

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: SCR 110

Improving Awareness of, and Support for, Students with Dyslexia

On May 21, 2010, HIDA received the most amazing letter from the Clerk of the Hawai'i State Senate. It said:

I transmit herewith a copy of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 110, which was adopted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session 2010.

Hawai'i has its first piece of "dyslexia legislation!"

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 110 ("SCR 110") provides for the creation of a working group to develop a comprehensive plan to improve awareness of, and support for, students with dyslexia, and to train teachers in strategies necessary to teach students with dyslexia, or other reading disabilities, how to read. It requires that the comprehensive plan address (a) increasing awareness of dyslexia; (b) early assessment and identification of students with literary challenges, including dyslexia; (c) a tiered continuum of intensity for research-based instructional intervention within the response to intervention model; (d) evidence-based progress monitoring that provides students, parents, and educators with data on student performance and improvements, and uses this data in evaluations and decisions for instructional changes; (e) research-based interventions to address the needs of students with literacy challenges, including dyslexia, consistent with guidelines established by the Partnership For Reading comprised of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), and the United States Department of Education, based on findings of the National Reading Panel; (f) practicum experience for educators in areas described in the preceding items (b) through (e); (g) consistency with federal law regarding eligibility and services with respect to specific learning disabilities; and (h) encouraging coordination and collaboration between the Department of Education and teacher preparation programs at State institutions of higher education.

The working group has been meeting since this past July. It consists of representatives from the State of Hawai'i Department of Education, University of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Government Employees Association, Special Education Advisory Council, Teacher Education Coordinating Committee (established under Section 304A-1202 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes), Learning Disabilities Association of Hawai'i, Dyslexia Tutoring Center of Hawai'i, Inc., Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools, and HIDA.

Progress is slow, but steady. Although each of these organizations has worked independently to assist children with reading disabilities, SCR 110 directs an unprecedented joint and coordinated effort to develop a single, comprehensive plan.

The working group is supposed to submit a status report to the Senate and House in the 2011 Legislative Session, and its completed plan in the 2012 Legislative Session. While the task seems impossibly large, and thus the outcome uncertain, Hawai'i has already benefited because of the exchange of information and efforts at collaboration at working group meetings. As one key Senator observed "the left hand of public education needs to know what the right hand is doing."

HIDA staff and volunteers are overwhelmed by the opportunity and hope afforded by SCR 110. They are regularly asked about what is available to help dyslexic children in the public schools; and their answers are rarely satisfactory to the parents, or to the staff and volunteers, themselves. The reality is that the public schools have not been able to effectively address the needs of students – up to 20% of the population - who have dyslexia or another reading disability. SCR 110 says those needs must be addressed, and brings together the people in Hawai'i who can make it happen.

DYSLEXIA AND SCR110*

*adopted 4.22.10 by Hawai'i State
Senate and House of Representatives



Promoting literacy through research, education, and advocacy.

Hawai'i Branch - HIDA

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is dyslexia?

A: Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition, and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological (sound manipulation) component of language. People with dyslexia are intelligent, yet they have great difficulty reading, writing, remembering, organizing and expressing their thoughts clearly.

Q: How does dyslexia affect students?

A: Despite adequate intelligence, students with dyslexia continue to struggle with all or many facets of learning to read, spell and write. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. As they struggle in school, students may develop self-esteem issues.

Q: What causes dyslexia?

A: Dyslexia is neurobiological in origin - there are neuro-anatomical and neuro-chemical differences between the brains of people with dyslexia and those without dyslexia. Dyslexia can be inherited in some families - recent studies have identified a number of genes that may predispose an individual to developing dyslexia.

Q: What are common characteristics of dyslexia?

A: People with dyslexia may, to varying degrees, experience some but not necessarily all of the following:

- difficulty acquiring and using oral and written language
- difficulty learning alphabetic principles and basic sound-symbol relationships, difficulty in phonological awareness, including rhyming, blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds in words
- slow, inaccurate, or labored oral reading difficulty acquiring age appropriate high frequency sight words
- confuses words that look similar (e.g., *horse* for *house*)
- weak spelling skills (may do well on spelling tests, but makes many spelling errors in daily work)
- difficulty with written assignments (may have good ideas, but cannot express them coherently)
- difficulty with reading comprehension due to weak decoding, word recognition, and decreased vocabulary growth because of limited reading experience.

Q: How common is dyslexia?

A: An estimated 10 - 20% of the population has dyslexia or another reading disability. This translates into 195,000 of the approximately 1,300,000 people in Hawai'i.

Q: Do all students who have difficulty reading have dyslexia?

A: No. While the most recent published federal study reports that 43% of fourth graders in Hawai'i read below the *basic reading level*, not all have dyslexia.

Q: Can people with dyslexia be taught to read?

A: Yes. People with dyslexia require direct, explicit and systematic instruction in both oral and written language. They benefit from a different way of teaching, and can learn to read through Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) instruction. MSL instruction (a) includes sequential, structured teaching (building from simple to complex) of phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency,

vocabulary, comprehension, speaking and listening, and written expression, and (b) allows students to engage in learning language concepts by simultaneously using their eyes, ears, hands, mouths, and sometimes whole bodies. MSL instruction is advocated by the Partnership for Reading (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute for Literacy, and U.S. Department of Education) and the International Dyslexia Association.

Q: What will SCR110 accomplish?

A: SCR110 creates a task force to develop a comprehensive public policy to (a) improve awareness of, and strengthen support for, persons with dyslexia, and (b) develop a comprehensive plan to make technical assistance and training (“Training”) available to Hawai‘i teachers, education administrators, education officials, psychologists, and other employees providing instruction, assessment or special services to students (“Educators”), for the early identification and assessment of dyslexia and other literacy challenges, and for the research-based instruction of students in oral and written language.

Q: What is meant by *findings of the National Reading Panel* in SCR110?

A: The National Reading Panel (NRP) was a national panel of leading scientists, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, educational administrators and parents, convened at the request of Congress, to assess the status of research-based interventions (teaching approaches) to teach children to read. The NRP’s final report summarized its findings in five areas (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension). SCR110 requires that Training be consistent with the NRP’s findings.

Q: What is meant by *tiered continuum of intensity for research-based instructional intervention* in SCR110?

A: SCR110 provides that the Training must include a *tiered continuum of intensity for research-based instructional intervention*. This means all students will be taught to read in the classroom with a core curriculum consistent with the NRP’s findings. The core curriculum will be supplemented, and instruction may occur in smaller groups, for students who are identified as non-responsive to the core curriculum. A specialized and intensive curriculum will be developed, which may include one-on-one instruction, for students who are identified as non-responsive to the supplemented core curriculum. The curriculum at each point on the continuum will include instructional interventions that are *research-based* – meaning they will be based on scientifically based reading research.

Q: What is meant by *response to intervention* in SCR110?

A: SCR110 provides that the Training must include *response to intervention*. This means that if a student is not making adequate progress, the interventions implemented for that student will be matched to his or her academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs, and his or her progress will be frequently monitored to make decisions about change in instruction or goals.

Q: Will SCR110 help students with dyslexia?

A: Yes. SCR110 will improve awareness of, and strengthen support for, students with dyslexia, and will result in the early identification and assessment of dyslexia. Furthermore, the elements of the Training are consistent with interventions, such as MSL instruction, used to teach dyslexic students to read. Such interventions have been effective with students with dyslexia, ADD, ADHD, mild asperger, mild autism, ELL and ESL. They help all readers, including students in the general mainstream population, but are essential for students with dyslexia.

Q: Why is SCR110 so important?

A: The ability to read is integral to success in life.

- 62% of dyslexic or other learning disabled students were unemployed one year after graduation
- over 50% of juvenile offenders tested have dyslexia or another learning disability
- 60% of adolescents in substance abuse treatment programs have learning disabilities

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP A
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO IMPROVE AWARENESS OF AND STRENGTHEN
SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DYSLEXIA.

1 WHEREAS, dyslexia is a learning disability that is
2 neurobiological in origin and characterized by difficulties with
3 accurate and fluent word recognition, poor spelling, and poor
4 decoding abilities, resulting in problems with reading
5 comprehension and reduced reading experience that impede the
6 growth of vocabulary and background knowledge; and

7
8 WHEREAS, students with dyslexia may experience difficulties
9 in skills such as reading, spelling, writing, and speaking; and

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11 WHEREAS, between ten and twenty per cent of Americans are
12 affected by dyslexia or other reading disabilities; and

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14 WHEREAS, a significant number of students in Hawaii,
15 including those with dyslexia, read below basic reading levels
16 and experience literacy challenges, which include difficulties
17 with language (spoken or written) or reading (in phonemic
18 awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, or comprehension), or
19 difficulties with one or more of the basic neurobiological or
20 psychological processes involved in understanding or using
21 language (spoken or written) that may result in an imperfect
22 ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform
23 mathematical calculations; and

24
25 WHEREAS, an improved awareness of and support for persons
26 with dyslexia and improved training of educators (including
27 teachers, education administrators, education officials, and
28 other employees providing instruction, assessment, or special
29 services for general, compensatory, gifted, or special
30 education; therapy; and training of students under the
31 jurisdiction of the Department of Education) will help students,
32 including those with dyslexia, obtain the necessary instruction,



1 support, skills, and resources to increase their success in
2 school; now, therefore,
3

4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, the
6 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
7 Education and the University of Hawaii are requested to
8 establish a working group to develop a comprehensive plan to
9 improve awareness of and strengthen support for persons with
10 dyslexia, partly through the provision of training for educators
11 in the State by the 2012-2013 school year, where training
12 includes technical assistance and training in the early
13 identification and assessment of dyslexia, and on the direct,
14 explicit, and systematic research-based instruction of students
15 in oral and written language; and
16

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the comprehensive plan is
18 requested to include but not be limited to the following areas:
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- 20 (1) Increasing awareness of dyslexia;
- 21
- 22 (2) Early assessment and identification of students with
- 23 literacy challenges, including dyslexia;
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- 25 (3) A tiered continuum of intensity for research-based
- 26 instructional intervention within the Response to
- 27 Intervention model;
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- 29 (4) Evidence-based progress monitoring that provides
- 30 students, parents, and educators with data on student
- 31 performance and improvements, and that uses this data
- 32 in evaluations and decisions for instructional
- 33 changes;
- 34
- 35 (5) Research-based interventions to address the needs of
- 36 students with literacy challenges, including dyslexia,
- 37 consistent with guidelines established by the
- 38 Partnership For Reading, comprising the National
- 39 Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the
- 40 National Institute for Literacy, and the United States
- 41 Department of Education, based on findings of the
- 42 National Reading Panel;
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- 1 (6) Practicum experience for educators in areas described
- 2 in paragraphs (2) to (5);
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- 4 (7) Consistency with federal law regarding eligibility for
- 5 services available for persons with specific learning
- 6 disabilities; and
- 7
- 8 (8) Encouraging coordination and collaboration among the
- 9 Department of Education, the University of Hawaii, and
- 10 other teacher preparation programs at institutions of
- 11 higher education in the State; and
- 12

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
14 to:

- 15
- 16 (1) Consider current educational policies, practices, and
- 17 training with regard to literacy challenges, including
- 18 dyslexia; and
- 19
- 20 (2) Review existing dyslexia-related legislation in other
- 21 jurisdictions, including without limitation
- 22 California, Texas, Colorado, Louisiana, and Alabama;
- 23 and
- 24

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following are requested to
26 join the working group:

- 27
- 28 (1) A representative of the Department of Education;
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- 30 (2) A representative of the University of Hawaii;
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- 32 (3) A retired principal representing the Hawaii Government
- 33 Employees Association;
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- 35 (4) A representative of the Learning Disabilities
- 36 Association of Hawaii;
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- 38 (5) A representative of the Dyslexia Tutoring Center of
- 39 Hawaii, Inc.;
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- 41 (6) A representative of the Hawaii Branch of the
- 42 International Dyslexia Association;
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- 1 (7) A representative of the Hawaii Association of
- 2 Independent Schools;
- 3
- 4 (8) A representative of the Special Education Advisory
- 5 Council; and
- 6
- 7 (9) Two representatives of the Teacher Education
- 8 Coordinating Committee, established under section
- 9 304A-1202, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the working group
 12 are requested to designate a chair from among its members, serve
 13 without compensation, and receive no reimbursement for expenses;
 14 and

15
 16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
 17 requested to provide administrative support for the working
 18 group, and the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to
 19 provide legislative drafting services for the working group;
 20 provided that the working group is requested to submit its
 21 proposals for legislation to the Legislative Reference Bureau
 22 not later than November 1, 2011; and

23
 24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education and
 25 the University of Hawaii are requested to submit the working
 26 group's comprehensive plan, including any proposed legislation
 27 that furthers dyslexia awareness and implements the findings of
 28 the working group, to the Legislature no later than twenty days
 29 prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2012; and

30
 31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 32 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of
 33 Education, Chairperson of the Board of Education, President of
 34 the University of Hawaii, Chairperson of the Board of Regents of
 35 the University of Hawaii, Hawaii Government Employees
 36 Association, Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii,
 37 Dyslexia Tutoring Center of Hawaii, Inc., Hawaii Branch of the
 38 International Dyslexia Association, Hawaii Association of
 39 Independent Schools, Special Education Advisory Council,
 40 Chairperson of the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee, and
 41 the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

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