



DYSLEXIA DC

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for [DC Law 23-191](#)
Addressing Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties
*Amendment Act of 2020***

Updated June 2023

Table of Contents

	Page
Background Information	3
Contact Information	3
Dyslexia and Reading Difficulties Awareness Training	4
Universal Screening	5
Implementation Logistics	6
Compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	8

BACKGROUND

Effective March 16, 2021, [DC Law 23-191 Addressing Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties Amendment Act of 2020](#) (“the Act”) established specific requirements for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and local education agencies (LEAs) to address the needs of students with reading difficulties. This legislation specifically requires, among other things, Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness training for educators, an approved list of screening implements, universal screening for reading difficulties in kindergarten through grade 2 and publicly available compliance documentation. This FAQ document focuses specifically on these elements of the Act.

OSSE has made significant progress in the initial requirements of this legislation, including the release of the awareness module. Additional work on the required technical assistance, training and guidance required for LEAs to successfully implement the Act has also been conducted in partnership with local advocacy organizations and LEA leaders.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Additional information about the legislation and guidance from OSSE can be found on the Dyslexia DC webpage: osse.dc.gov/page/Dyslexia

For questions, please contact Celina Ketelsen at Celina.Ketelsen@dc.gov.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dyslexia and Reading Difficulties Awareness Training

1. How do educators access the Dyslexia and other reading difficulties awareness module?

OSSE has created a Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness module. Educators can access the Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness module, as well as other professional development opportunities, via the [OSSE Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#). The OSSE LMS organizes eLearning content in one centralized location, provides unlimited access to professional learning and tracks and maintains progress for each user.

Please review the instructions to access the OSSE LMS [here](#). All District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and DC public charter school educators have access to the LMS using the email associated with the LEA by which they are currently employed.

2. The legislation states that all educators must complete awareness training. What is OSSE's definition of all educators?

Consistent with the Act, "educator" is defined as "teacher, school administrator, guidance counselor, social worker, or an individual who works with students with special needs in an academic capacity". OSSE further defines an **educator as a professional directly involved in the regular creation of learning environments that foster the development of students.**

- **INCLUDE** Teachers, Paraprofessionals, School Administrators, Instructional Specialists, Instructional Coordinators and Supervisors, Librarians/Media Specialists, School Counselors/Directors, Special Education Support Staff: Audiologists, Psychologists, Physical Education Teachers, Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, Speech-language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers
- **EXCLUDE** LEA Administrators, LEA Administrative Support Staff, School Administrative Support Staff, Student Support Staff

3. How will LEAs know whether educators have successfully completed the required Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness training?

All educators receive a certificate of completion upon completing the required Dyslexia and reading difficulties modules training. OSSE recommends that LEAs require educators to provide this certificate of completion by a specific date as determined by the LEA, such as Oct. 1, to confirm that educators have completed this training. Per the legislation [see DC Code §38-2581.06], this completion data must be submitted by all LEAs by Oct. 31 of each year. OSSE will share completion data with LEAs upon request.

4. Many LEAs and schools have developed and are implementing Dyslexia and reading difficulties training. Can an LEA or a school substitute its training for OSSE's?

The Act requires all educators employed by DC LEAs to take OSSE's awareness training. Any LEA may continue to use its own training, but **all educators** must complete OSSE's Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness module.

5. Is the Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness module an annual requirement?

Yes, all DC educators are required to complete Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness training on an annual basis.

Universal Screening

1. How will OSSE assist educators in preparing to screen for reading difficulties?

OSSE will ensure educators are prepared to screen for reading difficulties by using two levers: (1) professional development and (2) guidance for LEAs. OSSE has created a Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness module that is accessible to all DC educators via the OSSE LMS. This module provides critical information for educators regarding the use of universal screeners. OSSE is also developing additional professional development modules to support educators, including a specific course on universal Screeners.

Beyond professional development, OSSE is offering [specific guidance](#) to support the roll-out of universal screening for grade K-2 students. OSSE has created a list of [approved screeners](#) to support LEAs with the selection of assessments for required screening in the 2023-24 school year and beyond. Through this guidance, OSSE is providing educators with the information they need to make assessment decisions and providing framing for consideration regarding the universal screener process.

2. Many LEAs and schools currently already use an assessment for phonological awareness. Must an LEA or school abandon that assessment for one that includes all factors required in the legislation?

No. However, selected screening tools must include all the factors listed in the legislation: phonological awareness, rapid naming skills, correspondence between sounds and letters and decoding. OSSE has provided LEAs with a list of [approved screeners](#).

3. Is my LEA required to use a screener on the list?

No. However, OSSE strongly encourages LEAs to select a screener on the list provided by OSSE. Nevertheless, it is not required that LEAs select a screener from the list. Should an LEA select a screener that is not included in the list, the LEA must be able to provide a written justification for the selection of another screener upon request.

4. Will OSSE provide funding to purchase universal screeners and/or curriculum?

No. Each LEA is responsible for the procurement of universal screeners and/or curriculum.

5. Will OSSE provide additional guidance and corresponding professional development for identifying reading difficulties in English Learner (EL) students?

Yes, additional guidance is forthcoming and will be located on the [Dyslexia landing page](#). Corresponding professional development will be available on the [OSSE LMS](#).

Implementation Logistics

1. When and where will synchronous or in-person professional development (PD) occur? Will OSSE come to an LEA or a school to provide this PD? Can an LEA or school provide its own PD without OSSE?

To meet the schedule constraints of educators, OSSE is offering the Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness modules and forthcoming professional development courses on reading difficulties through the [OSSE LMS](#). These asynchronous professional development opportunities allow teachers to complete PD at times that are most convenient. Any LEA may provide additional professional learning on this topic that is separate from OSSE. However, all DC educators are required to complete OSSE's Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness training.

2. What is the timeline for implementation?

Please see the following summary of the timeline for implementation:

- **Ongoing:** LEAs review available information, including the OSSE-approved list, to select a screener to be used in kindergarten through grade 2 for all students beginning the 2023-24 school year and each year thereafter.
- **On or Before First Day of School for the 2023-2024 School Year:** All DC educators must complete Dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness training via the [OSSE LMS](#).
- **2023-24 School Year:** All students in kindergarten through grade 2 are screened for Dyslexia and other reading difficulties. Schools provide information to families about their student's results. Remediation and intervention are provided for students who are identified through the screening process.
- **Annual compliance process:**
 - **Oct 31:** DCPS submits compliance letter to OSSE. All public charter LEAs submit compliance letters to PCSB.
 - **Within 10 business days of Oct. 31:** OSSE makes all DCPS compliance letters publicly available.
 - **Nov. 15:** PCSB submits all letters to OSSE.
 - **Within 10 business days of Nov. 15:** OSSE makes all public charter school compliance letters publicly available.

3. Realistically, when does OSSE expect LEAs to complete all these requirements? Will there be guidance for training educators?

LEAs must complete the requirements by the start of the 2023-24 school year. OSSE provides technical assistance and guidance to support the implementation of this requirement. OSSE recognizes that LEAs have many competing priorities; however, implementation of this legislation is critical to meeting the needs of our youngest readers.

OSSE has provided guidance on screeners, as well as awareness training on Dyslexia and other reading difficulties. In terms of student scheduling, LEAs/schools will have full responsibility in developing these schedules and to ensure that screening occurs by the required deadline each school year.

4. How will LEAs be held accountable for the requirements of the legislation?

LEAs will be required to submit compliance documentation to demonstrate that they have met the requirements of the legislation. This documentation will be submitted in the form of a letter.

DCPS will be required to submit this compliance letter to OSSE by **Oct. 31**. Within **10 business days of Oct. 31**, OSSE will make all DCPS compliance letters publicly available. All public charter LEAs will submit a letter to PCSB by **Oct. 31**. PCSB will then transmit all LEA letters to OSSE by **Nov. 15**. Within **10 business days of Nov. 15** each year, OSSE will make **all LEA letters publicly available**. This transparency will be the primary accountability framework for this legislation. The LEA letters will be available via [OSSE's Dyslexia landing page](#).

5. The legislation notes that an “array of supports” will be provided – what types of supports are available beyond the required awareness training?

On the OSSE LMS, **all educators** are required to complete the Dyslexia and reading difficulties modules training. Additionally, OSSE will make available additional professional development training about recognizing students with reading difficulties, screening students for reading difficulties and implementing instruction in the general education classroom which meets the needs of students with reading difficulties. Please consider subscribing to the monthly OSSE [Teaching and Learning Professional Development Bulletin](#) as all upcoming professional development opportunities will be shared via that newsletter.

OSSE has also created [Universal Screener Guidance](#) and a list of [OSSE Approved Universal Screeners](#) to support LEAs with the implementation of this legislation.

6. How much time do schools need to plan for moving forward to cover this annual requirement?

Every DC educator should plan to dedicate **2-3 hours** on an annual basis to complete Dyslexia and reading difficulties modules training. Additional professional learning time could be dedicated to providing professional development and on-the-job training regarding the use of screeners. Each LEA and school will need to create an appropriate time in the daily instructional schedule to ensure that all K-2 students are screened for Dyslexia/reading difficulties. LEAs and schools will also need to budget time for analyzing screener data, communicating with families about the data and providing instructional remediation and/or intervention to all students. These times will vary by school.

Compliance with IDEA

- 1. Does screening for Dyslexia and the application of remediation and intervention instruction eliminate the need for compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?**

No. The Act does not alleviate an LEA from its obligations under the IDEA. See D.C. Code § 38-2581.05. If an LEA suspects that a child may be a child with a disability, including but not limited to a specific learning disability, the LEA should refer the child for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and related services. The LEA must obtain parent consent before evaluation of the child.

- 2. Does screening for Dyslexia and the application of remediation and intervention instruction eliminate the need for compliance with the IDEA?**

No. The Act does not alleviate an LEA from its obligations under the IDEA. See D.C. Code § 38-2581.05. If an LEA suspects that a child may be a child with a disability, including but not limited to a specific learning disability, the LEA should obtain parent consent before evaluation of the child.