

Iowa Dyslexia Board

Meeting Minutes – March 1, 2023

Meeting minutes taken by Kathy Bertsch

CALL TO ORDER

Nina Lorimor-Easley, board chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Barb Anderson, Matt Cretsinger, Stephanie Edgren, James Northwick, Nina Lorimor-Easley, Kay Stork, Ben Walizer, Tammy Wilgenbusch, Shane Williams, Kara Wishman.

Absent: Kristen Craig, Katie Greving, Mark Hennigar

1. Welcome

- a. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- b. **Approve Agenda:** Matt Cretsinger moved to approve the meeting agenda and Tammy Wilgenbusch seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- c. **Approve Meeting Minutes from October:** Tammy Wilgenbusch moved to approve the January 2023 meeting minutes and Kara Wishman seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- d. **Board Member Announcements/updates**
 - i. Nina Lorimor-Easley presented to the Iowa Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE) literacy work group on the timeline of dyslexia legislation and how they impact higher education. She also reviewed the scope of work of the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC).
 - ii. Nina Lorimor-Easley reported out on Dyslexia Day at the Capital. Decoding Dyslexia Iowa and the IRRC were represented. The rotunda was busy and they gave out a lot of cookies. They were able to speak to several legislators.
 - iii. Ben Walizer, IRRC, reported:
 - Grand View University's dyslexia endorsement program is approved and they plan to open enrollment for fall 2023. Another program was provided feedback and has not yet submitted a revision for approval.
 - Applications are being accepted for the University of Iowa's endorsement program.
 - The IRRC's director position has been posted and will hopefully begin screening and doing interviews this spring.
 - The IRRC's budget was not increased after the reduction last year. With anticipated carryover, the proposed budget is \$300,000 less than

planned. In 2022 the budget was \$1.5 million with \$250,000 for dyslexia. The IRRC is asking for the budget to be restored not for any more than was offered in the past. This would set the new director up to build the program. Having a budget cut reduces the possibility of interest in the director position. The IRRC will be back at the capital on April 12th to discuss the budget with legislators. Any advocacy is appreciated.

- iv. Shane Williams shared about the Mississippi Bend AEA's (MBAEA) dyslexia parent event. Lisa Hawker, MBAEA dyslexia specialist, supported this work and it had overwhelmingly positive results. Rachel Anderson who is in the second dyslexia cohort partnered to support the work. The interest and need from educators is growing.
 - v. The Department announced the hiring of Wanda Steuri as their Education Program Consultant for Science of Reading and Dyslexia. Wanda received her dyslexia specialist endorsement from the University of Iowa and is currently a literacy consultant for Grant Wood AEA.
 - vi. Matt Cretsinger noted that many educators have tried to register for [Plain Talk](#) and it was sold out very quickly. He inquired what other conferences are available. Stephanie Edgren noted that [The Reading League conference](#) and [Cox Campus](#) and [AIM Institute for Learning and Research](#).
 - vii. The Department of Education reported that dyslexia is on the agenda for the upcoming planning meeting for the next special education statewide network meeting. If accepted, Kathy Bertsch (Department) and Matt Cretsinger (Marshalltown) will present about dyslexia with a focus on topics from the [Department's dyslexia website](#).
- e. **Meeting Time:** The board discussed the possibility of having a change in meeting time due to schedules. Meeting time will remain 10:00 to 2:30. James Northwick suggested perhaps another day other than Wednesday could be considered moving into 2023-2024.

2. Legislative Update

- a. Nina Lorimor-Easley presented on two pieces of legislation that were proposed this session around dyslexia.
 - i. HF 104 would provide parents resources to offset costs for private dyslexia instruction. Discussions on this bill were concerned with setting a precedence for public funding as well as equitable allocation of resources.
 - ii. HF 129 would provide a scholarship for individuals taking the dyslexia endorsement. Discussions on this bill were concerned with it setting a precedence for funding endorsements. The advocacy approach is to frame it in support of literacy not just students with dyslexia.
 - iii. Advocacy Strategies who lobbies for Decoding Dyslexia Iowa noted that there is potentially still a path in appropriations for funding for the dyslexia endorsement scholarship.
- b. Stephanie Edgren inquired about efforts to recognize the importance of structured literacy. Kathy Bertsch from the Department noted that explicit, systematic and

- sequential literacy instruction is a priority and the Department is working on some work to lean into it.
- c. The board discussed the sunset date of this board (2024) and that changing this would need to go into legislation during the next session.
 - d. Nina Lorimor-Easley also discussed the possibility of expanding the endorsement to allow specific professional licenses. This could result in possible legislation for the next session.
 - e. Nina Lorimor-Easley and Barb Anderson provided an overview of the by-law responsibilities and how this relates to the board and legislative initiatives. They noted that per board by-laws member duties include:
 - i. Section 2. Board members represent the public role they serve on the board.
 - ii. Section 3. Board members are responsible for proposing agenda items before Board meetings.
 - iii. Section 4. Board members may speak about the Board's work, but shall not speak or lobby on behalf of the board unless authorized to do so.

3. Iowa Reading Research Center

- a. Ben Walizer and Nina Lorimor-Easley reported on the work that is a collaboration with the Department of Education. This overlaps to some degree with the board's goals and committees can think how this may influence board actions.
 - i. ELearning course on structured literacy in the classroom: The IRRC is working with Spencer Community School District to document and record footage of structured literacy in the general education classroom and how it ties through tiers of instruction. They plan to document general classroom instruction, tier 2 and tier 3 instruction for the 5 key routines of structured literacy. It will be very comprehensive and applicable to anyone teaching in general education and will cover grades kindergarten through intermediate.
 - ii. Parent Portal: The IRRC will provide a portal with select materials for parents around common language regarding learning disabilities, appropriate intervention, special education, structured literacy, science of reading and screeners. This will humanize the content for families.
 - iii. Professional Development Community: The IRRC is launching an online professional development community for dyslexia endorsees to build on knowledge and skills. This will keep the community strong.
 - iv. Online tool to support universal screening results decisions: The IRRC is building an online tool for teachers to support them in using universal screening results. The tool would provide next steps for instruction and/or diagnostic assessment.
 - v. Continuing Education Courses: The IRRC is working on a 15 hr (1 credit) and 30 hr (2 credit) course available for professional learning from the IRRC and/or packaged so they could be offered by AEA's.
 - 15 hr course: using your data to determine structured literacy instruction.

- 30 hr course: how to use data when a structured literacy curriculum and instruction is in place.
- vi. James Northwick inquired on if/how the IRRC may be supporting districts on curriculum review/adoption. The IRRC reported that they are beginning a project on district curriculum selection. The IRRC will develop a case study for how to make sweeping changes in early literacy and the curriculum decisions that are part of this. This could include a process for districts to engage in their own review and possible supports for districts in carrying out a curriculum review.
 - vii. Podcast on history of science of reading: The IRRC is launching an 8 podcast series this summer.

4. Subcommittees

- a. The board reviewed subcommittee assignments.
 - i. Communication: Matt (chair), Shane, Barb (recorder), Mark (?)
 - ii. Institutes of Higher Education: Stephanie (chair), Nina, Shane, James
 - iii. Data Mining: Tammy (chair), Katie (recorder ?), Kara, Ben
 - iv. Assessment Discovery: Kay (chair and recorder), Matt, Nina, Kara
 - v. Instruction Discovery: Ben (chair), Stephanie, Kay, Kristen (?), James
- b. Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) Subcommittee Proposed Action:
 - i. Develop a resource for prospective teacher training students and IHEs that highlights the characteristics of teachers trained in the science of reading and the necessity for K-12 schools.
 - ii. Tammy Wilgenbusch moved to approve the action and Kara Wishman seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.
- c. Data Mining Subcommittee Proposed Action:
 - i. Create and disseminate 2 surveys which would be collected in alternate years.
 - Survey 1. District Literacy Materials Survey: This survey would be a replication of the survey developed by the IRRC in 2019 and would assess whether there has been a change in the types of literacy intervention and curricular materials districts use.
 - a. Matt Cretsinger moved to approve the action and Stephanie Edgren seconded the motion. Motion carried all in favor.
 - Survey 2. Educator Survey: This survey would measure teacher's knowledge and training around dyslexia. This would be a much shorter version of the task force survey from 2019.
 - a. Matt Cretsinger moved to approve the action and James Northwick seconded the motion. Motion carried all in favor.

d. Communication Subcommittee Proposed Action:

- i. Create a communication plan and calendar that coordinates with the work of the other subcommittees and would be vetted through the Department through such means as school leader update, website etc. and include audiences such as special education network, curriculum network, School Administrators of Iowa, Iowa Association of School Boards, as necessary.
 - James Northwick moved to approve the action and Tammy Wilgenbusch seconded the action. Motion carried all in favor.

e. Instruction Discovery Proposed Action:

- i. Identify/develop/adapt a set of curriculum evaluation guidelines to be used to ensure curricular programs align to evidence based practices for K-5 English Language Arts.
- ii. Discussion. Ben Walizer discussed that he thinks this board is the right audience for this work because the board provides an additional level of expertise/guidance as oversight. The IRRC would draft the curriculum evaluation guidelines for the board's review.
 - Tammy Wilgenbusch moved to approve the action and Kay Stork seconded the action. Motion carried all in favor.

5. Adjourn

- a. The board adjourned at 2:00.