

# Report of the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia to the 2021 Kansas Legislature

**CHAIRPERSON:** Jim Porter

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON:** Representative Brenda Dietrich

**OTHER MEMBERS:** Senators Bruce Givens and Ty Masterson

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS:** Jennifer Bettles, Sarah Brinkley, Jaime Callaghan, Tally Fleming, Dr. David Hurford, Jennifer Knight, Alisa Matteoni, Christina Middleton, Jeanine Phillips, Jeri Powers, Angie Schreiber, and Sonja Watkins

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:** Mike Burgess, Laura Jurgensen, and Lori McMillan

## **CHARGE**

Pursuant to 2018 Sub. for HB 2602 (KSA 72-8193), the Task Force shall advise and make recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, and the State Board of Education regarding matters concerning the use of evidence-based practices for students with dyslexia. Specifically, the bill provides the Task Force's recommendations and resource materials shall:

- Evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the previous recommendations of the Task Force.

# Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia

## REPORT

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia restates the previous recommendations of the Task Force and specifically recommends the creation of a statewide dyslexia coordinator within the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE).

**Proposed Legislation:** The Task Force requests legislation to appropriate sufficient additional funds to the KSDE to hire a statewide dyslexia coordinator.

### BACKGROUND

The Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia (Task Force) was created by 2018 Sub. for HB 2602, codified at KSA 72-8193, to advise and make recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, and State Board of Education (KSBE) on or before January 30, 2019, regarding matters concerning the use of evidence-based practices for students with dyslexia.

The Task Force initially reported to the Governor, Legislature, and KSBE in January 2019.

The Task Force was extended through fiscal year 2022 by 2019 House Sub. for SB 16, authorizing the Task Force to meet no more than once per year in calendar years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

### COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The Task Force met November 9, 2020. The Task Force received updates on the progress of the implementation of recommendations made at previous meetings. To begin the meeting, a Task Force member and representative of Pittsburg State University provided a general review of the Task Force's charge, discussions and recommendations from previous meetings, and progress of such recommendations.

### Teacher Preparation

The Task Force received testimony on updates of the implementation of previous recommendations related to the training of college of education professors on the Science of Reading.

#### *State Board of Regents Universities*

Representatives of Pittsburg State University provided testimony to the Task Force on the implementation of Science of Reading training for teachers at State Board of Regents (Regents) public institutions.

In addition to a general review, the first representative provided information on the progress of colleges and universities to implement the training. He noted such progress has been slowed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which affected every institution in Kansas.

Another representative provided information compiled from Regents institutions, focusing on three areas: professional development and scholarship for educators; curricular enhancements; and standards, new courses, and revised programs of study.

#### *Private Universities*

A conferee provided testimony to the Task Force on behalf of the Kansas Association of Private Colleges of Teachers of Education (KAPCOTE). The conferee stated KAPCOTE

member schools are preparing to implement education and teacher standards previously recommended by the Task Force after the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) formally adopts such standards.

## **Professional Development**

### ***Educational Service Centers***

Representatives of Keystone Learning Services, Greenbush Education Service Center, and Southwest Plains Regional Service Center provided testimony to the Task Force on the progress of educational service centers in supporting the implementation of Task Force recommendations.

The educational service center representatives described professional development opportunities available for teachers and administrators, including the six hours of training required by KSDE and specific training, such as that for Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS). The representatives noted thousands of teachers need to receive the initial six hours of training, and such training provided by KSDE was recorded and organized in modules for teachers to view at their convenience.

## **Dyslexia Handbook**

### ***KSDE***

A representative of KSDE provided updates on KSDE's implementation of standards modified by the KSBE and of teacher education and licensure requirements, as previously recommended by the Task Force. The representative also provided an update on the implementation of screening requirements to identify struggling readers or students with dyslexia, the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation model, evidence-based reading instruction, and the dyslexia coordinator position within KSDE.

The representative distributed the KSDE Dyslexia Handbook created as a result of a previous Task Force recommendation.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Task Force restates its previous recommendation for a statewide dyslexia coordinator position to be created within KSDE and the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to fill the position.