MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2018

By: Representative Byrd

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1402

AN ACT TO CREATE "THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATOR DYSLEXIA AWARENESS ACT OF 2018"; TO AMEND SECTION 37-173-21, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE, BEGINNING IN THE 2018-2019 ACADEMIC YEAR, EACH INDIVIDUAL ENROLLED IN A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE COURSE OF STUDY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION AND THOSE PURSUING A DEGREE IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AT A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION TO COMPLETE A MINIMUM OF FIFTEEN CLASS HOURS OF DYSLEXIA EDUCATION BEFORE GRADUATION WITH A MINIMUM GRADE OF EIGHTY PERCENT; TO REQUIRE ALL CANDIDATES APPLYING FOR LICENSURE AS A MISSISSIPPI LICENSED EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY EDUCATOR, SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR, OR THOSE APPLYING FOR AA ADMINISTRATOR LICENSURE TO SHOW PROOF OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF AN APPROVED DYSLEXIA EDUCATION COURSE WITH A MINIMUM GRADE OF EIGHTY PERCENT FROM AND AFTER JULY 1, 2019; TO EXEMPT CERTAIN SCHOOL PERSONNEL FROM THE DYSLEXIA EDUCATION REQUIREMENT AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OR SPECIAL PURPOSE SCHOOL; TO AUTHORIZE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OR SPECIAL PURPOSE SCHOOL EMPLOYING SUCH PERSONS TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY DYSLEXIA EDUCATION TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO APPROPRIATE SCHOOL PERSONNEL THROUGH THE USE OF A MISSISSIPPI AA LICENSED DYSLEXIA THERAPIST SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DYSLEXIA EDUCATION COURSE SHALL BE DESIGNED AS FIFTEEN-CLASS-HOUR UNIT COURSES THAT ADHERE TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS OF READING PROVED BY THE INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION; TO PRESCRIBE THE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL TO BE INCLUDED IN THE COURSE SHALL FOLLOW THE STANDARDS ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION'S PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMITTEE; TO AMEND SECTION 37-159-51, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY TO THE PRECEDING PROVISIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:
SECTION 1. This act shall be known, and may be cited as "The Mississippi Educator Dyslexia Awareness Act of 2018."

SECTION 2. Section 37-173-21, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-173-21. (1) The State Board of Education in conjunction with each nonpublic school and local school board operating under the provisions of this chapter, may:

(a) Extend the school day or length of the scholastic year;
(b) Develop and establish a curriculum that is consistent with the Mississippi Curriculum Framework in the subject areas of mathematics, social studies, science, music, art and physical education; and
(c) Select, purchase and use textbooks, literature and other instructional materials that would improve educational attainment by students in the school, subject to the approval of the board.

(2) The qualified personnel to facilitate the educational process of learning and instruction for children with dyslexia who attend the schools shall consist of the following:
(a) An administrator or director with additional training in the characteristics of dyslexia;
(b) A dyslexia therapist licensed by the department in dyslexia therapy;
(c) Dyslexia therapists in training participating in a department approved dyslexia therapy graduate internship program; and

(d) Licensed elementary, secondary or special education teachers under the supervision of a state department licensed dyslexia therapist.

(3) (a) Beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year, each individual enrolled in a postsecondary degree course of study in early childhood, elementary or secondary education, special education and school administration at a public or private postsecondary institution shall be required to complete a minimum of fifteen (15) class hours of dyslexia education before graduation with a minimum grade of eighty percent (80%) in the course of instruction. From and after July 1, 2019, all candidates applying to the department for licensure as a Mississippi licensed early childhood, elementary or secondary educator, special education instructor and those applying for an AA administrator licensure must show proof of successful completion of an accredited dyslexia education course with a minimum grade of eighty percent (80%).

(b) Persons employed with a public school district or special purpose school as an educator or administrator on July 1, 2015, shall be exempt from the requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection; however, the school district or special purpose school employing such persons is authorized to provide the
necessary dyslexia education training as a component of staff
in-service training and professional development to appropriate
school personnel through the use of a Mississippi AA licensed
dyslexia therapist, subject to the availability of funds provided
for such training.

(4) (a) The dyslexia education courses required under
subsection (3) of this section shall be designed as
fifteen-class-hour unit courses that adhere to the Knowledge and
Practice Standards for Teacher of Reading approved by the
International Dyslexia Association, and shall be instructed by a
dyslexia therapist who holds a license in dyslexia therapy and a
national certification as a Certified Academic Language Therapist
(CALT).

(b) The dyslexia education courses shall follow the
standards adopted by the Professional Standards and Practices
Committee of the International Dyslexia Association, as approved
and adopted in 2010, and may be taught by a qualified instructor
under paragraph (a) of this subsection or through online course
work.

(c) The dyslexia education courses required to be
offered at each public and private postsecondary institution shall
include International Dyslexia Association Level 1 Standards A, B,
and C as provided in Section I of the Knowledge and Practice
Standards, as follows:
Standard A: Foundation Concepts about Oral and Written Learning shall enable the degree course student to:

1. Understand and explain the language processing requirements of proficient reading and writing through phonological processing (speech sound), orthographic processing (print), semantic processing (meaning), syntactic processing (sentence level) and discourse processing (connected text level) by explaining the domains of language and their importance to proficient reading and writing.

2. Understand and explain other aspects of cognition and behavior that affect reading and writing through attention, executive function, memory, processing speed and graphomotor control by assisting the degree course student to recognize that reading difficulties coexist with other cognitive and behavioral problems.

3. Define and identify environmental, cultural and social factors that contribute to literacy development, including the language spoken at home, language and literacy experiences and cultural values by identifying major research findings regarding the contribution of environmental factors to literacy outcomes.

4. Know and identify phases in the typical developmental progression of oral language (semantic, syntactic and pragmatic), phonological skill, printed word recognition, spelling, reading fluency, reading comprehension and written
expression by matching examples of student responses and learning
behavior to phases in language and literacy development.

5. Understand and explain the known causal
relationships among phonological skill, phonic decoding, spelling,
accurate and automatic word recognition, text reading fluency,
background knowledge, verbal reasoning skill, vocabulary, reading
comprehension and writing by explaining how a weakness in each
component skill of oral language, reading and writing may affect
other related skills and processes across time.

6. Know and explain how the relationships
among the major components of literacy development change with
reading development, such as changes in oral language, including
phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, spelling,
reading and writing fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension
skills and strategies and written expression by identifying the
most salient instructional needs of students who are at different
points of reading and writing development.

7. Know reasonable goals and expectations for
learners at various stages of reading and writing development by
providing degree course students with case study materials that
explain why a student is or is not meeting goals and expectations
in reading or writing for his or her age or grade level.

(ii) Standard B: Knowledge of the Structure of
Language shall enable the degree course student to:
1. Identify, pronounce, classify, and compare the consonant and vowel phonemes of English by identifying similar or contrasting features among phonemes.

2. Understand the broad outline of historical influences on English spelling patterns, especially Anglo-Saxon, Latin (Romance) and Greek by allowing the degree course student to recognize typical words from the historical layers of English.

3. Define grapheme as a functional correspondence unit or representation of a phoneme by accurately mapping graphemes to phonemes in any English word.

4. Recognize and explain common orthographic rules and patterns in English by sorting words by orthographic "choice" pattern, analyzing words by suffix ending patterns and applying suffix ending rules.

5. Know the difference between "high frequency" and "irregular" words by identifying printed words that are the exception to regular patterns and spelling principles, sorting high frequency words into regular and exception words.

6. Identify, explain, and categorize six (6) basic syllable types in English spelling by sorting, pronouncing, and combining regular written syllables, and applying the most productive syllable division principles.

7. Identify and categorize common morphemes in English, including Anglo-Saxon compounds, inflectional suffixes.
and derivational suffixes, Latin-based prefixes, roots and
derivational suffixes and Greek-based combining forms by helping
the degree course student to recognize the most common prefixes,
roots, suffixes and combining forms in English content
words, and analyzing words at both the syllable and morpheme
levels.

8. Understand and identify examples of
meaningful word relationships or semantic organization by matching
or identifying examples of word associations, antonyms, synonyms,
multiple meanings and uses, semantic overlap and semantic feature
analysis.

9. Define and distinguish among phrases,
dependent clauses, and independent clauses in sentence
structure by requiring the degree course student to construct and
deconstruct simple, complex and compound sentences.

10. Identify the parts of speech and the
grammatical role of a word in a sentence by requiring the degree
course student to identify the basic parts of speech and classify
words by their grammatical role in a sentence.

11. Explain the major differences between
narrative and expository discourse by classifying text by genre,
identifying features that are characteristic of each genre, and
identifying graphic organizers that characterize typical
structures.
12. Identify and construct expository paragraphs of varying logical structures, including classification, reason and sequence by identifying main idea sentences, connecting words and topics that fit each type of expository paragraph organization.

13. Identify cohesive devices in text and inferential gaps in the surface language of text by analyzing text for the purpose of identifying the inferences that students must make to comprehend.

(iii) Standard C: Knowledge of Dyslexia and Other Learning Disorders shall enable the degree course student to:

1. Understand the most common intrinsic differences between good and poor readers (i.e., cognitive, neurobiological and linguistic) by requiring the degree course student to recognize scientifically accepted characteristics of individuals with poor word recognition who are overdependent on context to aid word recognition and experience inaccurate nonword reading.

2. Recognize the tenets of the National Institute of Child and Human Development/International Dyslexia Association definition of dyslexia by explaining the reasoning or evidence behind the main points in the definition.

3. Recognize that dyslexia and other reading difficulties exist on a continuum of severity by requiring the degree course student to recognize levels of instructional
intensity, duration and scope appropriate for mild, moderate and severe reading disabilities.

4. Identify the distinguishing characteristics of dyslexia and related reading and learning disabilities, including developmental language comprehension disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, disorders of written expression or dysgraphia, mathematics learning disorder and nonverbal learning disorders by requiring the degree course student to match symptoms of the major subgroups of poor readers as established by research, including those with dyslexia, and identify typical case study profiles of those individuals.

5. Identify how symptoms of reading difficulty may change over time in response to development and instruction by identifying predictable ways that symptoms might change as students move through the grades.

6. Understand federal and state laws that pertain to learning disabilities, especially reading disabilities and dyslexia by explaining the most fundamental provisions of federal and state laws pertaining to the rights of students with disabilities, especially students’ rights to a free, appropriate public education, an individualized educational plan, services in the least restrictive environment and due process.

(5) The Legislature shall designate that a portion of the annual State Department of Education appropriation allocated for providing professional development for dyslexia and other related
disorders shall be used for the purpose of being reallocated to
the state institutions of higher learning for purposes of hiring
experts in dyslexia education and training to provide instruction
of the courses required under this act.

SECTION 3. Section 37-159-51, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
amended as follows:

37-159-51. (1) There is established the Mississippi
Dyslexia Education Scholarship Program for the purpose of
identifying and recruiting qualified university and college
students from the state for schooling in education with a focus on
dyslexia therapy.

(2) The receipt of a scholarship under the program shall be
solely limited to those students who are enrolled in or who have
been accepted for enrollment into a master's degree program of
study for dyslexia therapy at any public or private institution of
higher learning within the State of Mississippi at the time an
application for scholarship is filed with the Board of Trustees of
State Institutions of Higher Learning.

(3) The annual amount of the scholarship award shall be
equal to the total cost for tuition, materials and fees at the
college or university in which the student is enrolled. Awards
made to nonresidents of the state shall not include any amount
assessed by the college or university for out-of-state tuition.

(4) Upon completion of the master's program and licensure
requirements, * * * a scholarship recipient who has not been
previously licensed by the State Department of Education, shall render service as licensed teacher of dyslexia therapy in a public school district in the state, and shall comply with the provisions of Section 37-173-21(3) and (4) as a condition of application for such licensure. Any person who received two (2) annual awards, or who received fewer than two (2) annual awards, or the equivalent of two (2) annual awards, shall render one (1) year's services as a licensed teacher for each year that the person received a scholarship award.

(5) (a) Any person failing to complete a program of study which will enable that person to obtain a master's degree in dyslexia therapy shall become liable immediately to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning for the sum of all Dyslexia Education Scholarship awards made to the person, plus interest accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the person abrogates his or her participation in the program.

(b) Any person failing to complete his or her teaching obligation, as required under subsection (4) of this section, shall become liable immediately to the board for the sum of all scholarship awards made to the person less the corresponding amount of any awards for which service has been rendered, plus interest accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the person discontinues his or her service.

(6) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall prepare and submit a report to the Legislature by
January 1, 2015, outlining in detail the number of participants who have received scholarship funds under the program, the record of service provided by those recipients as they transition out of the degree program into the public school districts of this state, and the projection for expanding the program to include more participants annually as determined by the need for such qualified professionals in the public school setting. Additionally, the report shall include a summary of allocations and expenditures for the administration of the program and the total amount of funds issued to recipients of scholarships from the inception of the program until such time as the report has been prepared and submitted to the Legislature.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2018.