



Talking Points for 2020 Dyslexia Bills

Early Dyslexia Screening for Students (A5259/S4341)

Train Teachers about Dyslexia (A6450 /S4342)

Screening for People Who Are Incarcerated (S6787/A7822)

Interventions for Kids with Dyslexia or Phonological Disabilities (S5608/A7210)

Dyslexia Task Force (S7093/A8786)

Establishing Dyslexia Schools (A6911)

- **What is Dyslexia?** Dyslexia is not seeing things backwards or upside down. It is not a visual problem, but a brain-based learning disability characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition, so students decode words incorrectly or very slowly and with great effort. People with dyslexia have difficulty with phonological processing - connecting the letters to the sounds they make and thus have difficulty recognizing words - even words they see frequently - making them slow and inaccurate readers.
- **How Common is Dyslexia?** Between 15-20 percent of people are affected by dyslexia. That means in every class of 30 students, 5 or 6 of them have dyslexia, but most of them will not be identified for years, and many never are.
- **Can we Screen for Dyslexia?** Yes, research has shown that early signs of dyslexia can be identified before the age of 6. Research also shows that if children are not reading on grade level by 3rd grade, they only have a 1 in 8 chance of making up for that lost time and getting back to grade level.
- **What Do I talk About When I meet with Elected Representatives? Tell your personal story with dyslexia!** Talk about who you are, how you learned to read, if you struggled, and what or who helped you or inspired you. Talk about why it is important to you that the bills are passed and the need to improve support for young people with dyslexia. Ask your legislator if they will cosponsor these bills.
- **YOU are the expert of your own experience!** Your story is the best tool to show elected officials and their staff why these bills are so important. Tell them what dyslexia is!
- **Early Screening for Dyslexia Bill** (S4341 Brooks/A5259 Simon): This bill creates a program for early screening at an age when children can make the most progress - and before they fall behind their peers. The bill creates a program that will provide early screening and intervention services for children with risk factors for dyslexia. It requires school districts to conduct mandatory early screening for dyslexia for all children starting in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten and continuing each year until students successfully complete second grade. It also requires school districts to designate an individual to provide resources to the parent and/or guardian of any child who displays indications of dyslexia.

- **Bill to Train Teachers about Dyslexia** (S4342 Brooks/A6450 Simon): Too often, teachers, parents and administrators have trouble recognizing the symptoms of dyslexia. This bill requires the incorporation of the structured multisensory approach into the literacy courses that are already required for prospective teachers. This bill ensures that undergraduate and graduate students are trained in evidence-based, effective methods of teaching reading, including structured, multisensory approaches, also known as structured literacy. This approach is effective in teaching students with dyslexia and related learning disabilities. This training can include what is referred to as "Orton-Gillingham" instruction, including the use of sight, hearing, touch and movement to help students connect language with letters and words.
- **Dyslexia Screening for People Who are Incarcerated** (S6787 Myrie /A7822 Simon): Research shows that, like Ameer Baraka and so many others, about one third of people who are incarcerated suffer from undiagnosed dyslexia and learning disabilities. Even so, most prisons do not provide the tools for incarcerated individuals to learn behind bars. Without those tools, it is difficult to acquire the necessary skills to succeed upon their release. This bill requires dyslexia screening for people who are incarcerated who do not have a GED or a high school diploma. It will provide them with intervention that is evidence-based, proven effective, and consistent with science-based research tailored to addressing dyslexia.
- **Interventions for Children with Dyslexia or Phonological Learning Differences or Disabilities** (S5608 Jackson/A7210 Carroll): Though one in five students has dyslexia or a phonological learning difference or disability, the current educational system is not set up to teach these students to read successfully and confidently. This bill requires that students with dyslexia be taught through a multi-sensory approach, or "Orton-Gillingham" designed instruction, and will require schools to provide students who need specialized reading instruction with the specific resources they need. Schools will also be required to inform parents of any intervention their children receive.
- **Dyslexia Task Force** (Hoylman S7093/Carroll A8786): Although between five and seventeen percent of the population is estimated to have dyslexia, there is still little research done to develop guidelines for screenings, intervention, and support for those students who need it most. This bill will establish a task force to develop those guidelines for students at risk of and with dyslexia and other phonological disorders, and develop a program of study to help teachers learn how to best help such students
- **Establishing Dyslexia Schools:** (Carroll A6911): Parents and caregivers of dyslexic students are saddled with enormous financial and emotional burdens in finding schools that support their children's learning needs. Currently in New York City, there is only one school that uses the curriculum and teaching methods necessary to effectively teach students with dyslexia and other phonemic awareness issues how to read. This bill establishes schools dedicated to teaching dyslexic students in certain school districts, ensuring that students will no longer have to travel prohibitive distances or be shut out due to wait lists.
- **Resources:** Advocates for Children | [ARISE Coalition \(https://www.arisecoalition.org/\)](https://www.arisecoalition.org/) | [Decoding Dyslexia NY \(https://www.decodingdyslexiany.org/\)](https://www.decodingdyslexiany.org/) | Eye to Eye [Everyone Reading \(https://www.everyonelearning.org/\)](https://www.everyonelearning.org/) | [Understood \(https://www.understood.org/\)](https://www.understood.org/) | NCLD | Learning Ally | Literacy Trust | The Reading League | Teach My Kid to Read | The International Dyslexia Association

