

## What is Dyslexia?

The definition of dyslexia is included in Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.01. As stated in statute, "dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent recognition of words 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. Students who have a dyslexia diagnosis must meet the state and federal eligibility criteria in order to qualify for special education services.

## Current Minnesota Statutes Related to Dyslexia

School districts are required to identify students who are not reading at grade level by the end of kindergarten, first and second grade and report their efforts to screen and identify students with dyslexia per Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.12. Identified students are to be provided with alternative instruction that is multisensory, systematic, sequential, cumulative and explicit per Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.56. The MDE dyslexia team is currently focusing on supporting school district efforts to screen and identify students with characteristics of dyslexia and develop teacher capacity to provide evidence-based reading instruction. The dyslexia team consists of Amy Schulting (Dyslexia Specialist), Vicki Weinberg (Specific Learning Disabilities Specialist) and Jenny Wazlawik (Literacy Specialist).

- Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.01: Defines dyslexia.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.12: Reading proficiently no later than the end of grade 3.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.122: Dyslexia specialist.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.56: Alternate instruction required before assessment referral.

## Further Information for Educators and Parents

Please see the [MDE Reading Well by Third Grade webpage](#) for further information including:

- MDE technical guidance documents for schools.
- Professional developmental opportunities for teachers.
- Support and advocacy resources for parents.
- Coming soon: dyslexia screening link.

### Staff Contact:

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