



****The Need for Dyslexia Legislation in Illinois****

WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

Dyslexia is a **language-based learning disability**, neurobiological in nature, characterized by an impairment in the ability to recognize and match auditory sounds with written letters and words and/or to do so automatically.

Functional MRI research shows that **readers with dyslexia rely on different parts of their brain** to read versus readers without dyslexia, **making reading much slower, more laborious, and less fluent and efficient**, and negatively impacting comprehension.

FACTS RELATED TO DYSLEXIA & TO ILLINOIS' READING FAILURE

- Dyslexia affects up to 20% of the population.
- Dyslexia represents the most prevalent of all known learning disabilities, comprising 80-90% of those with learning disabilities.
- Per the 2019 Illinois Report Card, 66% of Illinois eighth graders are not reading at a proficient level.
- Only 15% of Black students and 25% of Hispanic/Latino students met or exceeded reading proficiency standards in eighth grade, compared to 45% of White students.
- Only 21% of low-income students were proficient in reading.
- Illinois' poor reading scores—which have remained stagnant for over 17 years—demonstrate that children with dyslexia are not the only children in Illinois schools who are struggling to learn to read under current instructional methods.
- Reading interventions based on structured literacy are shown to be effective for children with dyslexia, and they are also effective for children without dyslexia.
- From birth to age 8 is a critical period for literacy development in children, making it essential to identify the instructional needs of struggling readers as early as possible through early screening.
- Illinois is falling far behind—over 20 states already have dyslexia legislation, including Ohio, Indiana, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, and Mississippi.
- Studies have shown that nearly 48% of prison inmates show characteristics of dyslexia.
- Annually, states spend far more money on prisons than education, with spending on prisons increasing at a rate 3 times that of spending on education.
- Because income is strongly related to literacy, improving adult literacy would have enormous economic benefits. The average annual income of adults who read at a sixth grade level is \$63,000, which is significantly higher than adults who read at a third to fifth grade level who earn \$48,000 on average, and almost twice as much as adults at the lowest levels of literacy who earn just \$34,000 on average.

ILLINOIS MUST ACT NOW TO PASS HB4202 - early screening & effective reading intervention

- The students of Illinois have a right to learn to read in school.
- The negative consequences for children who fail to learn to read are well-documented & profound:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pervasive academic difficulties - higher high school dropout rates - lower lifetime earning; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - higher unemployment - mental health challenges - disproportionate imprisonment rates
--	--

- Failing to meet the needs of Illinois students with dyslexia is feeding the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Dyslexia Legislation must include **early screening & effective reading intervention** to address the inequity in reading instruction throughout Illinois—the children of Illinois can wait no longer!

“The link between academic failure and delinquency, violence, and crime is welded to reading failure.” - Michael Brunner-National Institute of Justice