

Dyslexia Intervention and Support Frequently Asked Questions

Dyslexia can hide a student's full range of strengths and abilities.



During April 2021, a new set of laws strengthening dyslexia supports for Ohio's children went into effect. The dyslexia support laws apply to each local, city and exempted village school district in Ohio. The new dyslexia support laws establish:

- [Dyslexia screening measures](#);
- [Professional development for identifying dyslexia and instructing students with dyslexia](#);
- [A multi-sensory structured literacy certification process](#) for teachers; and
- [The Ohio Dyslexia Committee](#).

More information and updates will be posted on the [Ohio dyslexia supports webpage](#).

General Questions

1. What is dyslexia?

Ohio law defines dyslexia as a specific learning disorder that is neurological in origin. Dyslexia is characterized by unexpected difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities not consistent with the person's intelligence, motivation and sensory capabilities. Difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language.

2. What is the timeline for implementation of the provisions outlined in the law? What are the timelines for administering dyslexia screeners?

There are many different components of the law, and timelines vary for each. The following table is a list of requirements and their start dates or deadlines:

Requirement	Start Date or Deadline
A. Committee and Guidebook	
Appoint Committee: Ohio Department of Education to appoint individuals to the Ohio Dyslexia Committee and other appointing authorities to establish selection process for appointments.	May 12, 2021

Requirement	Start Date or Deadline
<p>Convene Committee: Convene the first meeting of the Ohio Dyslexia Committee.</p>	<p>Within 30 days after nine members have been appointed to the committee.</p>
<p>Guidebook: Ohio Dyslexia Committee to develop a dyslexia guidebook.</p>	<p>Dec. 31, 2021</p>
<p>B. Tier One Dyslexia Screening</p>	
<p>Kindergarten Screening: Screen all Kindergarten students.</p>	<p>Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year and each school year thereafter. Screening to take place after the first day of January of the school year in which the student is enrolled in kindergarten and prior to the first day of January of the following school year.</p>
<p>Elementary Grades Screening - Startup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All K-3 Students:</i> Screen all students in grades K-3. • <i>Grades 4-6 by Request:</i> Screen students in grades 4-6 upon request of a student’s parent or guardian or request of a student’s teacher with the permission of the student’s parent or guardian. 	<p>Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.</p>
<p>C. Transfer Student Screening</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kindergarten Transfers:</i> Administer a tier one dyslexia screening measure to each kindergarten student who transfers into the district or school midyear during the school's regularly scheduled screening of the kindergarten class or within 30 days after the student's enrollment if the screening already has been completed. • <i>Grades 1-6 Transfers:</i> Screen each student in grades 1-6 who transfers into the district or school midyear within 30 days after the student's enrollment. 	<p>Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year and each year thereafter.</p>
<p>Elementary Grades - Continuing: Screen all students in kindergarten and students in grades 1-6 upon request of a student’s parent or guardian or request of a student’s teacher with the permission of the student’s parent or guardian.</p>	<p>Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year and each school year thereafter.</p>

Requirement	Start Date or Deadline
D. Tier Two Dyslexia Screening	
<p>At-Risk Students: Screen each at-risk student who does not show significant progress toward attaining grade-level reading and writing skills by the sixth week after the student is identified as at risk.</p> <p>At-Risk Transfer Students: In the case of a transfer student who is identified as at risk of dyslexia, a tier two dyslexia screening must be administered “in a timely manner.”</p>	<p>Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year and each school year thereafter.</p>
E. Teacher Professional Development and Certification	
<p>Teachers complete required number of instructional hours in approved professional development courses aligned with the dyslexia guidebook.</p>	<p>Teachers of grades K-1, including special education – by the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.</p> <p>Teachers of grades 2-3, including special education – by the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.</p> <p>Special education teachers of students in grades 4-12 – by the beginning of 2025-2026 school year.</p>
<p>Districts establish a multi-sensory structured literacy certification process for teachers.</p>	<p>Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.</p>

3. Does this law replace the Third Grade Reading Guarantee requirements for screening and providing Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans?

No, it does not replace the Third Grade Reading Guarantee requirements. The Third Grade Reading Guarantee continues to require K-3 Reading Diagnostic Assessment and Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (RIMP) for students who score “not on track.”

4. How will districts cover the various costs associated with the requirements of this legislation?

Districts should use existing local, state and allowable federal funds to cover the costs associated with the dyslexia support laws requirements. The Ohio Department of Education is required to select up to four school districts that have implemented dyslexia screening, identification and remediation services similar to those prescribed by the dyslexia support laws and analyze the financial costs of those services. The Department must submit a report and make recommendations to the Ohio General Assembly by Dec. 31, 2021, regarding how to effectively address the costs of implementing dyslexia screening, identification and remediation services.

5. Will districts need to report data regarding implementation of the dyslexia support laws to the Ohio Department of Education?

Districts will be required to report their dyslexia screener results to the Department. The forthcoming dyslexia guidebook also may require additional data and information to be reported to the Department.

6. What can districts expect from the dyslexia guidebook?

The dyslexia guidebook is intended to support district services for children with dyslexia or children displaying dyslexic characteristics and tendencies by providing best practices and methods for universal screening, intervention and remediation. These practices and methods will include explanation of a multi-sensory structured literacy program and how it can be used. The dyslexia guidebook also may provide other relevant information and guidance from the Ohio Dyslexia Committee.

7. What is a multi-sensory structured literacy program?

Multi-sensory learning uses various sensory pathways simultaneously to enhance memory and learning of written language. Structured literacy is an approach to teaching decoding that is systematic and cumulative, explicit and diagnostic. This approach to decoding focuses on phonology, sound-symbol association, syllables, morphology, syntax and semantics.

8. How can districts learn more about multi-sensory structured literacy programs?

The Department, in consultation with the Ohio Dyslexia Committee, will develop multi-sensory structured literacy program professional development for teachers in evidence-based dyslexia screening and intervention practices. More information on multi-sensory structured literacy is available through the [International Dyslexia Association](#).

Ohio Dyslexia Committee

1. What is the Ohio Dyslexia Committee?

The Ohio Dyslexia Committee will be the group responsible for developing many of the implementation guidelines of the Ohio dyslexia support laws. The committee's responsibilities include developing a dyslexia guidebook and prescribing the number of clock hours of dyslexia-related professional development required for teachers. In addition to these duties, the Ohio Dyslexia Committee may:

1. Recommend appropriate ratios in school buildings of students to teachers who have received certification in identifying and addressing dyslexia;
2. Recommend which additional school personnel should receive certification in identifying and addressing dyslexia, including school psychologists or speech-language pathologists; and
3. Consider and make recommendations regarding whether the dyslexia law's professional development requirements should include completion of a practicum.

2. Who is on the Ohio Dyslexia Committee?

The Ohio Dyslexia Committee will consist of 11 members. Members will be appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction (seven members), state Speech and Language Board (one member), chancellor of higher education (one member) and Ohio Chapter of the International Dyslexia Association (two members).

The following chart lists the Ohio Dyslexia Committee roles and entity responsible for appointing individuals to fill each role:

Dyslexia Committee Role	Appointing Entity
School district <i>superintendent</i>	State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Elementary school <i>principal</i>	
Certified <i>classroom teacher</i> with two years of experience teaching in a multi-sensory structured literacy program	
Appropriately certified <i>educational service center employee</i>	
School <i>psychologist</i>	
Appropriately certified <i>reading intervention specialist</i>	
Ohio <i>Department of Education employee</i>	
<i>Parent</i> of a child with dyslexia or an adult with dyslexia	International Dyslexia Association of Ohio
Appropriately certified <i>board member of the International Dyslexia Association</i>	
Appropriately certified individual with experience in <i>higher education and teacher preparation programs</i>	Chancellor of Higher Education
Appropriately certified <i>speech-language pathologist</i>	Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board

Professional Development for Teachers

1. What type of teacher professional development is required?

The professional development required by the dyslexia support laws includes training for identifying characteristics of dyslexia and understanding the pedagogy for instructing students with dyslexia. The required professional development courses must be evidence-based and aligned to the dyslexia guidebook that will be developed by the Ohio Dyslexia Committee. The Ohio Dyslexia Committee will determine the specific number of clock hours needed to meet the professional development requirement for teachers — a total that is at least six clock hours and not more than 18 clock hours.

The Department, in collaboration with the Ohio Dyslexia Committee, will select and maintain a list of courses that fulfill the professional development requirements. The list may consist of online or classroom learning models. The list of approved professional development courses will be communicated to the public and published at a later date. For a list of dates by which professional development requirements must be met by grade, please see the table above.

Please note: Professional development coursework that is **evidence-based and aligned to the dyslexia guidebook** completed by a teacher prior to the law’s effective date of April 12, 2021, may count toward the

required number of instructional hours in professional development courses *only* if it appears on the forthcoming list of Department-approved courses.

2. What is “multi-sensory structured literacy certification?”

A multi-sensory literacy certification will be defined by the Ohio Dyslexia Committee. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, districts must establish their own multi-sensory structured literacy certification process for teachers that aligns to the Ohio Dyslexia Committee’s guidebook. More information about this process will be released in the coming months from the Ohio Dyslexia Committee.

3. Are required teacher professional development and multi-sensory structured literacy certification the same thing?

No. The professional development training and multi-sensory structured literacy certification are two separate requirements under the law. The professional development requires a set number of hours of approved coursework (established by the Ohio Dyslexia Committee). The multi-sensory structured literacy certification process for teachers will be determined by districts with guidance provided by the Ohio Dyslexia Committee. Please see the table above for specific implementation dates.

Dyslexia Screening and Intervention

1. Will dyslexia become one of the disability categories for special education?

No. Dyslexia will not be added as a disability category for special education.

2. Will an individualized education program (IEP) need to be written if a child is identified as “at risk” by the dyslexia screener?

No. The determination of “at risk” by a dyslexia screener is not a diagnosis. If a parent or guardian thinks his or her child may have a disability that is affecting the child’s education, a request can be made to the district to evaluate the child to determine whether he or she would be eligible for special education.

3. How do districts find reliable screening measures?

In the coming months, the Ohio Dyslexia Committee will develop a list of approved dyslexia screeners. The approved list will be communicated to the public and posted on the Ohio dyslexia supports website. Currently, there are no assessments approved to fulfill the requirements of the law.

4. What is a tier one or tier two dyslexia screening measure? When does a district use a tier one or tier two screening measure?

Information about what qualifies as tier one or tier two dyslexia screening measure will be determined by the Ohio Dyslexia Committee and communicated to the public. Under [Ohio law](#), tier one dyslexia screening measures will be used by districts to identify each student who is at risk of dyslexia. Districts also must administer a tier two dyslexia screener if no progress is observed during the progress monitoring period after the tier one dyslexia screener was administered.

5. What must a district do if a student is identified as at risk for dyslexia according to a tier one screening measure?

If a student is identified as at-risk for dyslexia based on the student’s tier one screening measure results, districts are required to do the following:

- Notify the student’s parent, guardian or custodian that the student has been identified as being at-risk for dyslexia;
- Monitor the progress of each at-risk student toward attaining grade-level reading and writing skills for up to six weeks.
 - The district or school shall check each at-risk student's progress on at least the second week, fourth week and sixth week after the student is identified as being at risk.

- If no progress is observed during the monitoring period, the district or school shall notify the parent, guardian or custodian of the student and administer a tier two dyslexia screening measure to the student.
- Report to the student's parent, guardian or custodian the results of the tier two screening measure within 30 days after the screening measure's administration.

In addition, districts will be required to follow the guidance in the forthcoming dyslexia guidebook regarding students identified as at risk for dyslexia.

6. What must a district do if a student is identified as having dyslexia tendencies under a tier two screening measure?

Districts will be required to report to a student's parent or guardian the student's results on a tier two screening measure approved by the Ohio Dyslexia Committee within 30 days after the measure's administration. If, as determined by the tier two screening measure, the student is identified as having dyslexia tendencies, the student's parent or guardian will be provided with information about reading development, the risk factors for dyslexia and descriptions for evidenced-based interventions.

If a student demonstrates markers of dyslexia, the district must provide the student's parent, guardian or custodian with a written explanation of the district's multi-sensory structured literacy program. In addition, districts will be required to follow the guidance in the forthcoming dyslexia guidebook regarding students identified as at risk for dyslexia.