

## Florida PTA Proposed Resolution

### **Educational Implications for Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)**

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## **Educational Implications for Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)**

- Whereas, Nearly 39% of all the students who qualify for Special Education are classified as having a Learning Disability (LD) and dyslexia is the most common learning disability affecting 80% of all individuals with a learning disability and up to 15–20% of the population as a whole have some of the symptoms of dyslexia; and dyslexia is an unexpected language processing disorder, neurobiological in nature that can impact, reading, spelling, written expression, and comprehension; and is characterized by poor fluency, spelling and decoding abilities<sup>[1, 2, 3]</sup>; and
- Whereas, Multiple studies have shown that early reading difficulties without appropriate intervention will have adverse effects leading to lower graduation rates, behavioral issues and a lifelong negative socio-economic impact; and individuals impacted by learning disabilities, including dyslexia, are overrepresented in prison populations and in the juvenile justice system<sup>[2, 4, 5]</sup>; and
- Whereas, The term dyslexia is found in the laws of at least forty-two states and other jurisdictions and in the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) within the broad eligibility category of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), yet many public schools have historically avoided the terms “dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia” in evaluations when determining special education eligibility and in Individual Education Program (IEP) documents<sup>[6, 7, 8]</sup>; and
- Whereas, there is compelling scientific evidence that early identification and intervention improves literacy outcomes for most students of dyslexia and other struggling readers using an evidence-based, explicit, direct, systematic, cumulative and sequential approach to instructing students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), currently defined as Structured Literacy<sup>[5, 9, 10]</sup>; and
- Whereas, most teachers’ preparation programs provide little to no training regarding dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia, appropriate accommodations or evidence-based instructional approaches for students with Learning Disabilities leaving most teachers unprepared to adequately address the learning needs of these children<sup>[5, 10, 11, 12]</sup>; now therefore be it
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations support the use of evidence-based instructional approaches for students with dyslexia, currently defined as Structured Literacy, and evidence-based instruction for dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD); and be it further
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations work with their local school districts to research and advocate for the adoption of evidence-based approaches, meaningful IEP goals, and educational policies that best serve students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD); and be it further
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations support schools in implementing best practices in meeting the needs of students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) through practices such as early

intervention and differentiated instruction and to encourage accommodations and needed assistive technology through 504 Plans and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in all learning environments; and be it further

Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations recognize that Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) have significant educational implications and encourage local and state education agencies and institutions of higher education to require pre-service and on-going post-service training on dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), the warning signs of dyslexia and appropriate instructional approaches as well as the use of early screening for dyslexia and successful approaches to communicating with parents.

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## Rationale:

Children with dyslexia and other learning disabilities face challenging obstacles that impede their academic success. One of the largest barriers is a lack of clear communication and knowledge of dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia by both educational professionals and parents. Some educational professionals believe learning disabilities are the “domain” of Special Education or the medical field when in fact most children with dyslexia and other learning disabilities are in general education classrooms. In fact, there is no medical treatment for dyslexia; all the “treatments” are educational. Therefore, we need better information and communication for both teachers and parents. The adoption of this resolution, *Addressing the Educational Implications of Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Disabilities*, makes parents, educators, and policy makers partners in addressing the vast impact that dyslexia and other learning disabilities have on student populations. Inherently, this resolution substantiates Florida PTA as a trusted resource that gives credence to the basics of curriculum improvement and more effective teaching and learning strategies for students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. This resolution also seeks to urge remedies to the current lack of instructional interventions and how public schools need to address the significant implications dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia have on student learning.

This resolution will reduce the problem by persuading local and state education agencies and institutions of higher learning to require training on dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia including the warning signs, early screening, and appropriate interventions, for their teachers, staff and credential candidates. Additionally, this resolution will serve as a stepping stone to encourage the use of early screening for dyslexia to include parental notification.

Because dyslexia is the most common learning disability, Florida PTA can encourage state legislation that advocates for training in early identification of dyslexia, appropriate interventions, assisted technologies and other resources that provide students with equitable access to the general education curriculum. Furthermore, because of the need to improve the understanding of dyslexia and its warning signs, Florida PTA can offer accurate information regarding dyslexia and support the use of evidence-based Structured Literacy approaches for students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, along with access to appropriate accommodations and assistive technologies.