

“Say Dyslexia” Bill Fact Sheet

Executive Summary:

House Bill 2170 requires a student’s IEP (Individualized Education Program/Plan) to have “dyslexia” written on the paperwork if the child has a dyslexia diagnosis.

Background:

Dyslexia impacts nearly 1 in 5 children. Public schools will not diagnose dyslexia. Parents of a child with a dyslexia diagnosis frequently report difficulty getting their school district to write “dyslexia” on their child’s IEP. Even though the child may have a dyslexia diagnosis from a developmental pediatrician or neuropsychologist, districts typically only identify the child as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) in the IEP, arguing that the district does not diagnose dyslexia.

Having the dyslexia diagnosis written on the IEP paperwork empowers parents to advocate for the appropriate services.

The U.S. Department of Education has recognized this problem and in October of 2015 issued a “dear colleague” letter with policy guidance on IDEA/IEP terms to clarify that there is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations or IEP documents.

The letter indicates that this has been an issue for families for a decade, and in spite of this guidance, many public schools will still not put “dyslexia” on the IEP.

What the Bill Does:

The language of House Bill 2170 II is as follows:

IF, PURSUANT TO SECTION 19 15-761, PARAGRAPH 2, SUBDIVISION (a), THE PUPIL IS FOUND TO NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES BECAUSE OF A SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY, THE PUPIL'S INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM SHALL INDICATE WHETHER THE PUPIL HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH DYSLEXIA.

The bill will require a student’s IEP (Individualized Education Program/Plan) to have “dyslexia” written on the paperwork if the child has a dyslexia diagnosis.

Why is the “Say Dyslexia” Bill Needed?

1. Ensuring a dyslexia diagnosis is on IEP paperwork empowers parents to advocate for appropriate interventions / dyslexia services for their child. Oftentimes dyslexia requires more interventions than general reading support throughout the week.
2. This bill is a great step towards raising new awareness of dyslexia at the legislature and with broad support it can encourage the legislature to consider additional policy changes to support students with dyslexia.
3. Only 31% of Arizona students scored at or above proficient in reading according to the latest NAEP results. Ensuring students with dyslexia have the term on their IEP is an important step in helping tens of thousands of students and their families advocate for proper reading intervention services.