

Ohio Dyslexia Committee

September 28, 2021

Ohio Department of Education

Committee Members Attending: LM Clinton, LaMonica Davis, Steve Griffin, Dana Hamilton, Melissa Spangler, Chinnon Jaquay, Mike McGovern, Amy Murdoch, Rebecca Tolson, Trevor Thomas, Olivia Weisman

Ohio Department of Education Presenters: Melissa Weber-Mayrer-Director of Approaches to Teaching and Professional Learning, Beth Hess-Assistant Director Literacy, Bernadette Laughlin- Education Program Specialist, Office for Exceptional Children, David Ehle- Director, Office of Data Quality & Governance/EMIS

Department Staff Providing Information:

Recording Secretary: Kyaundra Ellis, Ohio Department of Education

Opening

Mike McGovern, Committee Chair, welcomed the committee members and called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. *Mike called roll.* A quorum was present to proceed with committee. Notes from the previous meeting were approved.

Melissa Weber-Mayrer shared with the committee that the department has hired a Dyslexia Administrator, Dr. Sherine Tambyraja. Dr. Tambyraja is joining the Department from the Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy. Her research has focused on the language and literacy development of young children with communication disorders. She will begin on October 12 and be present for the October committee meeting.

Parent and Student Spotlight

Tracie Stamm, a parent from Bexley City Schools, addressed the committee with her child's challenges and successes.

Action Item

Review draft sections of the guidebook on assessment, instruction, and certification process

Beth Hess provided an overview of the documents to be discussed in the draft guidebook sections provided by Stephanie Stollar. The committee discussed the draft sections of the guidebook and provided feedback.

- I. **Update from Department Assessment team on status of Request for Qualifications for tier 1 dyslexia screener:** ODE assessment office is looking to fold in the Tier 1 dyslexia screener into an approval process they have for a broader array of approved vendor assessments. The assessment team is proposing to add items to the stand-alone tier 1 dyslexia screener to what is already required for the K-3 Third Grade Reading Guarantee diagnostic. They would like the committee to make recommendations in the next two weeks in anticipation of an RFQ release in December to select appropriate assessments.

II. Assessment Draft- Initial Reactions

The committee provided feedback in the following areas:

- Department is trying to student first terms and avoid deficit-based terms like "struggling readers"
- Stick to "risk status" rather than "on track"/" not on track" to not confuse results of TGRG screening and dyslexia screening
- "Students with expressive speech and language concerns" rather than "students who stutter"
- "Students and system at risk" is helpful, include it later as well when discussing universal screening.

- Provide as many examples as possible.
- “What is the goal of screening?” – is it important to be specific about identifying signs of dyslexia
- Specify need for professional familiar with the student to be part of screening and identification throughout document, also include that professional should be trained to administer assessment
- Include parents in results notification

Open Q&A/comments

Q: What is the organization of the full document? Some sections rose questions about missing items that then showed up in other sections.

A; The document is currently somewhat piecemeal to ensure all elements of legislation are addressed, but eventually assessment and intervention will be more integrated.

Q: Does the draft correctly capture the characteristics of tier 1 and tier 2?

- Tier 1
 - Add “Approved by Ohio Department of Education” to the Tier 1 screening section.
 - Committee Chairman, Mike McGovern asked the committee to look very closely at the Proposed Criteria, to share it with their colleagues and to provide feedback within 2 weeks.
 - Superintendent Thomas stated that interchanging “Tier 1” and “Universal Screener” can cause confusion. Tier 1 is in the law and generally understood. The law states that we must screen every kindergarten student after January 1, and every first, second and third grader – note that this should be done three times per year, as not everyone in the district may know this. Amy suggested providing an overview of MTSS at the beginning of the guidebook that can underpin later information for clear understanding.
 - This work is intended to inform instruction – the intent is not to have a dyslexia diagnosis tool – the Tier 1 and Tier 2 screeners should inform instruction and identify need for additional services and supports.
 - Beth Hess noted that it may be useful for the committee to begin writing an executive summary for the guidebook to clearly set expectations for the reader and communicate the committee’s vision for the system.
 - There will not be an approved list of Tier 2 assessments because they are often individualized, informal, and should align to the instructional scope and sequence of the classroom. These assessments are generally curriculum-based, and the committee is not engaging in a curriculum approval process.

Q: Do we have a lot of districts that rely on the KRA for their Third Grade Reading Guarantee diagnostic?

A: Although the Department does not formerly collect this information in EMIS, a research project that is currently underway regarding Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans indicates that many districts use the Language and Literacy subscore from the KRA to determine who is on track and not on track in kindergarten for the purpose of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

- Committee member, Dana Hamilton, expressed concern over this, noting that she did not believe this adequately screened kindergarten students. She expressed concern that for schools using only the KRA, they may miss students and lose critical intervention time between the administration of the KRA and the administration of the tier 1 dyslexia screener.

III. Assessment Draft- Clarifying Terms

- “Dyslexia Tendencies” / “characteristics of dyslexia” / “children displaying dyslexic characteristics and tendencies” / “markers of dyslexia” – Are these the same? Are they different? What is the nuance?
 - Dr. Stollar provided a draft definition:

Dyslexic tendencies are early indicators or warning signs of potential difficulty with reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. The following tendencies serve as “markers for dyslexia”:

 - *Inaccurate reading of text*
 - *Dysfluent reading of text*
 - *Difficulty with automatic word recognition*
 - *Difficulty matching sounds to letters*

- *Difficulty blending and segmenting sounds in spoken words*
- *Difficulty naming letters*
- Feedback from the committee:
 - Differentiate by age level/developmental stage
 - Mike McGovern and Rebecca Tolson agreed that the terms were intended to be interchangeable by the individuals drafting this legislation. Legal counsel may need to be consulted to determine if this is allowable and if the committee can choose to use one phrase.
 - Chinnon Jaquay shared that characteristics and tendencies may be more interchangeable, but markers may be different – markers are measurable, characteristics and tendencies may not be. Avoid veering into identification – markers can be described in Tier 2 – it sounds like this is sort of “causes for referral”.
 - “Risk factors for dyslexia” – tendencies are what we see child indicating, but risk factors could be things that happen before the tendencies. Beth reminded the committee that the information should be both research-based and family friendly as this is related to the information that will be provided to families.
- What do the terms “measures” and “administer” mean in the context of ORC 3323.251(C)
 - “Measures” refers to progress monitoring measures, the goal of the legislation was to ensure that intervention was closely tied to data.
 - “Administer” should refer to overseeing the process rather than giving the assessment in relation to the multidisciplinary team responsibilities.

IV. Instructional Response to Risk Draft

- This would be a good place to give examples of instructional practices.
- Useful to describe the data-based decision making at each tier
- Assessment should be integrated into the discussion of instruction through a tiered model
- Committee member, Rebecca Tolson, suggested this would be a good place to include some key research on the science of reading and why this is so important.
- “Multi-Sensory Structured Literacy Program” – is this a good place to clarify with what is NOT structured literacy.
- A principal walkthrough tool would be welcome here, as would an audit tool to assess current programs and materials and whether they fit this definition.

Discussion Item: Multidisciplinary Teams (second discussion)

I. ODE update on statewide framework for MTSS

- Bernadette Laughlin shared that the Department is going to be addressing MTSS through a statewide framework as described in *Each Child Means Each Child*.
- Bernadette shared the new initiative for MTSS:
 - Focus Area A of *Each Child Means Each Child*: An integrated model of a statewide multi-tiered system of supports.
 - Recommendation 1: Develop a consistent and clear statewide model of an integrated multi-tiered system of support that all districts, community schools or early childhood education programs may adopt and implement or use as a model.
 - Tactic A:
 - Create infrastructure to support the development of an integrated model of a multi-tiered system of supports through a common set of resources, professional learning, coaching, collaborative opportunities, and scheduling.
 - Supports should be provided at all levels of the educational system, including during pre-service education.

II. Discussion on multidisciplinary teams

- Ensure members are knowledgeable in structured literacy. There are different people available in all districts, may not be the same team make up.

- There is one team that's IDEA, there's another in the Dyslexia law. MTSS teams meet regularly throughout the year and talk about all students. They look at data to identify if there are students that need additional intervention (may be dyslexia related, may not be). This is early in the process, before a diagnosis of a student of dyslexia. The Multidisciplinary Team is student focused and used for IDEA.
- This could be a place to list what skill sets should be on the team (certified and properly trained) [comment later that certification may not work here, need flexibility, but could provide best practice and note that this may look different in your district based on your resources]
- Describe skills team members should have, list some of the roles they may be called.
- Team should not be special ed heavy – curriculum/instruction and support services should work together, not in silos. The dyslexia legislation is not about a special education issue, it's about providing high quality instruction to all students. If curriculum and special education are in conflict and not working together closely, it delays services and supports. There shouldn't be huge pedagogical shifts between Tiers 1, 2 and 3, nor within services provided for special education.
- Full system should not delay diagnostic process but should expedite it – what happens if there are signals pointing straight to evaluation rather than intervention as a first step. Include qualifying language “indication of disability should move straight to evaluation”

Open Q&A/comments

Q: Can the committee provide clarity in guidebook on what specially designed instruction looks like for a child with a dyslexia diagnosis and an IEP? What does it mean? What changes about their instruction vs. a student who does not qualify for an IEP?

A: The committee discussed the need to bring in the Office for Exceptional Children to ensure the guidebook informs compliance and monitoring teams. Dr. Murdoch shared that with a solid multi-tiered system of support, the point is not an IEP, it's about students getting what they need.

Q: What can the committee do regarding do about kids who have been missed who are in middle and high school with low reading skills?

A: Upper elementary and middle school students can have screening requested by parent or teacher, but educators will need guidance on how to use that data. Question of when IEP comes in will be especially vital for these students. Additionally, intervention specialists thorough grade 12 will receive professional development.

Discussion Item: Reporting (initial discussion)

Committee members had a preliminary discussion around reporting. The committee heard from David Ehle who discussed departmental data use.

- I. **Provisions in law**
 - a. Districts report to the Department dyslexia screening results
 - b. Develop reporting mechanisms for districts to submit to the department information and data required in the guidebook (as determined by the committee)
- II. **Information on Department collected data**
 - a. Four typical uses of data- compliance, accountability, research, aggregate vs. student level data
 - b. What is EMIS? EMIS is a data system, including multiple applications and interfaces, that collects a variety of information for cross coordination of data. Almost no one puts data straight into EMIS – EMIS leverages data that is entered into district student information systems, HR systems, and financial systems. Any change in EMIS requires significant lead time for districts to collaborate with their data vendors to incorporate the data point into their systems.
 - c. A recent law requires that every time a change is made to EMIS, a 30-day public comment period be open, EMIS must respond within 30 days, and another 30 days are open for public review. It takes at least 90 days to update EMIS. The change can take place on a rolling cycle if required by law, but otherwise must be completed by spring before the school year when the data will be collected.
 - d. Committee member LM Clinton shared Literacy data currently collected by office: K-3 Ontrack/Non on Track status; RIMPs; KRA-R, Third Grade Reading Guarantee (Promotion, Exemption, Alternative Assessments), Ohio's State Test for English Language Arts results.
- III. **Suggestion for committee consideration**

I. Data – Mechanism:

- Tier 1 Dyslexia Screener Results (At Risk/Not At-Risk) – EMIS
- Tier 2 Dyslexia Screener Information – Non-EMIS
- Dyslexia Guidebook Data – To Be Determined

Open Q&A/comments

Q: Should Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 Dyslexia Screener results be reported at Aggregate or Student Level?

- For Tier 1: The committee agreed-student level data would be most desirable to understand student outcomes, but in the current system it would be difficult to track students longitudinally.
- For Tier 2: Asked the question could we include “did you communicate with parents about results” that would indicate next step in MTSS?

Q: How would the Department check data if we aren’t sure how many students would be screened at each grade level each year?

- The committee stated that student data is relevant for accountability of tracking.

Q: If this data is not required, do we know if schools are keeping it?

- If data isn’t collected on a requirement, it may not be seen as “required”
- Chair McGovern noted that potentially the committee should wait until the guidebook is more complete to see if that may inform how reporting should be complete. This is a possibility but would need to be mindful of timeline – potentially plan follow up discussion for January meeting.

Discussion Item: Feedback on Committee’s Definition of Certification

The committee discussed the concerns the Department is receiving in dyslexia inbox.

Issue	Proposed Solution
Misunderstanding the difference between the PD requirements for educators and where certification fits in	Written guidance, as well as a recorded webinar
Don’t know where to find the information referenced in the definition (e.g. locating the IDA approved list)	Link the websites directly in the definition and model where to find these in the recorded webinar
Lack of knowledge or experience with the certifications offered by the Center for Effective Reading Instruction	Written guidance and model in the recorded webinar

The committee discussed questions committee members are receiving, such as:

- The definition lists accrediting organizations by name but doesn’t specific list the providers accredited by those organizations. Professionals certified by International Dyslexia Association approved programs as accredited plus are questioning whether their providers are approved. *Proposed Solution:* provide an additional page in the definition with the current list of programs with the accreditation plus credential from the International Dyslexia Association.
- Questions from professionals who were certified several years ago when the International Dyslexia Association had different accreditation levels (Tier 2 not accreditation plus). *Proposed Solution:* This question can go to the International Dyslexia Association for guidance.

Other Questions/Comments from Committee

- Districts are asking “When will you release a screener that will tell us which of our students are dyslexic?” This indicates a great need for information and training.
- Committee members are receiving requests for information on dyslexia from staff members who realize they would like to be more informed

- Committee member Olivia Weisman is coordinating a book study using Dr. Jan Hasbrouck's *Conquering Dyslexia: A Guide to Early Detection and Intervention for Teachers and Parents* for the ESC of Lorain County – they are starting a new cohort this winter due to high interest.

Public comments

The committee heard public comments from Assistant Superintendent Kelly Holbrook from Heath and Literacy Coordinator Blythe Wood from Heath, OH, and, Dr. Pat Skidmore, an audiologist from Montgomery County ESC.

Assistant Superintendent, Kelly Holbrook shared her appreciation to the Dyslexia Committee and Department for their hard work. Kelly shared that Heath City Schools is 16% non-white, 44% economically disadvantaged, and diminishing Title I. Kelly and her team spent time on needs assessment: clear scope and sequence, curriculum aligned to science of reading, talking to teachers and parents, trends in evaluation and team report data. They began to work on ensuring teachers, especially intervention, Title I and Reading specialists, had professional learning in science of reading. They also needed to ensure work aligned with mission and vision: Ensuring All Kids Learn and Grow Is Our Collective Responsibility. "Reading is a Right" drove their work. Administrators must ensure staff have the education to ensure students have that right and must invest to ensure materials are available for the students to have their right.

Blythe Wood – Vice President of IDA Central Ohio, director of a nonprofit that provides free tutoring to students with dyslexia and Literacy Coordinator for Heath City Schools. Blythe shared that certification is primarily through ALTA and their teachers are becoming Certified Academic Language Practitioners, although other pathways are available as well. All teachers and administrators at K-2 site have been trained except for 4 new teachers who will begin training in October. There is a push in the curriculum to align with science of reading – they are using Heggerty, Foundations, Wit and Wisdom, and have decodable readers available for young children and are working to make them available for older children. Partnering with Licking County Library to help students sign up for library cards. Parent survey at kindergarten registration informed them that 22% of parents have identified a risk of reading difficulty for their children.

Beth noted that Heath has a Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant, through which they are working to develop a model literacy site up through 5th grade.

Dr. Pat Skidmore, audiologist with Montgomery ESC – has worked with deaf and hard of hearing students in the Dayton area for 20 years through her work at the ESC. Deaf learners by definition; do not have access to all the sounds of language. A dyslexia screening relies on sounds – when a deaf learner does not pass a dyslexia screener, there are a variety of aspects of reading that could be at cause. If a student who is deaf or hard of hearing is exhibiting literacy delays, it is imperative to include a teacher of the deaf in this child's educational team. A student who is deaf, can also have dyslexia. Another group with not normal hearing is the population of students who have auditory processing disorder. Accurate assessment for auditory processing disorder is difficult before the age of 7, and teams should be aware of this issue, which is often confused and could coexist with dyslexia. Auditory processing disorder should be red flag for literacy skills. Ear infection can also cause fluctuating hearing loss which could contribute to identification of dyslexia. Using microphone systems has been shown to increase test scores for students with hard of hearing, ADHD, and with dyslexia. It would be beneficial to get soundfield amplification, (that are required to be built into buildings now) back up and running in places where they weren't maintained after installation.

Open Q&A/comments

Q: When we see mix of markers between auditory processing disorder and dyslexia, would the distinguishing characteristic be in measures of listening comprehension? Would scores be higher in learners with dyslexia?

Committee members discussed the SLPs would assume but would defer to dyslexia experts. Dr. Tolson stated that for dyslexic students, reading comprehension was typically a grade level or more below and listening comprehension was typically at grade level or over grade level. Dr. Murdoch concurred and noted that may change as students get older because lack of access to print may reduce language knowledge needed for higher listening comprehension.

Next steps

The next meeting will be in person on October 26, 2021.

Adjournment

Chairman Mike McGovern adjourned the meeting at 3:30.

DRAFT