

**House Bill (HB) 253 (2026)**  
**Guidance on District Dyslexia Policies**  
*April 2026*



Effective immediately, [HB 253, Section 2\(5\)](#) amends [KRS 158.307](#) to require each local school district to establish a "policy addressing the implementation of a program for the identification of and strategies for assisting students in K-3 with dyslexia."

### **District Policy Requirements**

[HB 253, Section 2\(6\)](#) requires the local board's dyslexia policy to include, at minimum, the following:

- (a) The definition and characteristics of dyslexia;
- (b) A process for identifying students who are displaying characteristics of dyslexia;
- (c) A process for the utilization of evaluation tools to accurately identify students who are displaying characteristics of dyslexia. Any qualified dyslexia evaluation tool utilized by a local district shall address but not be limited to the following components:
  1. Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness;
  2. Sound symbol recognition;
  3. Alphabet knowledge;
  4. Decoding skills;
  5. Encoding skills; and
  6. Rapid naming;
- (d) A process for how evaluation tools are administered and evaluated by trained district personnel or licensed professionals;
- (e) A process for outreach to parents of students identified with or displaying the characteristics of dyslexia with information and resource materials and how dyslexia may be addressed in the student's educational setting;
- (f) Identification of evidence-based interventions, structured multisensory and literacy approaches to teach language and reading skills, and accommodations that schools may utilize to provide services to students identified as having dyslexia; and
- (g) A process for monitoring a student's progress, including assessments to ascertain whether the intervention services improve the student's language processing and reading skills.

Whenever possible, schools should begin by providing support in the general education classroom to ensure access to appropriate grade-level learning. In order to intervene before a student's performance falls below grade level, schools must screen all students in accordance with [KRS 158.305](#).

### **Statutory Reporting Requirements**

Per Section 2, subsection (7), "**[b]y June 30, 2028, and June 30 of each year thereafter for five (5) years, each local school district shall provide the department the following data for the current school year:**

- (a) The number of students in K-3 that were identified through the approved universal screener and reading diagnostic assessment as defined in [KRS 158.305](#) as displaying characteristics of dyslexia;
- (b) The number of students in paragraph (a) of this subsection that were identified as needing enrichment programs as defined in [KRS 158.305](#);
- (c) The number of students in K-3 that were participating in literacy interventions within the school setting; and
- (d) The process or tools used to evaluate student progress."

## Model Policy Considerations

Below are considerations for schools and districts as they develop their local dyslexia policies. Effective intervention is essential to ensure struggling readers receive appropriate scaffolding and coherent, accelerated learning aligned with strong, daily Tier 1 universal/core instruction grounded in a [high-quality instructional resource \(HQIR\)](#).

### Screening and Intervention

- If the universal screener and diagnostic required under [KRS 158.305](#) indicates that a student displays risk factors or areas of need associated with characteristics of dyslexia, the school should use a [multi-tiered system of supports](#) to address the needs of the student.
- For students displaying characteristics of dyslexia, intervention services offered by the school should utilize evidence-based structured literacy practices within a multi-tiered system of supports that specifically target areas of need and:
  - Provide explicit, systematic, sequential, and cumulative instruction that adheres to a logical plan about the alphabetic principle and is designed to accommodate the needs of each individual student without presuming prior skills or knowledge;
  - Promote evidence-based practices that have been proven effective and do not include the three-cueing system model of word reading;
  - Engage the student in multisensory/multimodal language learning techniques;
  - Include phonemic awareness activities to enable the student to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in the spoken language;
  - Provide graphophonemic knowledge for teaching the letter-sound plan of the English language;
  - Teach the structure and patterns of the English language, including linguistic instruction in morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics, that is directed toward proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that words and sentences are the carriers of meaning;
  - Develop strategies that advance the student's ability in decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension; and
  - Provide meaning-based instruction directed at purposeful reading and writing, with an emphasis on comprehension and composition.
- If screening tools and resources indicate that, after receiving the initial tier of student support, a student requires interventions, the school district may provide the interventions in either the general education classroom or in an enrichment program in accordance with [KRS 158.305](#).

### Family Engagement and Support

If the student's performance on a universal screener and diagnostic indicates a need for intervention services, local policies should provide information on how to notify the student's parents or guardian of the results of all screenings and provide them with information and resource materials that include the following:

1. The characteristics of dyslexia
2. The appropriate classroom interventions and accommodations for students within a multi-tiered system of supports
3. If after receiving interventions, further screening tools and resources indicate that a student continues to demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia and has not made progress toward proficient performance in reading, the school district may consider a referral for an evaluation to determine if the student needs special education and related services in accordance with [707 KAR 1:300](#).

### Related Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

In developing their local policies, districts should reference reading-related statutes and regulations to ensure

alignment of the dyslexia policy to early literacy requirements, including but not limited to:

- [HB 253, Section 1](#) establishes a new section of [KRS Chapter 158](#) to prohibit the use of three-cueing
- [KRS 158.305](#) establishes requirements for comprehensive reading programs, universal screening, diagnostic assessments, reading improvement plans, multi-tiered system of supports and accelerated interventions
- [KRS 158.307](#) establishes requirements for local dyslexia policies
- [KRS 158.791](#) establishes legislative findings and intent regarding reading and mathematics
- [KRS 158.840](#) establishes legislative intent related to universal screening, diagnostics and intervention services
- [704 KAR 3:095](#) specifies the requirements for a district-wide multi-tiered system of supports for students in K-12

## Dyslexia Toolkit

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has developed a [Dyslexia Toolkit](#) and a list of [approved universal screeners and reading diagnostic tools](#) to assist districts in developing and implementing their local dyslexia policy. In KDE's Dyslexia Toolkit, schools and districts can find more information on:

- The definition and characteristics of dyslexia
- Evidence-based explicit and systematic instruction for students displaying characteristics of dyslexia
- Dyslexia screening within a [multi-tiered system of supports](#)
- Tiered interventions and supports for students displaying characteristics of dyslexia
- Instructional supports for students with characteristics of dyslexia

## Supplemental Resources

- [Accommodations for Students with Dyslexia](#) (International Dyslexia Association, 2020)
- [Dyslexia in the Classroom: What Every Teacher Needs to Know handbook](#) (International Dyslexia Association, 2019)
- [Early Literacy Screening Assessments webpage](#) (Kentucky Department of Education, 2026)
- [Early Literacy webpage](#) and [resources](#) (Kentucky Department of Education, 2026)
- [Guidance for Individual Education Program \(IEP\) Development](#) (Kentucky Department of Education, 2025)
- [High-Quality Instructional Resources \(HQIRs\)](#) (Kentucky Department of Education, 2026)
- [Kentucky multi-tiered system of supports implementation guide](#) (Kentucky Department of Education, 2025)
- [Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading](#) (International Dyslexia Association, n.d.)
- [Read at Home Plan Family Guide](#) (Kentucky Department of Education, 2026)
- [Universal Screening: K–2 Reading](#) (International Dyslexia Association, 2019)

## Associated Statutory and Regulatory Definitions

- **"Comprehensive reading program"** means any print, nonprint, or electronic medium of reading instruction designed to assist students. For students in kindergarten through grade three (3), program instructional resources shall include instruction in five (5) key areas: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension ([KRS 158.792](#))
- **"Diagnostic assessment"** means a formal or informal student assessment, utilizing valid and reliable tools, given to guide instruction and tailor interventions based upon individual student academic and behavioral strengths and needs to accelerate progress toward proficiency ([704 KAR 3:095](#))
- **"Dysgraphia"** means difficulty in automatically remembering and mastering the sequence of muscle motor movements needed to accurately write letters or numbers ([KRS 158.305](#))
- **"Dyslexia"** means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties

typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. ([KRS 158.307](#))

- **"Enrichment program"** means accelerated intervention within the school day or outside of the school day or school calendar led by individuals most qualified to provide the intervention that includes evidence-based reading instructional programming related to reading instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, and other instructional strategies aligned to reading and writing standards. ([KRS 158.305](#))
- **"Evidence-based"** has the same meaning as in [20 U.S.C. sec. 7801\(21\)](#). ([KRS 158.307](#))
- **"Intervention"** means an academic or behavioral instruction, practice, strategy, or curriculum that is identified through data-based problem-solving and provided to meet a student's academic and behavioral needs, in addition to Tier 1 universal instruction. ([704 KAR 3:095](#))
- **"Multi-tiered system of supports" or "MTSS"** means a multi-level prevention system designed to maximize student achievement and social and behavioral competencies through an integration of differentiated universal instruction, assessment, and intervention. ([704 KAR 3:095](#))
- **"Phonemic awareness"** means the ability to recognize that a spoken word consists of a sequence of individual sounds and the ability to manipulate individual sounds in speaking. ([KRS 158.307](#))
- **"Reading diagnostic assessment"** means an assessment that measures a student's skills against established performance levels in essential components of reading and identifies students that require intervention in at least one (1) of those components to accelerate the student's progress toward proficient performance in reading. ([KRS 158.792](#))
- **"Reading improvement plan"** means an accelerated intervention plan for a student in kindergarten through grade four (4) that is developed to increase a student's rate of progress toward proficient performance in reading that is identified as necessary based on the student's results on an approved reading diagnostic assessment. This plan should be developed in collaboration and accordance with any existing program services plan, individualized education program, or Section 504 Plan unless the program services plan, individualized education program, or Section 504 Plan already addresses improving reading. ([KRS 158.305](#))
- **"Reading intervention"** means curriculum, activities, and evidence-based strategies used to accelerate student progress toward proficiency in reading, including but not limited to individual instruction, small groups, multisensory approaches, tutoring, mentoring, and the use of technology that targets specific reading skills and abilities. ([HB 253, Section 1](#))
- **"Reliable, replicable evidence"** means objective, valid, scientific studies that: 1. Include rigorously defined samples of subjects that are sufficiently large and representative to support the general conclusions drawn; 2. Rely on measurements that meet established standards of reliability and validity; 3. Test competing theories, where multiple theories exist; 4. Are subjected to peer review before their results are published; and 5. Discover effective strategies for improving reading skills. ([KRS 158.792](#))
- **"Tier 1 universal instruction"** means instruction provided to all students based on the state's academic standards as set forth in [704 KAR Chapter 8](#), and is aligned with [KRS 158.6451](#). ([704 KAR 3:095](#))
- **"Tier 2 targeted intervention"** means supplemental evidence-based intervention, in addition to and in alignment with Tier 1 universal instruction, for students identified by universal screening and diagnostic assessment data as at-risk for not meeting grade-level academic or behavioral benchmarks. ([704 KAR 3:095](#))
- **"Tier 3 intensive intervention"** means that, in addition to Tier 1 universal instruction and Tier 2 targeted intervention, a student is provided evidence-based intervention services, based on diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring data, with an intensity and duration matched to the student's individualized academic and behavioral needs. ([704 KAR 3:095](#))
- **"Universal screening"** means a systematic process of analyzing students' performance at certain points

during the academic year, utilizing valid and reliable tools to assess the learning and achievement of all students in academics and related behaviors, that may include validated indicators such as course performance, attendance, and behavior data to evaluate the effectiveness of Tier 1 universal instruction and determine which students need closer monitoring or intervention. ([704 KAR 3:095](#))

For questions related to HB 253, contact policy advisor for the Office of Teaching and Learning, [Sarah Medley](#).