

We regret a representative from the NC Department of Public Instruction cannot be here with you tonight to share in your celebration of Dyslexia Awareness month. Recognizing that much work remains to be done to ensure all students read at proficient levels, we appreciate the opportunity to share with you a bit about our current work and projects.

We continue our record of providing professional development to improve the quality of instruction for students with reading disabilities, including dyslexia. Our history goes back sixteen years to the establishment of the NC State Improvement Project (NC SIP) in 2000 with the goal of improving the quality of instruction for students with disabilities through professional development, on-site technical assistance and university teacher education programs. A primary component of the NC SIP project is the *Reading Research to Classroom Practice* 30-hour course. This course is based on the principles of structured literacy instruction for students with dyslexia.

In recognition of the need to continue to expand the capacity of North Carolina educators to identify and educate students with dyslexia, we developed a full day course, *Deep Dive into Dyslexia: The Science of Reading and Expert Teaching* in 2016. Thirty-two *Reading Research to Classroom Practice* instructors were selected to engage in a deep study of dyslexia. This professional learning event occurred over two days during the summer of 2016 with dyslexia expert and author Nancy Hennessy. This past summer, we prepared an additional cohort and now have 51 district-based trainers across all 8 regions of the state. Trainer knowledge is continuously supported through required webinars led by Nancy Hennessy. As a result, in the 2016-17 school year, we offered an estimated 56 *Deep Dive into Dyslexia* trainings across the state. To further expand our reach, an online course for educators on the definition, characteristics, and common myths of dyslexia is in development and will be available through Canvas, the Department's online platform for professional development.

This past summer, we piloted a new professional development on word level written expression difficulties, which includes dysgraphia, and are continuing to refine this professional development for further dissemination. In addition, we are crafting professional development and other supports to address dyscalculia, as required in the legislation.

House Bill 149 requires that the definition of dyslexia, adopted by the International Dyslexia Association, be added to *NC Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*. This was brought to the State Board of Education at the August meeting and has been added to policy. Inclusion of the definition, which is consistent with our statewide training, contributes to our common understanding of dyslexia. As Louisa Moats stated recently, "When children and their parents are trying to cope with the symptoms of dyslexia, discovering that there is a name for these problems, that they are not alone, and that a great deal is known about the condition can provide instant relief and hope for the future."

A meeting with stakeholders to identify issues and priorities in regard to communication on dyslexia and dyscalculia provided direction for the Department as we planned to fill existing gaps. A direct link has been added to the home page of the Exceptional Children division

website to provide easy access to informational materials. We are delighted to be collaborating with the Exceptional Children Assistance Center to produce materials for parents and educators; plans are underway for a series of short video clips on myths and facts of dyslexia.

The NC Department of Public Instruction thanks all of you for your passionate and diligent advocacy for students with dyslexia and we look forward to future collaboration. Together we can build common understanding and take steps to ensure the success of students with dyslexia.