

18.32 Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia

Resolution passed 2016

Whereas, language-based learning disorders including but not limited to dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia, impacts 1 in 5 students, approximately 20% of the population or more than 200,000 students in Washington state’s public schools; and

Whereas, language-based learning disorders have been defined to include a variety of neurological conditions that interfere with a person’s ability to store, process, or produce information which may interfere with learning. The Brain Balance Achievement Center provides specific definitions as follows:

- Dyslexia is a reading disorder characterized by difficulty recognizing letters, learning letter sounds, and identifying rhyming words
- Dysgraphia is a learning disability characterized by distorted and incorrect handwriting as well as issues with fine motor skills
- Dyscalculia is a disorder characterized by problems with learning fundamentals that include one or more basic numerical skills
- Dyspraxia, also called Apraxia, is a condition characterized by significant difficulty in carrying out routine tasks involving balance, fine-motor control, and kinesthetic coordination. Verbal dyspraxia describes a difficulty in the use of speech; and

Whereas, language processing disorders are currently addressed in state and federal law. The term dyslexia is included in the Revised Code of Washington under the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and in federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) within the broad eligibility category of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). IDEA states: specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculation, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Despite these references in law, many public schools have historically avoided the term identification of these language-based disabilities in evaluation, when determining special education eligibility, and in Individual Education Program (IEP) documents; and

Whereas, there is compelling scientific evidence that early identification and intervention using an evidence-based multisensory, direct, explicit, structured and sequential approach to instructing students with language processing disorders, known as multisensory structured, language, teaching, improves literacy outcomes for most students with symptoms of dyslexia; and

Whereas, in 2009 the Washington state legislature provided guidance and funding for pilot intervention programs and to develop a dyslexia handbook for educators along with a few additional resources for parents which have been available on the website of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, however, funding has not been continued and was limited to only dyslexia; and

Whereas, most teacher preparation programs provide no training regarding language processing disorders, appropriate accommodations, or evidence-based multisensory structured language teaching, leaving most teachers unprepared to adequately address the learning needs of students with language processing disorders.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support early screening for signs and symptoms of language processing disorders including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, with parental notification; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support legislation for funding to support training of parents, teachers and other school personnel in early identification of language processing disorders including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and use of evidence-based programs that provide explicit instruction including Multisensory Structured Language Teaching, with appropriate accommodations to provide students with equitable access to the general education curriculum.