




STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Ed Richardson
Interim State Superintendent of Education

September 22, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: County and City Superintendents of Education
FROM: Ed Richardson 
 Interim State Superintendent of Education
RE: *Dyslexia Awareness Month*

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has designated October as *Dyslexia Awareness Month* in Alabama. Dyslexia affects between 10 and 20 percent of students in Alabama schools. Reading, writing, and spelling are essential literacy skills for all learning in school and beyond. Students who do not develop these skills early on are at risk for school failure and limited life opportunities.

In our on-going efforts to prepare all students to graduate college, career, and life ready, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), working collaboratively with the Dyslexia Advisory Council (DAC), has established the following goals for *Dyslexia Awareness Month*:

- To create awareness of the needs of students with dyslexia at the school, family, and community level.
- To encourage year-round engagement in events to celebrate and embrace students with dyslexia at the school, family, and community level.
- To make available information to schools, families, and communities regarding support and resources for students with dyslexia.

In order to support the *Dyslexia Awareness Month* goals, a list of suggested activities is included in Attachment 1. Dyslexia resources, information, and online courses that may assist teachers and administrators are located on the ALSDE Web site and can be accessed by visiting the [Dyslexia](#) Webpage.

Please join us in promoting *Dyslexia Awareness Month* in Alabama by supporting an environment of awareness and understanding for dyslexia in your district, schools, and communities. We have provided a sample resolution for use by your local board of education (Attachment 2).

For questions regarding dyslexia, you may contact Mrs. Karen Porter, ARI Program Coordinator, by e-mailing dyslexia@alsde.edu. Additionally, Mrs. Reeda Betts and Mrs. Donna Harper are the lead contacts for dyslexia and MSLE for ARI. Please feel free to contact them with your questions by calling 334-353-1389 or by e-mailing Mrs. Betts (rbetts@alsde.edu) or Mrs. Harper (dharper@alsde.edu) directly.

ER:KP:TH

Attachments

cc: Dyslexia Advisory Council Members Mrs. Shanthia Washington
 Dr. Barbara J. Cooper Mrs. Karen Porter

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Ed Richardson
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OCTOBER 2017 - DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH IN ALABAMA

October 2-6, 2017: Dyslexia Awareness Month Kick-off Week for Schools and Communities

Create awareness in schools and communities in your district with “dyslexia day/night,” social media events, school casts, morning messages, etc., using #SayDyslexiaAL17, the official hashtag for Alabama’s *Dyslexia Awareness Month*. Utilize Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE)-trained teachers, school reading specialists, coaches, partners, parents, and community experts to host mini-workshops/seminars and open-house community events. Create awareness of resources for support of dyslexia by promoting the [International Dyslexia Association-Alabama Branch \(IDA-AL\)](#) and the [Alabama Reading Initiative](#) Dyslexia Websites. Coordinate with local partners and stakeholders to develop community awareness of dyslexia by providing facts, resources, and support to families. Encourage groups to reach out to local experts and develop on-going partnerships to support dyslexia. Work to develop year-round communication, support, and resources for families, schools, and communities in your district.

October 9-13, 2017: “Lights, Camera, Action!” Week

Bring technology into the classroom to highlight the many ways in which students with dyslexia can express themselves and communicate by means other than writing. Encourage students to share stories with oral recounting, storytelling, and/or drama activities. Consider a “No Pencil/Pen Day” storytelling competition by utilizing technology solutions such as text to speech, audio and/or video recordings, and recording through pictures, so that all students can enjoy expressing themselves.

October 16-20, 2017: Show Your Support Week

Wear red or silver to demonstrate awareness and support in your school and community. Encourage teachers and students to demonstrate support for dyslexia by wearing the colors and offering school/class proclamations. Encourage district communication/media personnel to create public service announcements, local news articles, and district communication posts for local school Websites promoting awareness using #SayDyslexiaAL17, the official hashtag for Alabama’s *Dyslexia Awareness Month*.

October 23-27, 2017: “Famous Dyslexics” Week

Create school and community awareness for the many talents and gifts dyslexic students have by engaging in class projects and schoolwide activities that feature [famous dyslexic achievers](#) in America and across the globe.

Additional Resources for Teachers, Administrators, and Parents:

[International Dyslexia Association](#)

[Alabama Dyslexia Association](#)

[Alabama Game Changers](#)

[Decoding Dyslexia](#)

[Roundtable Solutions](#)

[Dyslexia In the Classroom: What Every Teacher Needs to Know](#)

[Embracing Dyslexia](#)

[Being You](#)

[Dyslexia Help](#)

[What Does the Dyslexia Person Feel?](#)

[Understood](#)

SAMPLE LOCAL BOARD RESOLUTION

October 2017 Dyslexia Awareness Month

WHEREAS, Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that is neurobiological in origin and is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities; and

WHEREAS, these difficulties typically are caused by a deficit in the phonological component of language that is unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and to the provision of effective classroom instruction; and

WHEREAS, secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge; and

WHEREAS, Dyslexia occurs on a continuum of severity affecting between 10 and 20 percent of the population according to the National Institutes of Health; and

WHEREAS, our district and community will benefit from an increased awareness of the nature of Dyslexia, the early warning signs of Dyslexia, and the value of multisensory structured language interventions for students with Dyslexia; and

WHEREAS, greater recognition and understanding are necessary to ensure that individuals with Dyslexia living in Alabama and all other Americans with Dyslexia are accurately identified and provided with appropriate services so that they might lead maximally productive lives:

NOW, THEREFORE, THE, _____, _____, do hereby proclaim October 2017, as **Dyslexia Awareness Month in (insert LEA)** and encourage all teachers, parents, and community stakeholders to learn more about dyslexia and to offer support to parents, educators and individuals affected by Dyslexia.