

# **Educator Training to Enhance Skills of Students with Dyslexia**

**Report to the Legislature**



**Randy I. Dorn**  
State Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

**March 2011**

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# **Educator Training to Enhance Skills of Students with Dyslexia**

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**March 2011**

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## Background

Substitute Senate Bill 6016 (SSB 6016) from the 2009 legislative session requests that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provide training to the state's nine regional Educational Service Districts (ESDs) on the topic of dyslexia and to develop a state dyslexia handbook. Substitute Senate Bill 6016 builds upon the successful implementation of the Lorraine Wojahn Dyslexia Pilot Project, which was authorized in the 2005 legislative session under Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5349 and continued for the 2007–09 biennium in House Bill 1128.

Between 2005 and 2009, the Legislature provided funding (\$1,265,000) over a four-year period to help schools implement research-based, multisensory literacy intervention for students with dyslexia. It is estimated that 10 to 20 percent of the population has dyslexia, a language-based disorder that affects a person's ability to read and write. Participating schools were required to have a three-tiered reading structure in place, provide professional development training to teachers, assess students, and collect and maintain data on student progress in reading and spelling. Students receiving intervention support through the dyslexia pilot projects made substantial and steady academic gains in reading and spelling. The Legislature sustained this work and expanded statewide support to teachers by providing resources for developing and delivering information and training, including a handbook to improve the skills of students with dyslexia.

The original state appropriation to support SSB 6016 was \$145,000 per year. The 2010 final supplemental budget, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6444, allocated \$75,000 to support the continuation of SSB 6016 during the 2010–11 year; however, these funds were reduced to \$37,000 in the December 2010 Supplemental Budget.

## ESD Training

As per SSB 6016, OSPI developed and facilitated a five-day professional development session titled *Washington State Professional Development on Dyslexia*. The training days occurred in November and December 2009. The 38 participants included literacy representatives from each of the nine regional ESDs, a cross-state representation of reading specialists, generalists with strong reading background, and administrators from each ESD region. Participants had previously completed training on all twelve modules of *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)*. OSPI partnered with the Washington Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (WABIDA) to develop and deliver the five-day professional development.

## Trainer-of-Trainers

Although not required in SSB 6016, a subcommittee of the ESD training group developed a professional development module, *Washington State Dyslexia Training Module*. The training module includes PowerPoints and presenter notes. This training module will be used by each ESD during at least one dyslexia professional development session as a pilot during the 2010–11 school year. The ESD presenters, in collaboration with OSPI, will collect feedback from the dyslexia professional development sessions this year and continue to refine the training module. In addition, a copy of this module

has been forwarded to WABIDA to review and provide feedback. In July 2011, a final copy of the training-of-trainers module will be disseminated to each educator who attended the *Washington State Professional Development on Dyslexia* event in fall 2009. In addition, professional development sessions will be provided by the ESDs to all trainers to ensure consistency and accuracy of each presentation. Each trainer will receive a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and a facilitator's guide. Finally, OSPI and the ESDs will maintain a list of trainers equipped to offer professional development to teachers and other educators in the state of Washington, who participated in the training-of-trainers professional development.

### ESD Activities

Substitute Senate Bill 6016 requires the ESDs to report their professional development offerings and activities to OSPI. In fall 2010, the ESDs reported the following summary of their activities associated with dyslexia support:

- Representatives from each ESD attended the five-day dyslexia training.
- Five representatives from various ESDs assisted in the development of the dyslexia training module.
- Four ESDs offered 1–3 hour professional development sessions on the topic of dyslexia to 254 teachers and other educators.
- Two ESD Literacy Leadership Cadre (LLC) members attended the Washington Branch of the International Dyslexia Association annual conference.
- One ESD representative presented two sessions on the topic of dyslexia to a special education ESD group.

### Dyslexia Handbook

OSPI entered into a contract with WABIDA to develop a state handbook on dyslexia. A final draft of the handbook will be submitted to OSPI by June 1, 2011. The purpose of the handbook is to provide school districts and families with information regarding the laws, identification, and instructional support for students with dyslexia. The handbook will be posted on the OSPI, ESD, and WABIDA Web sites. Hard copies may be distributed at professional development sessions that address dyslexia.

### Recommendations

There is a continued need to provide information throughout the state on effective instruction for students with dyslexia. Remaining 2010–11 funds will support the development and Web site posting of a dyslexia handbook. The ESDs have committed to providing professional development on the topic of dyslexia through the 2011–12 year.

Future funding would support the distribution of, and training on, the dyslexia handbook and would support the training-of-trainers module being developed by the ESDs and OSPI. Finally, funding would also support statewide implementation of the recommendations in the *Washington State Dyslexia Training Module*; that is, state's relevant statutes and their relation to federal special education laws, research-based, appropriate assessment systems, and multisensory literacy intervention.

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2011