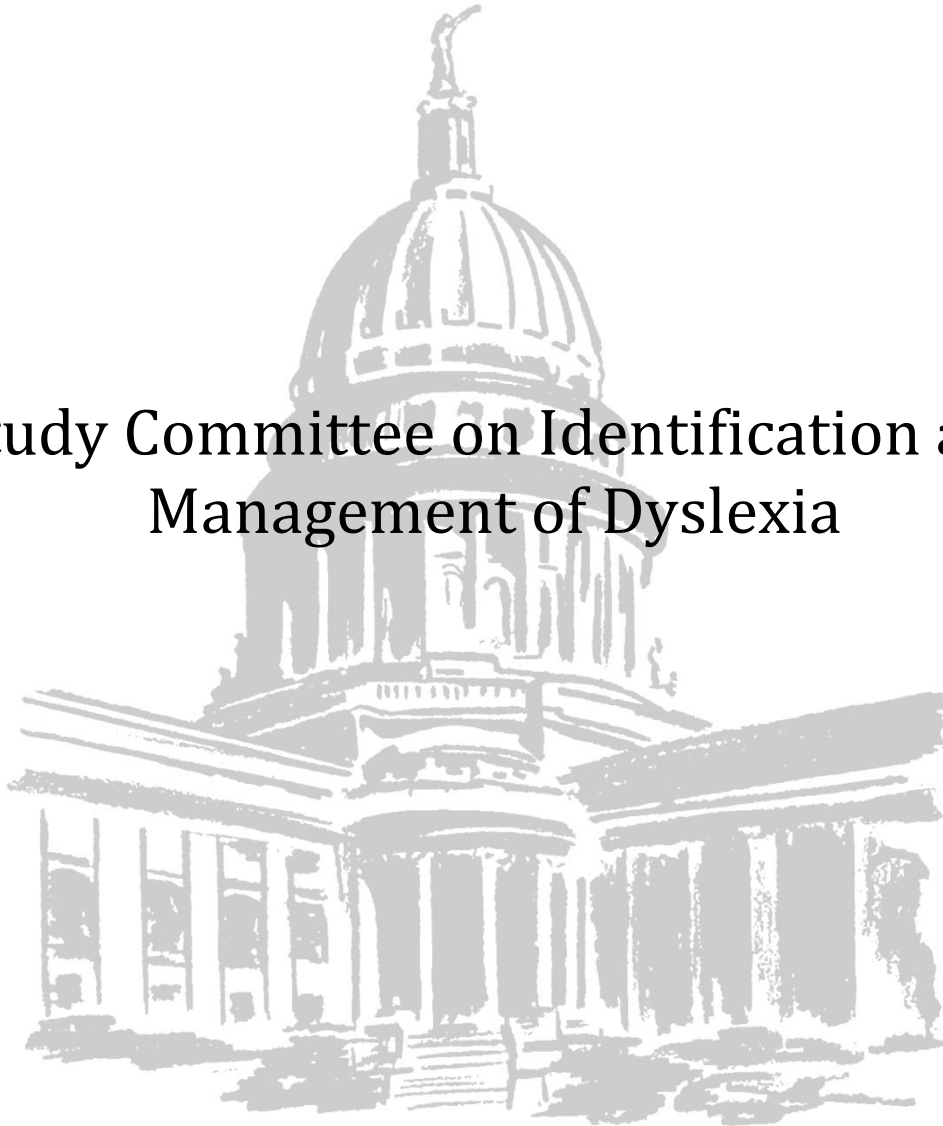


Report to the Joint Legislative Council

Study Committee on Identification and Management of Dyslexia



February 1, 2019

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STUDY COMMITTEE ON IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DYSLEXIA

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February 1, 2019

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PART I

KEY PROVISIONS OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

LRB-0368/2, RELATING TO EMPLOYING A DYSLEXIA SPECIALIST AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION

LRB-0368/2 requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to hire a dyslexia specialist beginning in the 2019-20 school year and provides \$95,000 per year to fund this position. The dyslexia specialist's duties are to: (1) provide schools with information, technical assistance, and support related to dyslexia and related conditions; (2) provide schools with information, technical assistance, and support related to addressing the needs of pupils with dyslexia and related conditions; (3) increase professional awareness in schools, and instructional competencies of teachers, to meet the educational needs of pupils with dyslexia and related conditions or identified with risk characteristics associated with dyslexia and related conditions; and (4) develop implementation guidance and make recommendations to the state superintendent of public instruction for comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction practices and strategies to be used to assist regular education teachers and special education teachers to recognize educational needs of and improve literacy outcomes for pupils with dyslexia and related conditions or identified with risk characteristics associated with dyslexia and related conditions, including recommendations related to increasing the availability of online professional development programs and materials.

LRB-0383/3, RELATING TO DEVELOPING A GUIDEBOOK RELATED TO DYSLEXIA AND RELATED CONDITIONS

LRB-0383/3 requires DPI to develop a guidebook for parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators regarding dyslexia and related conditions. To develop the guidebook, the state superintendent of public instruction must establish an advisory committee, whose membership shall be determined in consultation with the International Dyslexia Association—Wisconsin Branch, Inc. (IDA), and the Wisconsin State Reading Association, Inc. (WSRA). Representatives from IDA and WSRA also serve as cochairpersons on the advisory committee.

The advisory committee must submit to DPI a draft guidebook containing at least all of the following information: (1) guidelines on screening processes and tools available to identify dyslexia and related conditions; (2) a description of interventions and instructional strategies that have been shown to improve academic performance of pupils with dyslexia and related conditions; and (3) a description of resources and services related to dyslexia and related conditions that are available to pupils with dyslexia and related conditions, parents and guardians of such pupils, and educators.

The advisory committee must submit its draft guidebook to DPI within one year of appointment of all members of the advisory committee. DPI must publish the final guidebook within three months after it receives the draft guidebook from the advisory committee. Any school board that maintains an internet site must include a link to the guidebook on its internet site. Finally, DPI must review the guidebook once every three years, in consultation with IDA and WSRA.

RECOMMENDATION - ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider options to ensure that all applicants for an educator license must fulfill requirements to complete student teaching, obtain a passing score on the FoRT test, and other requirements demonstrating that the applicant is highly qualified. Such consideration should include reviewing the effectiveness of alternative licensure pathways that have fewer requirements.

RECOMMENDATION - LIFETIME LICENSURE

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider the repercussions of the lifetime educator license created in the 2017-19 Biennial Budget Act and its impact on teacher effectiveness. Such consideration should include options to ensure that all licensed teachers are required to have ongoing professional development.

RECOMMENDATION - GRADE RANGES FOR EDUCATOR LICENSES

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider the effectiveness of broadened grade ranges for educator licenses issued under current ch. PI 34, Wis. Adm. Code. Such consideration should include examining the repercussions of K-9 and 4-12 licensing bands on sufficient teacher preparation and student outcomes.

PART II

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

ASSIGNMENT

The Joint Legislative Council established the Study Committee on Identification and Management of Dyslexia and appointed the chairperson by an April 9, 2018 mail ballot. **Appendix 2** identifies the membership of the Joint Legislative Council at the time the mail ballot was approved. The committee was directed to review current screening, identification, school intervention, and treatment protocols for dyslexia in K-12 schools; to examine the effects of current state statutes and regulations on literacy outcomes for students with dyslexia; and to evaluate the effects of dyslexia on literacy outcomes in the state. The committee charge was to study recent research on evidence-based instructional techniques for students with dyslexia; determine the components and costs of successful dyslexia education practices and laws in other states; and identify institutional obstacles to academic attainment for these students. The committee was also charged to consider legislation to implement screening for characteristics of dyslexia in early grades; to ensure that reading instruction and intervention practices incorporate relevant research findings from the University of Wisconsin; to improve the partnership between parents, educators, counselors, and others on early identification and effective interventions for dyslexic learners; and to enhance statewide access to updated resources and training on dyslexic education.

Membership of the study committee was appointed by a June 4, 2018 mail ballot. The final committee membership consisted of three representatives, two senators and six public members. A list of committee members is included as **Appendix 3** to this report.

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

The committee held five meetings on the following dates:

- July 9, 2018.
- August 29, 2018.
- September 18, 2018.
- October 23, 2018.
- December 4, 2018.

At the committee's July 9, 2018 meeting, Chair Kulp welcomed committee members and several invited informational presenters.

Dr. Julie Gocey, pediatrician, UW School of Medicine and Public Health, and Dr. Daniel Gustafson, clinical neuro-psychologist, SSM Health Care, presented the committee with statistics

regarding Wisconsin students' performance on national reading examinations and discussed the problems that can ensue throughout a child's life when the child struggles with reading. The presenters then discussed how research relating to components of effective reading instruction can best inform curriculum for teaching all students to read, including struggling readers and students with dyslexia. The presenters emphasized the importance of screening tests for early identification of dyslexia, explaining that the earlier interventions are used, the more effective they are in improving a child's ability to read. The presenters also discussed examples of evidence-based instruction and interventions that could be implemented in schools.

Kurt Eley, director of student services, Waunakee Community School District, discussed the current processes for identifying students with reading difficulty and students needing special education services. He also discussed challenges for school districts in implementing reading interventions, including allocation of time for interventions, professional development, financial limitations, and staffing positions.

Mr. Eley stressed the importance of identifying children in need of services earlier, and improving coordination between medical practitioners and school administrators when a learning disability diagnosis is being made. In addition, he explained that teacher training and ongoing professional development is crucial for successfully implementing interventions and for evaluating the relative effectiveness of the interventions.

Debra Zarling, literacy coordinator, Oshkosh Area School District, provided an overview of research on reading theories, including the *1997 National Reading Panel Report* and the 2008 report, *Developing Early Literacy*, by the National Early Literacy Panel. She discussed the importance of teacher expertise as the key component of effective reading instruction, rather than one prescriptive approach or program for building reading comprehension and literacy attainment. Ms. Zarling advised the committee that teachers utilize their experience to meet individual students' unique and complex needs, including learning disabilities such as dyslexia. She described the Reading Recovery program, the RtI (Response to Interventions) model, and the remedial reading intervention requirements in the school district standards law, known as "Standard C." [s. 121.02 (1) (c), Stats.]

Ms. Zarling outlined ways in which limited funding impedes schools' ability to fully meet existing requirements such as Standard C. She described difficult decisions schools make on how to meet competing student needs given the constraints of staffing and time available. She encouraged the allocation of funds to train and hire more reading specialists and to provide ongoing professional development for educators. She described the impact of current state law requirements and cautioned against adding new mandates without providing additional resources to implement them.

Mark Seidenberg, Vilas research professor, Department of Psychology, UW-Madison discussed his research on the acquisition of reading skills and the neurological causes of reading difficulties in young children. He provided information regarding disagreements among scientists and educators as to effective reading instruction practices. He explained the importance of early identification of children who need reading interventions, and stressed that multiple factors, such as lack of socioeconomic resources, can cause or exacerbate reading struggles. He advised that

exposing children to more spoken language in their early pre-school years can help address such conditions before they develop into reading difficulties.

Professor Seidenberg advised the committee to ensure teachers have access to training on updated information regarding the nature of dyslexia and its identification. He emphasized that teacher training on developmental theory is crucial for successfully implementing interventions, offering Mississippi as a positive example of a state dyslexia program.

At the committee's August 29, 2018 meeting, Victoria Weinberg, PhD., implementation specialist (SLD AND MTSS) and Amy Schulting, PhD., M.Ed., LP, dyslexia specialist, Minnesota Department of Education discussed the development of the informational paper *Navigating the School System When a Child is Struggling with Reading or Dyslexia*. A number of individuals and organizations participated in the creation of the paper, including individuals with dyslexia, parents, teachers, evaluators, and special education teachers.

Dr. Weinberg discussed key components that assisted her in facilitating the development of the paper. She then answered questions from committee members, including questions about challenges after the publication of the paper. Dr. Weinberg noted that one challenge is implementation of the recommendations in the paper, since the paper is primarily about information sharing.

Dr. Weinberg was joined by Amy Schulting, who discussed her credentials and experience as a dyslexia specialist. Dr. Schulting emphasized the importance of evidence-based systemic instruction for all readers, as well as early identification and intervention.

Tom Keily, Education Commission of the States, provided the committee with an overview of dyslexia-related policies across the nation, specifically those codified in state laws or administrative rules.

Mr. Keily then summarized the components of guidance documents and informational materials on dyslexia that other states have developed. These materials contain resources for teachers and parents, and in some states, information about compliance requirements for schools and districts under state policies.

Mr. Keily addressed committee questions, such as the most widely used policies and the order of priority in which states usually adopt various policies.

Professor Donna Scanlon, University of Albany, State University of New York, set forth the position that in research literature, the terms dyslexia and reading disability tend to be used interchangeably and that a variety of factors may influence a child's ability to accurately and quickly read the words in a text. Dr. Scanlon stated that learning to decode words is one of several skills needed for reading comprehension and must be balanced with background knowledge.

Dr. Scanlon discussed various studies that she conducted, including a study of traits of successful readers. In her research, Dr. Scanlon found that most reading difficulties related to word reading skills can be prevented through effective, scientifically tested instruction provided by teachers in the early grades. She also found that children's literacy skills grow at different rates, and that children need to learn about the workings of the alphabetic code to be successful readers.

Dr. Scanlon shared findings from her research on the relative effectiveness of different interventions in kindergarten and strategies for effectively teaching literacy. Finally, Dr. Scanlon addressed questions from members, including whether a dyslexia diagnosis may be helpful for some struggling readers, and the merits of specific intervention tools.

Barbara Felix, Decoding Dyslexia, described the work of her organization which serves the parents of children with dyslexia. Ms. Felix shared, from her experience and the experience of other parent members, how a diagnosis of dyslexia and having a name for the condition can be helpful in understanding and remediating their children's challenges.

Ms. Felix presented the results of a Decoding Dyslexia survey of parent members regarding their experiences, including the availability of support in schools for students with dyslexia. She urged the committee to ensure that identification takes place early enough to remediate children's difficulties in the elementary grades, and to help schools provide support for dyslexia and effective instructional methods.

Dee Pettack, legislative liaison, and **Barb Novak, literacy consultant, DPI**, provided an overview of the governance structure of the public education system in Wisconsin, and the roles of federal, tribal, state, and local authorities. They described various measures of growing poverty and changing enrollment in Wisconsin school districts, especially rural districts, and concluded that these factors likely influence Wisconsin's lower ranking among states for reading assessment scores.

The DPI representatives discussed the legislative history of current state law requirements for early literacy screening and standards for reading interventions. They outlined limitations on the use of federal funds to comply with state statutes, and how this dynamic can lead districts to use fewer reading specialists and more general classroom teachers to implement reading interventions.

They suggested the committee support schools and districts in making local decisions about how to comply with Standard C and how to implement the RtI framework with struggling readers.

They then took questions from the committee, including questions regarding teacher preparation, reading specialist certification, and the FoRT.

At the committee's September 18, 2018 meeting, **Dr. Colleen Pennell, assistant professor of literacy/elementary reading, Carroll University**, described research findings on the characteristics of effective teacher preparation programs, and suggested content that should be incorporated in preparation programs for pre-service teachers, such as neuroscience and developmental science. Dr. Pennell informed the committee regarding the preparation of teachers of early literacy, emphasizing that scientific research has not identified any one method or program as the "silver bullet" for literacy acquisition.

Dr. Pennell stated that there is no consensus in the field regarding a definition of the term "dyslexia" or a single approach to remediating children with dyslexia she encouraged the committee to address the needs of all struggling readers and not only those identified as dyslexic.

Dr. Pennell reviewed the state teacher licensing requirements, as well as the standards that teacher preparation programs must meet for state approval. She suggested that the committee consider increasing professional development for educators and greater support for beginning teachers in their first three years of practice.

Dr. Pennell then answered questions from the committee on several topics including teacher induction programs, educator attrition rates, and the best way to distinguish which interventions qualify as “scientifically based” under s. 121.02 (1) (c) 3., Stats.

Kathy Champeau, legislative chair, WSRA, discussed research relating to literacy instruction and stated that one of the most critical factors is teacher expertise. Ms. Champeau stressed the importance of having high quality—as opposed to merely licensed—teachers for all children, regardless of a child’s geographic location. According to WSRA, teaching literacy is complex and it requires a comprehensive approach.

Ms. Champeau next addressed each topic outlined by the Legislative Council memorandum, *Topics for Committee Discussion*, which the committee would consider that afternoon. Ms. Champeau indicated that WSRA supports the publication of a guidebook and that WSRA would like to be a partner in the development of such a publication. Regarding the topic of a dyslexia specialist at DPI, Ms. Champeau questioned whether existing resources at DPI may already cover the duties of a dyslexia specialist, and urged the committee to further investigate the duties of existing positions at DPI. She then discussed the challenges of creating a definition for the term “dyslexia” since there is no universal definition in the field.

Ms. Champeau discussed WSRA’s support of the three proposed committee recommendations. She recommended that student teaching be a required component of licensing. In addition, Ms. Champeau stated that WSRA supports the current law with respect to literacy screening requirements, since it allows school districts flexibility regarding which assessment tool to use.

Finally, Ms. Champeau noted that WSRA supports summer school and extended day programs, early learning initiatives for oral language, funding Read to Lead grants, and funding for reading specialists that are required under current law.

Before the conclusion of this meeting, Legislative Council staff was directed to prepare two bill drafts relating to a guidebook and a dyslexia specialist, as well as three recommendations.

At the committee’s October 23, 2018 meeting, Chair Kulp initiated an introductory discussion among committee members regarding their impressions of the committee’s past meetings and remaining priorities. Members expressed concern regarding whether the drafts and recommendations requested on September 18, would adequately address all aspects of the committee’s charge. In particular, some members were interested in considering additional legislation on early identification, interventions, and defining the term “dyslexia.” Deborah Cromer, appearing on behalf of WSRA at the invitation of Chair Kulp, stated that educators need professional learning, time, adequate materials, and resources to address each individual child’s unique needs.

Chair Kulp invited Legislative Council staff to summarize the contents of the guidebook draft legislation for the committee. Then committee members asked questions and offered comments and suggestions. The committee also considered several proposed changes to the bill draft that lacked sufficient consensus to be incorporated in the bill draft.

The committee reached general consensus to make the following changes to the bill draft:

- Replace the terms “reading difficulties and dyslexia” with “dyslexia and related conditions” throughout the bill draft.
- Delete the categories of required members on the advisory committee.
- Add a condition that a member of the advisory committee cannot be the seller of a product relating to dyslexia, including products related to teaching instruction or teaching interventions.
- Provide that International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and WSRA each submit a list of eight individuals to be appointed to the advisory committee by DPI. This change replaced the provision requiring each organization to submit a list of 20 names to DPI, from which DPI would choose eight individuals for appointment to the advisory committee.
- Add a definition of dyslexia to the nonstatutory provisions for purposes of the advisory committee’s work developing the guidebook, not for inclusion in the Wisconsin Statutes. The committee decided to use the IDA definition, review alternative definitions that may be offered by committee members and by WSRA, and decide which definition would be most appropriate.

After all members were given an opportunity to propose and discuss any changes, Chair Kulp transitioned to a discussion of the next bill draft.

Legislative Council staff summarized the contents of the dyslexia specialist draft legislation for the committee.

During its discussion, the committee reached general consensus to make several changes to the bill draft, including the following:

- Replace the terms “reading difficulties and dyslexia” with “dyslexia and related conditions” throughout the bill draft.
- Replace the term “evidence-based” with “scientifically based” on p. 2, line 10.
- Require a qualified candidate for a dyslexia specialist to have five years, not three years, of experience in screening, identifying, and treating dyslexia and related conditions.
- Require a qualified candidate for a dyslexia specialist to have certification as one of the following: Fellow of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators; certification by the Academic Language Therapy Association as either: (1) a certified academic language therapist (CALT); or (2) an instructor of certified academic language

practitioner (ICALP); or certification by the Center for Effective Reading Instruction as either: (a) a structured literacy/dyslexia interventionist; or (b) a structured literacy/dyslexia specialist.

After all members were given an opportunity to propose and discuss any changes, Chair Kulp transitioned to a discussion of the draft recommendations.

The committee discussed the following recommendations that were drafted after the September 18, 2018 meeting. The committee discussed the merits of having recommendations as opposed to draft legislation, and members expressed a desire for forceful recommendations. The recommendations are set forth in their entirety below.

Recommendation — Lifetime Licensure

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider the repercussions of the lifetime educator license created in the 2017-19 Biennial Budget Act and its impact on teacher effectiveness. Such consideration should include options to ensure that all licensed teachers are required to have ongoing professional development.

Recommendation — Alternative Licensure

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider options to ensure that all applicants for an educator license must fulfill requirements to complete student teaching, obtain a passing score on the FoRT test, and other requirements demonstrating that the applicant is highly qualified. Such consideration should include reviewing the effectiveness of alternative licensure pathways that have fewer requirements.

Recommendation — Grade Ranges for Educator Licenses

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider the effectiveness of broadened grade ranges for educator licenses issued under current ch. PI 34, Wis. Adm. Code. Such consideration should include examining the repercussions of K-9 and 4-12 licensing bands on sufficient teacher preparation and student outcomes.

At the final committee meeting on December 4, 2018, Legislative Council staff began the discussion by describing the changes that the committee requested to be made to the guidebook bill draft at the prior meeting.

Chair Kulp then opened the floor for members to discuss changes to the guidebook draft. Certain members expressed concern about the provision that prohibits a member of the advisory committee from having a financial interest in certain products or programs related to dyslexia. These members wondered whether this provision could result in imbalanced representation on the committee. Members also expressed concern that DPI could have too much discretion in its ability to disqualify a member based on financial interest if this provision was left in the bill draft.

Other concerns expressed by members included whether the bill draft should give school districts time to learn the contents of the guidebook before being required to post the guidebook

on the school district's internet website. Members were invited to make additional general comments about the bill draft. Members expressed consensus that the study committee charge was an invitation to improve learning in all classrooms and educative efficacy for all children.

At the close of discussion, certain members advocated for deleting the bill draft provision that prohibits a member of the advisory council from having a financial interest in certain dyslexia products or programs. Members expressed an interest in having this provision re-inserted into the bill draft at a later point in the legislative process, after a more thorough debate of the definition of "financial interest."

The members moved to approve the bill draft, with the requested revisions, taking the following actions:

Public Member Malone moved, seconded by Public Member Warren, to finalize LRB-0383/2, with the following change: delete the provision of the bill draft that provides that no member of the advisory committee may have a financial interest in a vendor of either: (a) a product that is designed to identify dyslexia or a related condition; or (b) a program that provides training on dyslexia or a related condition to educators. The committee members approved the motion to amend the draft as described above by a roll call vote of Ayes, 8 (Reps. Kulp and Rohrkaste; Sen. Tiffany; and Public Members Dressel, Dykstra, Hejtmanek, Malone, and Warren); Noes, 2 (Rep. Stuck and Sen. Schachtner); and Absent, 1 (Public Member Weber).

The committee members approved the draft, as amended, by a roll call vote of Ayes, 10; (Reps. Kulp, Rohrkaste, Stuck; Sens. Tiffany and Schachtner; and Public Members Dressel, Dykstra, Hejtmanek, Malone, and Warren); Noes 0; and Absent, 1 (Public Member Weber).

Next, the committee discussed the dyslexia specialist bill draft. Chair Kulp invited Legislative Council staff to summarize for the committee the changes made since the last meeting to LRB-0368/2. Committee members asked questions and offered comments and suggestions.

Certain members suggested that the bill draft should require an individual to have classroom experience as a qualification for the position of dyslexia specialist. Members debated whether such a requirement would be advantageous. Some members felt that pedagogical experience was crucial and others felt that this position should be a content focused role and not a pedagogical one. The committee did not reach consensus on the question and did not move to amend the bill draft.

At the invitation of Chair Kulp, Deborah Cromer shared the position of WSRA. Ms. Cromer expressed the belief that a bachelor's degree, classroom experience, knowledge of childhood development, and literacy expertise are necessary qualifications for this position. WSRA stated that specialists currently employed at DPI are a better resource for this need and the organization would not support creating a dyslexia specialist position in DPI.

After all members were given an opportunity to discuss the bill draft, the committee moved to approve the bill draft, taking the following action:

Public Member Dykstra moved, seconded by Public Member Hejtmanek, to recommend LRB-0368/2. The committee members approved the motion by a roll call vote of Ayes, 8 (Reps. Kulp and Rohrkaste; Sen. Tiffany; and Public Members Dressel, Dykstra, Hejtmanek, Malone, and Warren); Noes, 2 (Reps. Schachtner and Stuck); and Absent, 1 (Public Member Weber).

The committee discussed the following recommendations that were drafted in preparation for the October 23, 2018 meeting. There were no changes to the recommendations before the December 4, 2018 meeting. After a brief discussion of the recommendations, committee members moved to approve all three recommendations, as follows:

Rep. Rohrkaste moved, seconded by Public Member Hejtmanek, to approve the following recommendations. The committee approved the recommendations unanimously.

Recommendation — Lifetime Licensure

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider the repercussions of the lifetime educator license created in the 2017-19 Biennial Budget Act and its impact on teacher effectiveness. Such consideration should include options to ensure that all licensed teachers are required to have ongoing professional development.

Recommendation — Alternative Licensure

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider options to ensure that all applicants for an educator license must fulfill requirements to complete student teaching, obtain a passing score on the FoRT test, and other requirements demonstrating that the applicant is highly qualified. Such consideration should include reviewing the effectiveness of alternative licensure pathways that have fewer requirements.

Recommendation — Grade Ranges for Educator Licenses

The Study Committee on the Identification and Management of Dyslexia recommends that the Legislature consider the effectiveness of broadened grade ranges for educator licenses issued under current ch. PI 34, Wis. Adm. Code. Such consideration should include examining the repercussions of K-9 and 4-12 licensing bands on sufficient teacher preparation and student outcomes.

PART III

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTRODUCTION BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

LRB-0368/2, RELATING TO EMPLOYING A DYSLEXIA SPECIALIST AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION

Background

At least eight states have created a position for a dyslexia specialist at the state or school district level in statute or code.¹ The positions may be housed in the state department of education (Maine and Minnesota), regional education service centers (Texas), or within local school boards (Virginia). Duties of a dyslexia specialist include:

- Assisting the department of education with general education interventions required by the department's special education rules (Maine).
- Providing technical assistance for dyslexia and related disorders and serving as the primary source of information and support for schools in addressing the needs of students with dyslexia and related disorders (Minnesota).
- Increasing professional awareness and instructional competencies to meet the educational needs of students with dyslexia or associated risk characteristics (Minnesota).
- Providing school districts with support and resources that are necessary to assist students with dyslexia and the families of students with dyslexia (Texas).
- Advising on dyslexia and related disorders, including appropriate interventions, accommodations, and teaching techniques (Virginia).

While some states leave the requirements for the position to the state department of education, others require certain qualifications by statute or code. Qualifications for a dyslexia specialist may include:

- A background in reading and language difficulties, including dyslexia, and in language and literacy (Maine).
- Certification as a dyslexia therapist, licensed psychologist, licensed speech-language pathologist, or dyslexia training specialist with a minimum of three years of field experience and certain training requirements (Minnesota).

¹ Statistics provided by Education Commission of the States.

- Licensure as a dyslexia therapist under state statute (Texas).
- Licensure as a reading specialist with a working knowledge of techniques to help students on the continuum of skills with dyslexia, dyslexia characteristics, the basic foundation of the keys to reading, and appropriate interventions (Virginia).

Description

At its September 18, 2018, meeting, the committee discussed legislation creating a dyslexia specialist position in DPI and instructed the Legislative Council to have the bill drafted. The committee decided to include detailed qualification requirements for the position, noting that an individual with specialized training in dyslexia concerns would be best prepared to assist with the remediation of dyslexia and related conditions.

The bill draft requires DPI to hire a dyslexia specialist beginning in the 2019-20 school year and provides \$95,000 per year to fund this position. The dyslexia specialist's duties are to: (1) provide schools with information, technical assistance, and support related to dyslexia and related conditions; (2) provide schools with information, technical assistance, and support related to addressing the needs of pupils with dyslexia and related conditions; (3) increase professional awareness in schools, and instructional competencies of teachers, to meet the educational needs of pupils with dyslexia and related conditions or identified with risk characteristics associated with dyslexia and related conditions; and (4) develop implementation guidance and make recommendations to the state superintendent of public instruction for comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction practices and strategies to be used to assist regular education teachers and special education teachers to recognize educational needs of and improve literacy outcomes for pupils with dyslexia and related conditions or identified with risk characteristics associated with dyslexia and related conditions, including recommendations related to increasing the availability of online professional development programs and materials.

LRB-0383/3, RELATING TO DEVELOPING A GUIDEBOOK RELATED TO DYSLEXIA AND RELATED CONDITIONS

Background

At least 17 states have resource guides specific to dyslexia. Of the 17, 11 states require the guide by state statute or administrative code. State policy may or may not prescribe an intended audience for whom a guidebook should be published and the composition of the group responsible for creating the guide.²

At the August 29, 2018 meeting, the committee heard from experts from the Minnesota Department of Education regarding the creation of the guidebook, *Navigating the School System When a Child is Struggling with Reading or Dyslexia*. The Minnesota Department of Education collaborated with experts, advocates, administrators, educators, and parents to create a guidebook to support parents and teachers of students with dyslexia in navigating the school

² Statistics provided by Education Commission of the States (ECS).

system. The publication was developed using a question and answer format, which was guided by questions that the group of experts most frequently received from parents and educators. The questions answered in the guidebook include:

- What does dyslexia or a struggling reader look like?
- What services and supports are available through the school and community, and how can we get access to those services?
- What can I do when services are not offered within the school?
- What can I do when interventions or special education supports are not working?

Other state departments of education have created similar guidebooks, including Arizona, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Texas. The guidebooks vary somewhat in terms of their audience. For example, the New Hampshire guidebook serves as a resource guide for teachers as well as a compliance guide for teachers and school administrators in carrying out the state's dyslexia policy. Minnesota's guidebook serves primarily as a resource guide for parents and teachers.

Description

Testimony before the committee indicated that parents, teachers, and administrators assisting students with dyslexia and related conditions may have difficulty finding information and resources related to dyslexia and related conditions. At its second meeting, the committee discussed legislation relating to the creation of a guidebook in Wisconsin and instructed the Legislative Council to have this bill drafted.

This bill draft requires DPI to develop a guidebook for parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators regarding dyslexia and related conditions. To develop the guidebook, the state superintendent of public instruction must establish an advisory committee, whose membership shall be determined in consultation with IDA, and WSRA. Representatives from IDA and WSRA also serve as cochairpersons on the advisory committee.

The advisory committee must submit to DPI a draft guidebook containing at least all of the following information: (1) guidelines on screening processes and tools available to identify dyslexia and related conditions; (2) a description of interventions and instructional strategies that have been shown to improve academic performance of pupils with dyslexia and related conditions; and (3) a description of resources and services related to dyslexia and related conditions that are available to pupils with dyslexia and related conditions, parents and guardians of such pupils, and educators.

The advisory committee must submit its draft guidebook to DPI within one year of appointment of all members of the advisory committee. DPI must publish the final guidebook within three months after it receives the draft guidebook from the advisory committee. Any school board that maintains an internet site must include a link to the guidebook on its internet site. Finally, DPI must review the guidebook once every three years, in consultation with IDA and WSRA.

STUDY COMMITTEE VOTES

On December 4, 2018, the study committee voted to recommend the following bill drafts and recommendations to the Joint Legislative Council for introduction in the 2019-2020 session of the Legislature. The votes on the bill drafts and recommendations were as follows:

- LRB-0368/2, relating to employing a dyslexia specialist at the Department of Public Instruction and making an appropriation, was approved by a vote of Ayes, 8 (Reps. Kulp and Rohrkaste; Sen. Tiffany; and Public Members Dressel, Dykstra, Hejtmanek, Malone and Warren); Noes, 2 (Sen. Schachtner and Rep. Stuck); and Absent, 1 (Public Member Weber).
- LRB-0383/3, relating to developing a guidebook related to reading difficulties and dyslexia, was approved by a vote of Ayes, 10 (Reps. Kulp, Rohrkaste, and Stuck; Sens. Tiffany and Schachtner; and Public Members Dressel, Dykstra, Hejtmanek, Malone and Warren); Noes, 0; and Absent, 1 (Public Member Weber).
- Three recommendations relating to lifetime licensure, alternative licensure, and grade ranges for educator licenses, were approved by a vote of Ayes, 10 (Reps. Kulp, Rohrkaste, and Stuck; Sens. Tiffany and Schachtner; and Public Members Dressel, Dykstra, Hejtmanek, Malone and Warren); Noes, 0; and Absent, 1 (Public Member Weber).

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

[s. 13.81, Stats.]

| <u>SENATE MEMBERS</u> | <u>ASSEMBLY MEMBERS</u> |
|---|--|
| Roger Roth, Co-Chair Senate President Appleton | Robert Brooks, Co-Chair Assistant Majority Leader Saukville |
| Alberta Darling JFC Co-Chair River Hills | Tyler August Speaker Pro Tempore Lake Geneva |
| Scott Fitzgerald Majority Leader Juneau | Joan Ballweg Markesan |
| Howard Marklein President Pro Tempore Spring Green | Peter Barca Kenosha |
| Mark Miller Monona | Dianne Hesselbein Assistant Minority Leader Middleton |
| Terry Moulton Chippewa Falls | Gordon Hintz Minority Leader Oshkosh |
| Jerry Petrowski Marathon | John Nygren JFC Co-Chair Marinette |
| Fred A. Risser Madison | John Spiros Marshfield |
| Jennifer Shilling Minority Leader La Crosse | Jim Steineke Majority Leader Kaukauna |
| Lena Taylor JFC Ranking Minority Member Milwaukee | Chris Taylor JFC Ranking Minority Member Madison |
| Van Wanggaard Racine | Robin Vos Speaker Rochester |

This 22-member committee consists of the majority and minority party leadership of both houses of the Legislature, the co-chairs and ranking minority members of the Joint Committee on Finance, and 5 Senators and 5 Representatives appointed as are members of standing committees.

STUDY COMMITTEE ON IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DYSLEXIA

Chair Bob Kulp, Representative
C4098 Pauline Ln.
Stratford, WI 54484

Vice Chair Patty Schachtner, Senator
1064 210th Ave.
Somerset, WI 54025

Nancy Dressel, Instructional Coach/Dyslexic/Parent
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985 198th Ave.
Somerset, WI 54025

Dr. Steven Dykstra, Psychologist
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Children's Dyslexia Center-Madison
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Amanda Stuck, Representative
1404 N. Harriman St.
Appleton, WI 54911

Tom Tiffany, Senator
4973 Willow Dam Rd.
Hazelhurst, WI 54531

Dr. Brenda Warren, Pediatrician
School Board President, Green Bay Area School
District
1685 MacArthur St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

Michael Weber, Superintendent
Port Washington-Saukville School District
100 West Monroe St.
Port Washington, WI 53074

STUDY ASSIGNMENT: The study committee is directed to review current screening, identification, school intervention, and treatment protocols for dyslexia in K-12 schools; to examine the effects of current state statutes and regulations on literacy outcomes for students with dyslexia; and to evaluate the effects of dyslexia on literacy outcomes in the state. The committee shall study recent research on evidence-based instructional techniques for students with dyslexia; determine the components and costs of successful dyslexia education practices and laws in other states; and identify institutional obstacles to academic attainment for these students. The committee shall consider legislation to implement screening for characteristics of dyslexia in early grades; to ensure that reading instruction and intervention practices incorporate relevant research findings from the University of Wisconsin; to improve the partnership between parents, educators, counselors, and others on early identification and effective interventions for dyslexic learners; and to enhance statewide access to updated resources and training on dyslexic education.

11 MEMBERS: 3 Representatives; 2 Senators; and 6 Public Members.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF: Jessica Ozalp, Senior Staff Attorney; Julia Norsetter, Staff Attorney; and Tracey Young, Support Staff.

COMMITTEE MATERIALS LIST

[Copies of documents are available at www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lc]

July 9, 2018 Meeting

- LC Staff Memorandum, *Wisconsin Law and Other States' Laws Relating to Dyslexia*, (July 2, 2018).
- Attachment, IM-2012-07, *Education Reform Legislation: 2011 Wisconsin Act 166*, (April 16, 2012).
- Attachment, U.S. Department of Education guidance letter addressing dyslexia and the category of “specific learning disability” (October 23, 2015).
- Presentation, Kurt Eley, Director of Student Services, Waunakee Community School District.
- Presentation, Dr. Julie Gocey, Pediatrician, UW School of Medicine and Public Health; and Dr. Danile Gustafson, Clinical Neuro-Psychologist, SSM Health Care.
- Presentation, Debra Zarling, Literacy Coordinator, Oshkosh Area School District.

August 29, 2018 Meeting

- Handout, *Development of Dyslexia Informational Paper: A Process Approach*, distributed by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Presentation, by Donna Scanlon, Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning.
- Presentation, Barbara Felix, Decoding Dyslexia.
- Presentation, by Tom Keily and Sara Shelton, Education Commission of the States.
- Presentation, Dee Pettack, Legislative Liaison and Barb Novak, Literacy Consultant, Department of Public Instruction.
- Handout, *Response to Information Request -- Overview of State Dyslexia Policies*, Education Commission of the States (September 7, 2018)
- Handout, *Response to Information Request -- Third-Grade Reading Policies*, Education Commission of the States (September 7, 2018)

September 18, 2018

- LC Staff Memorandum, *Topics for Committee Discussion* (September 11, 2018)

- Presentation, by Dr. Colleen Pennell, Assistant Professor of Literacy/Elementary Reading, Carroll University.

October 23, 2018

- LRB-0368/P1, relating to employing a dyslexia specialist at the Department of Public Instruction and making an appropriation.
- LRB-0383/P3, relating to developing a guidebook related to reading difficulties and dyslexia.
- Recommendation - Alternative Licensure.
- Recommendation - Lifetime Licensure.
- Recommendation - Grade Ranges for Educator Licenses.

December 4, 2018

- LRB-0368/2, relating to employing a dyslexia specialist at the Department of Public Instruction and making an appropriation.
- LRB-0383/2, relating to developing a guidebook related to dyslexia and related conditions.
- Recommendation - Alternative Licensure.
- Recommendation - Lifetime Licensure.
- Recommendation - Grade Ranges for Educator Licenses.