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Tennessee Department of Education Releases Guide to Help Support Students with Characteristics of Dyslexia

Resource Designed to Improve Student Outcomes through Identification and Support

NASHVILLE—The Tennessee Department of Education released today the Dyslexia Resource Guide, which offers assistance to schools for identifying and supporting for students showing characteristics of dyslexia. This guide provides districts with information related to screening procedures for dyslexia, specific interventions, professional learning resources, and reporting requirements.

“For all students to make academic gains, we must make sure that we are recognizing areas of need and providing relevant and focused supports,” Commissioner of Education Candice McQueen said. “This resource guide provides districts a comprehensive view on the characteristics of dyslexia and how to appropriately align interventions that are tailored to individual student needs.”

The resource guide provides the tools needed to support students showing characteristics of dyslexia through Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²), the state’s framework designed to meet the needs of all students through increasingly intensive interventions. For example, schools implement procedures for identifying characteristics of dyslexia through the screening process required by the existing RTI² framework.

Department leaders worked in partnership with the Dyslexia Advisory Council to develop the resource guide over the past year. The advisory council, which was established in fall 2016, includes a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including educators, parents, and school psychologists with expertise in dyslexia from across the state. A draft guide was released in March, and through rounds of internal and public feedback, the guide was revised to be more specific and actionable as school teams work to align interventions in a way that responds to individual student needs.

Moving forward, the department will work with the council to provide professional learning for educators, as well as more guidance for districts and families. Additionally, the advisory council will annually submit a report to the General Assembly with their findings and associated recommendations as they continue to review and monitor dyslexia screening and intervention practices across the state.

The guide came to fruition through Public Chapter 1058, which was sponsored by Sen. Dolores Gresham, R-Somerville, and Rep. Joe Pitts, D-Clarksville, and was approved by the Tennessee General Assembly during the 2016 legislative session. In addition to the creation of the resource guide, the law also established the advisory council and requires all students to be screened for the characteristics of dyslexia and provide appropriate interventions for students who are identified as having those characteristics.

The full Dyslexia Resource Guide is available on the department’s website [here](#). To learn more about Public Chapter 1058 and the Dyslexia Advisory Council, visit the department’s website [here](#).

For more information about the Dyslexia Resource Guide, contact Theresa Nicholls, assistant commissioner of special populations and student support, at Theresa.Nicholls@tn.gov. For media inquiries, contact Sara Gast, director of strategic communications and media, at (615) 532-6260 or Sara.Gast@tn.gov.