

As many of you know North Carolina passed its first piece of legislation this past July. We would like to thank everyone who spoke out in support of legislation. We would like to especially thank everyone who shared their stories with us. These stories and a summary were given to the leadership of both the house and senate and their education committees. We also shared them with the new state Superintendent Mark Johnson.

There has been some confusion about what HB 149 does.

It is not a mandatory screening law and does not require training for teachers on screening. These items were in the bill when it was initially proposed, but the bill was amended as it moved through the various committees. The bill also does not have any funding tied to it.

That being said, here is what HB 149 does do.

1. HB 149 defines dyslexia in the state education code.

This is a great step forward for dyslexia awareness.

2. It ensures that the State Board of Education provides professional development “on the identification of and intervention strategies for students with dyslexia, dyscalculia, or other specific learning disabilities.”

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has been increasing its efforts with a professional development program called Dive into Dyslexia. We asked Bill Hussey the Director of the Exceptional Children’s Department to share a statement about HB149 with us.

(See Link- NCDPI-Exceptional Children Statement on HB149)

3. Requires State Board of Education to develop and make available information electronically about dyslexia, educational methodologies, screening and what is available to support the work with children with dyslexia.

NCDPI is working on updating their website to have more information about dyslexia. We are encouraged by the updates they are making and hope they continue on this path.

4. Requires local boards of education to review the diagnostic tools and screening instruments they have available.

I look at this piece as another step forward in awareness. It does not mandate or require districts to screen all children or use certain methods. I am hopeful that it will at least start conversation in some districts about dyslexia.

That being said, we have a long way to go, but this is a great start.

Awareness is the first step to change!