support oversight and accountability of educator preparation programs to ensure course content is aligned to reading science and [Maryland's College and Career Readiness Standards](#).

- ❑ **Educator Preparation, In-Service.** We support professional learning in the science of reading for educators who work with striving readers and students with disabilities like dyslexia and encourage certification by the International Dyslexia Association. Professional development for educators and programs/materials for striving readers should align with the [Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading, IDA 2018](#) and the [IES Practice Guide for Foundational Skills to Support Reading in Grades K-3](#). Professional development programs should provide teachers with the core knowledge of learning and development which have been lacking in the pre-service programs.

- ❑ **Accommodations.** We support access to accommodations for students with dyslexia. It is imperative that students with 504s and IEPs are provided appropriate assistive technology and accommodations so they can access grade level content in the classroom, and so tests measure their skills rather than the effects of dyslexia.

- ❑ **Family Engagement in Reading and Literacy.** We support public education and public-school educators. We acknowledge that the relationship among schools, districts and parent advocates is often fractious and at times adversarial. It is in the students' best interest when schools engage families as partners to support each child's emergent reading and writing literacy. When parents and caregivers are engaged as partners, students, schools and communities benefit.

ABOUT US

Decoding Dyslexia Maryland (DDMD) is a volunteer, unincorporated, grassroots movement led by parents, students and related educational professionals. DDMD began in St. Mary's County in 2012 because there were no supports for parents or students with dyslexia. From its two parent beginnings, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland has grown to 15 chapters spanning the 25 school districts with thousands of members who include teachers, administrators, college professors, students, parents and related professionals.