

# Legislative Report Iowa Dyslexia Board

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November 2023

## LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

[Iowa Code 256.32A](#) was signed into law in 2020. This legislation states:

1. An Iowa dyslexia board is established to guide, facilitate, and oversee implementation of dyslexia instruction in Iowa and make recommendations for continued improvement of such instruction.

The Iowa dyslexia board shall also submit recommendations as follows:

- a. To the department regarding the required and preferred qualifications for a dyslexia consultant position required in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 60.
  - b. To the area education agencies regarding the required and preferred qualifications for dyslexia specialists required in accordance with section 273.2, subsection 11.
2. The Iowa dyslexia board shall consist of the following members: (as listed in Appendix A).
  3. The term of membership is three years. The terms shall be staggered so that at least four of the terms end each year, but no member serving on the initial board shall serve less than one year. The governor shall determine the length of the initial terms of office.
  4. The Iowa dyslexia board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly by November 15 annually.
  5. This section is repealed July 1, 2025.

## BOARD REPORT ANNUAL SUMMARY

This section details the work of the Iowa Dyslexia Board for the 2022-2023 academic year. This section is in response to the Iowa Code 256.32A, which applies to the Iowa Dyslexia Board as listed above, which states, "The Iowa dyslexia board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the general assembly by November 15 annually."

In response to this section of the code, the following actions were taken during the 2022-2023 academic year.

- The Iowa Dyslexia Board met 4 times in the 2022-2023 school year. During those meetings we continued to actualize the legislative mandates of the board.
- The Iowa Dyslexia Board established subcommittees based on what we prioritized. The subcommittees were related to the work of communication, institutes of higher education, data mining, assessment discovery, instruction discovery, and other items.
- The Iowa Department of Education Dyslexia Website was reviewed by the board. Content was reviewed and the final product was made public.
- First cohort of endorsement graduates graduated in December 2022. The second cohort 2 started in the fall of 2022.
- A dyslexia consultant was hired by the Iowa Department of Education. The Dyslexia Board is looking forward to leveraging the addition dedicated by the department in the form of the literacy team and the dyslexia specialist.
- Members of the Dyslexia Board provided guidance, content input, and worked collaboratively with the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC) to develop modules and a caregiver hub to support dyslexia and the Science of Reading.

## DYSLEXIA SPECIALIST ENDORSEMENT

This section of the report updates the availability of the dyslexia endorsement at Iowa's Institutes of Higher Education. This is in response to Iowa Code 272.2(22) 22 which applies to the Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement. The specific Iowa Code is listed below.

272.2(22)22 By July 1, 2021, adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A, developed in collaboration with the Iowa reading research center, establishing an advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement. The endorsement shall require a strong understanding of structured literacy instruction; the neurobiological nature, cognitive-linguistic correlates, developmental indicators, compensatory behaviors, potential psychological factors, and co-occurring disorders of dyslexia; demonstrated skill in administering informal and formal assessments related to dyslexia; demonstrated skill in delivery of explicit, systematic literacy intervention; demonstrated skill in developing and supporting services for students with characteristics of dyslexia including those who are eligible for services under chapter 256B or section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794, as amended; demonstrated skill in the design and implementation of accommodations and modifications; demonstrated competence in creating a dyslexia-friendly learning environment; and demonstrated skill in the use and integration of assistive technology. This endorsement shall, at a minimum, require three years of prior teaching experience and completion of a supervised practical experience.

In response to this section of the code, the following actions were taken during the 2022-2023 academic year.

- Grand View University and the University of Iowa now offer a Dyslexia Specialist endorsement.
- Grand View University's first cohort began coursework in May 2023.
- University of Iowa's first cohort of endorsement graduates graduated in December 2022. The second cohort started in the fall 2022. The third cohort started fall 2023.
- We have expanded the impact of the Science of Reading work through the specialist endorsement, and individuals with this endorsement are working in Iowa school districts and Area Education Agency systems.
- As envisioned by the Iowa Dyslexia Task Force, the professionals completing the Iowa Dyslexia Endorsement have begun to embark on training, teaching, and building the knowledgeable infrastructure within our public school system to advance the work in the science of reading.

## AREA EDUCATION AGENCY DYSLEXIA SPECIALISTS

This section of the report updates the employment of dyslexia specialists at every Area Education Agency (AEA). This is in response to Iowa Code 273.2(11) that applies to area education agencies established — powers — services and programs. The specific Iowa Code is listed below.

273.2(11) - Subject to an appropriation by the general assembly for such purpose, the area education agency board shall, by July 1, 2024, dedicate at least one full-time equivalent position to maintain a dyslexia specialist. The area education agency board may hire such a specialist or may provide appropriate training to qualify an existing employee as a specialist on dyslexia. The specialist shall provide technical guidance and assistance, including but not limited to professional development, strategies, and materials to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools relating to identification of and instruction for students with characteristics of dyslexia. The specialist shall be highly

trained in dyslexia and have a minimum of three years of field experience in screening, identifying, and treating dyslexia and related disorders. In the absence of an appropriation, each area education agency board is encouraged to employ a highly qualified dyslexia specialist.

In response to this section of the code, the following actions were taken during the 2022-2023 academic year.

- Each AEA has one or more staff members who have completed or will complete the dyslexia specialist endorsement.
- AEA Dyslexia Specialists are involved in supporting professional development for teachers and other support personnel on the Dyslexia framework that AEAs and the DOE are developing.
- AEA Dyslexia Specialists are aligning dyslexia webpages to facilitate communication with stakeholders, including parents.
- AEA Dyslexia Specialists are building system capacity to meet students' needs by supporting schools and the professionals who serve in schools.

## EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

This section of the report updates the inclusion of dyslexia specific information in educator preparation programs. Three sub standards within Iowa Code 281, Chapter 79 that applies to all teacher preparation programs regardless of their endorsements, are included below.

1. 79.15(3) Teacher Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions standard. "Each teacher candidate demonstrates competency in literacy, to include reading theory, knowledge, strategies, and approaches; and integrating literacy instruction into content areas. The teacher candidate demonstrates competency in making appropriate accommodations for students who struggle with literacy. Demonstrated competency shall address the needs of all students, including but not limited to students with disabilities; students who are at risk of academic failure; students who have been identified as gifted and talented or English learners; and students with dyslexia, whether or not such students have been identified as children requiring special education under Iowa Code chapter 256B. Literacy instruction shall include evidence-based best practices, determined by research, including that identified by the Iowa Reading Research Center."
2. 79.17(6)c Administrator knowledge, skills, and dispositions standard. "The unit shall provide evidence that administrator candidates develop the ability to meet the needs of all learners, as well as ensuring teachers meet the needs of diverse learners, including:  
Students who are struggling with literacy, including those with dyslexia."
3. 79.21(2)c Other candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions standard.\* "Candidates shall demonstrate the content knowledge and the pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn in accordance with the following provisions:  
Students who are struggling with literacy, including those with dyslexia."

Dyslexia-based activities are supported in educator preparation. Furthermore, unit compliance with the standards, outlined in Chapter 79, is ensured through Iowa Department of Education processes. Along with the Educator Preparation Team, the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) and the Iowa Reading Research Center supports dyslexia-related efforts in educator preparation. A list of involvement, across agencies, is detailed below including professional development, reaffirmation of accreditation checkpoints, and the dyslexia endorsement.

- Professional Development
  - In the Spring 2023, the Iowa Department of Education presented to the Iowa Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE) related to legislated items. Feedback was gathered as to additional support the institutions would need for implementation.
  - A Dyslexia Resource Handout was developed by the Iowa Department of Education to support legislated information and was disseminated to Educator Preparation Programs (EPP).
  - A workshop series was provided to interested EPP instructors for further guidance related to dyslexia instruction.
- EPP Accreditation Review (seven-year cycle) Checkpoints
  - Review curriculum (syllabi, activities and assessments) for Chapter 79's Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions Standard
  - Iowa BOEE reviews curriculum exhibits, in addition to the Iowa Department of Education educational preparation team review, as a separate process from the above work (occurs at the same time - every seven years alongside the program review)
  - Analyze survey responses from current candidates and graduates in level of preparation for identifying and meeting the needs of students struggling with literacy, including dyslexia
  - Conduct interviews with faculty, students, advisory committees and graduates to verify and validate the evidence of dyslexia preparation content
- K-12 Dyslexia Endorsement
  - Support EPPs in the proposal process to offer the K-12 dyslexia endorsement
  - Upon the recommendation of IRRC and BOEE curriculum and program review, the Iowa Department of Education Consultants review the program application for compliance and provide recommendations as appropriate to the director or the state board of education.

\*The other category in educator preparation, according to 79.19(256), includes “school guidance counselor, school audiologist, school psychologist, school social worker, speech-language pathologist, supervisor of special education (support and orientation and mobility specialist).”

## REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED DYSLEXIA TRAININGS

This section of the report updates the Dyslexia Overview Module training for Area Education Agencies (AEAs) and School Districts. This is in response to Iowa Code 273.3(25) AEA Training on Dyslexia and Iowa Code 279.72 Teacher Training on dyslexia. The specific Iowa Codes are listed below.

273.3(25) Require, by July 1, 2024, any person employed by the area education agency who holds a license, certificate, statement of recognition, or authorization other than a coaching authorization, issued by the board of educational examiners under chapter 272, to complete the Iowa Reading Research Center dyslexia overview module. Such persons employed after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year of the employee’s initial date of hire.

279.72 By July 1, 2024, the board of directors of a school district shall require all persons employed by the school district who hold a teaching license with an endorsement for prekindergarten, pre kindergarten or elementary special education, or prekindergarten through grade three levels issued under chapter 272, all practitioners and paraprofessionals assigned as Title I teachers and Title I paraprofessionals under

the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, and all practitioners endorsed to teach English as a second language to complete the Iowa Reading Research Center dyslexia overview module. Such persons employed by the school district after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year of the employee's initial date of hire.

In response to this section of the code, the following data has been collected.

**DYSLEXIA OVERVIEW ENROLLMENT & COMPLETION:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrollment Count</b>	<b>Completion Count</b>
Oct '18 – Oct '19	847	594
Oct '19 – Oct '20	3947	3570
Oct '20 – Oct '21	3311	3024
Oct '21 – Oct '22	3550	3332
Oct '22 - Oct '23	<b>6798</b>	<b>6416</b>
<b>Dyslexia Overview Grand Total</b>	<b>18453</b>	<b>16936</b>

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DYSLEXIA LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE**

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Iowa Department of Education addressed many of the recommendations of the Dyslexia Legislation and recommendations made by the Iowa Dyslexia Board. These items are listed below.

- The Iowa Department of Education [dyslexia website](#) was initiated.
- A Dyslexia Awareness campaign was held in October 2022.
- A Consultant was hired at the Iowa Department of Education for Dyslexia and the Science of Reading.
- A Science of Reading Task Team began to develop guidance for the State of Iowa to detail the elements of explicit and systematic literacy instruction for students.
- Presentations were given to multiple stakeholder groups related to the dyslexia legislation requirements and updates on progress made. The presentation also was a communication means to share guidance, tools and resources to help educators understand how the term “dyslexia” can be used in Iowa schools and how to partner with families about concerns around dyslexia.
- The Iowa Department of Education collaborated with the Iowa Reading Research Center to develop guidance, tools and resources for informal diagnostic assessment for students identified at risk for reading difficulties by FastBridge early literacy screeners. Such assessments would be used to inform intervention including dyslexia specific interventions for students with dyslexia and/or characteristics of dyslexia.

## IOWA DYSLEXIA BOARD PRIORITIES FOR 2023-2024

In conjunction with the Iowa Department of Education, the following priorities are established for the 2023-2024 academic year.

- **Priority 1:** Collaborate with Institutes of Higher Education to develop guidance, tools and resources to help educator preparation programs offer classes related to the Science of Reading and how best to instruct students with dyslexia and/or characteristics of dyslexia.
- **Priority 2:** Expand educator understanding and practices with the Science of Reading.
- **Priority 3:** Develop guidance, tools and resources for a Dyslexia Professional Development Plan to be used by the Iowa Department of Education, AEAs, and school districts across Iowa.

During 2023-2024, the Department will seek feedback and guidance from the Iowa Dyslexia Board related to each of these priorities.

**APPENDIX A: IOWA DYSLEXIA BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Term Serving</b>	<b>Represents</b>
Barb Anderson	Standing Beginning 8/1/22	Department of Education (Director Designee)
Kristen Craig Waukee CSD	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/25	Elementary core literacy teacher
Matt Cretsinger Marshalltown CSD	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/25	Special education administrator
Stephanie Edgren University of Iowa / Iowa Reading Research Center	2nd Term 9/7/22 to 6/30/25	Representative of an institution of higher education in Iowa with documented expertise in dyslexia and reading instruction
Katie Greving Decoding Dyslexia Iowa	1st Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/24	Representative of decoding dyslexia who is a parent of child/children with dyslexia
Mark Hennigar Clarion	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/25	Representative of decoding dyslexia who is an individual with dyslexia
Nina Lorimor-Easley	2nd Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/25	Provider certified in structured literacy reading program
James Northwick Atlantic CSD	1st Term 3/30/22 to 6/30/24	School administrator
Wanda Steuri	Standing Beginning 7/1/23	Department of Education (Iowa Department of Education Dyslexia and Science of Reading Consultant)
Kay Stork CAM CSD	2nd Term 6/30/22 to 6/30/25	Reading specialist
Ben Walizer	Standing Beginning 9/7/22	Representative of the Iowa Reading Research Center
Tammy Wilgenbusch University of Iowa, Stead Family Dept of Pediatrics	1st Term 9/7/22 to 6/30/25	Psychologist or speech language pathologist licensed in the state of Iowa with experience in diagnosing dyslexia
Shane Williams Mississippi Bend AEA	1st Term 6/30/21 to 6/30/24	Representative of an area education agency
Kara Wishman	2nd Term 6/30/22 to 6/30/25	Representative of decoding dyslexia who is a parent of child/children with dyslexia