

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCREENING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH
DYSLEXIA AND RELATED DISORDERS

Introduced By: Senator Gordon E. Rogers

Date Introduced: February 27, 2019

Referred To: Senate Education

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 67.2

4 SCREENING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA AND RELATED
5 DISORDERS

6 **16-67.2-1. Legislative findings.**

7 (1) Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin,
8 characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and
9 decoding abilities that typically result from a deficient in the phonological component of
10 language, and often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of
11 effective classroom instruction, with secondary consequences which include problems with
12 reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary
13 and background knowledge.

14 (2) Twenty percent (20%) of school-aged children in the United States are dyslexic.

15 (3) Somewhere between twenty-five percent (25%) and forty percent (40%) of children
16 with dyslexia also have ADHD and conversely, approximately thirty-five percent (35%) of
17 children with ADHD also have dyslexia.

18 (4) Approximately eighty-percent (80%) of children placed in special education for

1 learning disabilities are dyslexic.

2 (5) Dyslexia does not reflect an overall defect in language, but a localized weakness
3 within the phonologic module of the brain, where sounds of language are put together to form
4 words or break words down into sounds.

5 (6) Most children identified as having characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders can
6 be remediated successfully by explicit, systematic, multisensory instruction in phonics and
7 morphology.

8 (7) The cost of screening and treating dyslexia or a related disorder early is significantly
9 less than the cost of intensive remediation in the later school years for a child with dyslexia or a
10 related disorder.

11 (8) People with dyslexia are often more creative and have average to above average
12 intelligence.

13 (9) When intervention is delayed, it takes four (4) times as long to intervene in fourth
14 grade as it does in late kindergarten because of brain development and because of the increase in
15 content for students to learn as they grow older.

16 (10) Approximately eighty percent (80%) of prison populations are functionally illiterate.

17 (11) Approximately forty-eight percent (48%) of prison populations are dyslexic.

18 (12) The fee to cover the average cost of incarceration for federal inmates in fiscal year
19 2015 was thirty-one thousand nine hundred seventy-seven dollars and sixty-five cents
20 (\$31,977.65) or eighty-seven dollars and sixty-one cents (\$87.61) per day. The average annual
21 cost to confine an inmate in a residential re-entry center for fiscal year 2015 was twenty-six
22 thousand eighty-two dollars and ninety cents (\$26,082.90) or seventy-one dollars and forty-six
23 cents (\$71.46) per day.

24 **16-67.2-2. Screening for dyslexia and related disorders.**

25 (a) In addition to the provisions set forth in chapter 67 of this title, commencing in school
26 calendar year 2020-2021, all students in grades kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12)
27 including English for speakers of other languages students, enrolling in Rhode Island's public
28 schools, shall be screened using the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP)
29 for the identification of characteristics that are associated with risk factors for dyslexia, and the
30 related disorders of dyscalculia and dysgraphia, and yearly thereafter, to monitor progress. For
31 school calendar years after 2020-2021, all students entering kindergarten, and all students who
32 have not been tested must be tested.

33 (b) The screening of students shall be performed with fidelity and include without
34 limitation:

- 1 (1) Phonological and phonemic awareness;
- 2 (2) Sound symbol recognition;
- 3 (3) Alphabet knowledge;
- 4 (4) Decoding skills;
- 5 (5) Rapid naming skills;
- 6 (6) Encoding skills; and
- 7 (7) Morphology, and/or structured word inquiry.

8 (c) If the screening shows a student is at risk, then said student shall receive immediate
9 intervention using the phonics-based method called Orton-Gillingham.

10 (d) The parent, or legal guardian of any student who is identified as having characteristics
11 that are associated with the risk factors for dyslexia, or related disorders of dyscalculia, or
12 dysgraphia shall be notified, and provided with all evaluation information and findings, in
13 addition to yearly evaluative results, based on individual written intervention and support plans
14 developed with the student's parents or legal guardian.

15 (e) A parent or legal guardian of any student who is identified as having characteristics
16 that are associated with risk factors for dyslexia, or the related disorders of dyscalculia, or
17 dysgraphia has the right to submit the results of an independent neuropsychological evaluation by
18 a licensed pediatric neuropsychologist highly trained in dyslexia, and/or the related disorders of
19 dyscalculia and dysgraphia, which recommendations shall be implemented by the school district.

20 (f) A parent, or legal guardian, who submits an independent evaluation shall assume all
21 fiscal responsibility for said independent evaluation, unless the parent, or guardian is receiving
22 state assistance, in which case the state of Rhode Island shall assume fiscal responsibility through
23 the parent, or legal guardian's state supported health insurance.

24 (g) Until such time that all kindergarten through grade eight (K-8) teachers have been
25 Orton-Gillingham certified, the school district must provide dyslexia therapy by individuals who
26 possess a level I certification in Orton-Gillingham.

27 **16-67.2-3. Teacher certification.**

28 (a) A certification shall be defined as having completed the Orton-Gillingham Classroom
29 Educator Program as defined by the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators.

30 (b) No later than September 1, 2021, all kindergarten teachers must be certified. No later
31 than September 1, 2022, all first grade teachers must be certified. No later than September 1,
32 2023, all second grade teachers must be certified. No later than September 1, 2024, all third grade
33 teachers must be certified. No later than September 1, 2025, all fourth grade teachers must be
34 certified. No later than September 1, 2026, all fifth grade teachers must be certified. No later than

1 September 1, 2027, all sixth grade teachers must be certified.

2 (c) No later than September 1, 2021, any reading specialist, speech/language pathologist,
3 or any other person who will be addressing a child's literacy needs must be certified.

4 **16-67.2-4. Teacher professional development and training.**

5 No later than September 1, 2021, each school district shall develop and make available a
6 program to ensure all teachers and school administrators have access to materials to support
7 professional awareness of best practices on:

8 (1) Recognition of the characteristics of dyslexia, related disorders, dyscalculia and
9 dysgraphia; and

10 (2) Evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia, related disorders,
11 dyscalculia and dysgraphia.

12 **16-67.2-5. Dyslexia professional awareness.**

13 (a) No later than the 2020-2021 school year, the department of education shall ensure that
14 each teacher receives professional awareness on:

15 (1) The characteristics of dyslexia; and

16 (2) The evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia.

17 (b) Professional awareness shall be provided in conjunction with the Academy of Orton-
18 Gillingham Practitioners and Educators.

19 **16-67.2-6. Dyslexia resource guide.**

20 No later than September 1, 2021, all school districts shall develop and publish on their
21 respective school website a reading support resource guide to be used by parents as a resource.
22 The school districts shall solicit the advice of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and
23 Educators in the development of the guide.

24 **16-67.2-7. Funding for professional development.**

25 (a) In addition to the provisions set forth in § 16-67-4, each school district
26 board/committee shall provide funding for the professional development of their teachers in order
27 that their teachers can complete the Orton-Gillingham Classroom Educator Program and shall
28 direct expenditures from other funding sources to continuously strengthen the system in order to
29 increase student achievement and support instructional staff in enhancing rigor and relevance in
30 the classroom.

31 (b) A school district must coordinate its professional development program with a Rhode
32 Island college system institution or university, especially in preparing and educating personnel on
33 an on-going basis.

34 **16-67.2-8. Department of education responsibilities.**

1 (a) The department of education shall disseminate, using web-based technology research
2 based best practice methods by which the state and district school boards/committees shall
3 evaluate and improve the professional development system. The best practices must include data
4 that indicate the progress of all students. The department shall report annually to the state board
5 of education and the general assembly any school district that, in the determination of the
6 department, has failed to provide an adequate professional development system. This report must
7 include the results of the department's investigation and of any intervention provided.

8 (b) The department shall also disseminate, using web-based technology, professional
9 development in the use of integrated digital instruction at schools that include middle grades. The
10 professional development must provide training and materials that districts can use to provide
11 instructional personnel with the necessary knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively blend
12 digital instruction into subject-matter curricula. The professional development must emphasize
13 online learning and research techniques, reading instruction, the use of digital devices to
14 supplement the delivery of curricular content to students, and digital device management and
15 security.

16 (c) The department shall also establish a position within the department of education for a
17 reading specialist certified by Orton-Gillingham at a classroom educator level, as defined by the
18 Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators, to assist school districts.

19 **16-67.2-9. Dyslexia and related disorder education in teacher preparation programs.**

20 No later than the 2021-2022 school year, the department of education shall collaborate
21 with the commissioner of higher education to require that all teacher education programs offered
22 at state-supported institutions of higher education require:

23 (1) Dyslexia professional awareness of the characteristics of dyslexia;

24 (2) Evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia; and

25 (3) Completion of an Orton-Gillingham classroom educator program as defined by the
26 Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators.

27 **16-67.2-10. Dyscalculia.**

28 No later than September 1, 2021, any student identified as having dyslexia shall be
29 assumed to also have a diagnosis of dyscalculia and instructed in Singapore Math.

30 **16-67.2-11. Research committee.**

31 (a) No later than January 1, 2020, the general assembly shall form a study commission
32 consisting of five (5) members appointed by the governor comprising of two (2) parents of a
33 dyslexic child, one being Attorney Joseph Maggiacomo III, one board member of Decoding
34 Dyslexia Rhode Island, one elementary school teacher, and one representative from the Rhode

1 Island Federation of Teachers, to establish a plan for two (2) schools, to be located on the
2 University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College campuses, which will be dedicated solely
3 to the instruction of dyslexic children.

4 (b) The study commission will be funded by the general assembly, and shall visit no less
5 than four (4) schools dedicated to the education of dyslexic children, to include, but not limited
6 to, The Landmark School, located in Prides Corner, Massachusetts, The Carroll School, located in
7 Waltham and Lincoln, Massachusetts, The Einstein School, located in Plano, Texas, and the
8 Schenck School, located in Atlanta, Georgia.

9 (c) The committee shall render a report to the general assembly prior to the
10 commencement of the 2021 legislative session.

11 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCREENING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH
DYSLEXIA AND RELATED DISORDERS

1 This act would require all elementary and secondary public schools to provide screening
2 for dyslexia and related disorders to their students and establish an appropriate plan for their
3 treatment and/or education commencing in the school year 2020-2021 and continuing and create
4 a study commission for two (2) schools to be located on the University of Rhode Island and
5 Rhode Island College campuses dedicated solely to the instruction of dyslexic children.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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