

DYSLEXIA SCREENING IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHING LITERACY

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Senate Bill 567 (S-2) as passed by the Senate
Sponsor: Sen. Jeff Irwin

Analysis available at
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Senate Bill 568 (S-2) as passed by the Senate
Sponsor: Sen. Dayna Polehanki

House Committee: Education
Senate Committee: Education
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SUMMARY:

Senate Bills 567 and 568 would amend the Revised School Code to require a *dyslexia* screening to be part of state-approved reading assessments (SB 567) and to require teacher preparation programs to include instruction on identifying and addressing dyslexia in students (SB 568).

As used in the bill, *dyslexia* would mean both of the following:

- A specific learning disorder that is neurobiological in origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities that 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.
- A specific learning disorder that may include secondary consequences, such as problems in reading comprehension and a reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary.

Senate Bill 567 would add requirements relating to support by the Department of Education (MDE) for public schools' ability to assist students with dyslexia, modify requirements relating to the approval of assessments for measuring students' current reading ability, modify the requirements of literacy coaches, and make other changes reflecting the repeal of the third grade reading retention provisions.¹

The stated purpose of using these assessments is to help students score at a level of proficient or higher on the third grade English Language Arts portion of the state assessment (M-STEP²). These approved assessment systems are different from the M-STEP, Michigan's state standardized assessment, which measures student proficiency in different academic subjects at different grade levels.

Reading assessments

Under the bill, as part of deciding whether to approve an assessment model for districts, MDE would also have to consider the degree of compatibility with other approved statewide assessment measures, to minimize the impact on instructional time, as well as the degree to which the assessment demonstrates classification accuracy for identifying pupils with characteristics of dyslexia or difficulty decoding.

¹ <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2023-SB-0012>

² https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/General/Guide_to_State_Assessments.pdf

MDE has met the requirement in section 1280f to approve three or more valid and reliable screening, formative, and diagnostic reading assessment systems for selection and use by school districts and public school academies (PSAs, also known as charter schools) in accordance with the stated criteria. Diagnostic assessments refer to assessments given before starting a new content area, while formative assessments refer to assessments given during the teaching of that content area. The bill would remove language specifying the types of assessment system that should be approved by MDE and instead simply uses the term “assessment” to refer to the tool that MDE needs to approve for district use.

Literacy coaches

MDE is also required to recommend or develop an early literacy coach model (which the bill would rename as “literacy coach model”) that includes certain features. Senate Bill 567 would add the following required features regarding literacy coaches and the professional development and support they provide to other educators in their respective districts:

- Use of data diagnostically to adjust intervention instruction and to understand reasons why a pupil may not be responding to intervention instruction as expected.
- Use of evidence-based instructional methods and the features of evidence-based interventions for pupils who experience difficulties with decoding and word recognition.
- Appropriate use of statewide professional learning tools and evidence-based practices that meet the research requirements consistent with the science of reading.
- Provision of required professional learning for educators in applicable roles required under the bill (detailed below).

By the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, each school district, intermediate school district (ISD), and public school academy (PSA, or charter school) would have to provide assurance to MDE that all literacy consultants, literacy coaches, and other personnel providing reading intervention or reading instruction to pre-K to grade 12 pupils in the school district, ISD, or PSA received professional learning regarding all of the following, as applicable:

- The characteristics of dyslexia and underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
- Secondary consequences of dyslexia, such as problems in reading comprehension and a reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge and lead to social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties.
- Instructional adjustments for pupils with dyslexia and instructional adjustments to address the underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
- Methods to develop schoolwide and classroom infrastructure to meet the collective and individual needs of pupils using a *multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)* framework.
- Evidence-based instructional methods and features of evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the science of reading and principles of structured literacy that are designed for pupils with characteristics of dyslexia and pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
- Evidence-based instructional methods and features of evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the science of reading and principles of structured literacy that are designed to effectively meet the needs of most pupils.

Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) would mean a comprehensive framework that includes distinct tiers of instructional support and is composed of a collection of evidence-based strategies designed to meet the individual needs and assets of a whole pupil at all achievement levels.

Literacy coaches would also be required to do the following under the bill:

- Advise in developing schoolwide and classroom infrastructure to meet the collective and individual needs of pupils using an MTSS framework.
- Train school staff (in addition to teachers, who are already required to be trained by coaches) in data analysis and using different techniques to differentiate instruction.
- Model for teachers who have a classroom that includes a pupil with an individual reading plan, instruction with pupils in whole and small groups. Modeling and coaching for teachers who teach grades K to 3 is already required.

By the start of the 2027-2028 school year, MDE would have to provide technical assistance to school districts, ISDs, and PSAs to aid them in reporting information contained in a pupil's individual reading improvement plan.

The bill would allow an individual who is not a district-identified literacy coach to perform some of their required obligations if that individual meets the requirements that a district-identified literacy coach does.

Dyslexia supports

By September 1, 2024, MDE would have to develop dyslexia expertise to provide technical assistance to districts, ISDs, and PSAs regarding dyslexia and underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.

In consultation with the advisory committee proposed by HB 5098, MDE would offer this expertise by providing guidance on all of the following (and potentially other topics if needed):

- The appropriate selection and use at each grade level of reliable and valid universal screening assessments for the identification of pupils who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia and pupils who display difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently, to minimize the impact on instructional time.
- Structured literacy.
- Evidence-based instructional methods and the features of evidence-based interventions for pupils exhibiting the characteristics of dyslexia or pupils who have difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently that include instructional methods and curriculum resources that use a code emphasis approach to address the decoding and word-recognition components of reading and that are supported by the science of reading. Except as otherwise provided in these provisions, the instructional methods and curriculum resources described here could not include instructional methods or curriculum resources that minimize the importance of primarily using letter-sound information to decode or recognize unknown words, including any of the uses of letter-sound information described in a Tier 1 instructional support for a student diagnosed with, or exhibiting characteristics of, dyslexia.
- Professional learning about dyslexia to public schools.

To support the implementation of these requirements, MDE, in consultation with the advisory committee and based on current research, would have to regularly review and update the Michigan Dyslexia Handbook (or a similar publicly available dyslexia resource guide that

includes information regarding the education of pupils with dyslexia or characteristics of dyslexia), to be used by public schools. Reviews and updates must then be conducted at an interval not to exceed five years.

The bill would establish a series of deadlines for MDE to release or publish certain materials for use by public schools:

- Not later than January 1, 2026, MDE would have to provide a list of approved valid and reliable screening and progress monitoring reading assessments for selection and use by school districts and PSAs and, in addition to meeting applicable requirements regarding approved assessment tools, identify, within each approved assessment for selection and use by school districts and public school academies, a list of the elements of a reliable and valid universal screening assessment for the purpose of identifying pupils with characteristics of dyslexia or difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently that are or are not included in the approved assessment.
- Also by not later than January 1, 2026, MDE would have to publish a list of evidence-based reading curricula and materials that are aligned with science of reading methods that research has shown to improve literacy outcomes and help pupils achieve reading proficiency.
- By not later than August 1, 2027, each public school would have to update its selection of a valid and reliable screening and progress-monitoring reading assessment to ensure that the selected system includes a reliable and valid universal screening assessment in accordance with the bill's new requirement that approved assessments include a way to identify pupils with dyslexia and the guidance provided by the department, if it does not do so already. In complying with this requirement, a public school must minimize the impact on instructional time by selecting approved assessments that include elements fulfilling multiple assessment requirements, or, when appropriate, by adding approved assessment measures or combining compatible approved assessments that, when utilized together, include all of the elements of a reliable and valid universal screening assessment.
- By not later than the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, each school district, ISD, and PSA would have to provide assurance to MDE that all literacy consultants, literacy coaches, and other personnel providing reading intervention or reading instruction to pre-K to grade 12 pupils in the public school received professional learning regarding all of the following, as applicable:
 - The characteristics of dyslexia and underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
 - Secondary consequences of dyslexia, such as problems in reading comprehension and a reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge and lead to social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties.
 - Instructional adjustments for pupils with dyslexia and instructional adjustments to address the underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
 - Methods to develop schoolwide and classroom infrastructure to meet the collective and individual needs of pupils using an MTSS framework.
 - Evidence-based instructional methods and features of evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the science of reading and principles of structured literacy that are designed for pupils with characteristics of dyslexia

and pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.

- Evidence-based instructional methods and features of evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the science of reading and principles of structured literacy that are designed to effectively meet the needs of most pupils.
- The completion of a program of study approved under section 1531e (as outlined in SB 568) would fulfill the above requirements.

If the **benchmark assessment** or progress-monitoring assessment used by a school also meets the requirements for dyslexia screening, then a public school could utilize that assessment for the screening as well.

Benchmark assessment would mean an assessment administered periodically throughout a school year and used for one or more of the following purposes:

- To predict and identify learner readiness for success on a later summative assessment.
- To evaluate ongoing education programs and interventions.
- To provide teachers with individual learners' performance data to inform instruction.

Dyslexia screenings

Starting with the 2027-2028 school year, and continuing in each school year thereafter, the board of a public school would have to ensure that each required pupil is screened for characteristics of dyslexia and difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently using a reliable and valid universal screening assessment. All the following pupils enrolled in a public school would have to be screened:

- Each pupil in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3, including those who transferred to that public school from another public school in Michigan and have not been screened for characteristics of dyslexia and difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently using a reliable and valid universal screening assessment at their previous school. (Pupils in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, or grade 3 who transferred from a school outside of Michigan would not have to be screened if they present written documentation to their new school showing that they were subject to a reliable and valid universal screening assessment at their previous school.)
- Each pupil in any of grades 4 to 12 who, as determined by that pupil's teacher, educational-support staff, or the pupil's parent or legal guardian, demonstrates any of the following:
 - Escape or avoidance behaviors when asked to engage in reading or writing activities.
 - Effortful or laborious reading.
 - Reading-comprehension difficulties caused by inaccurate or inefficient word reading.
 - Significant spelling or encoding difficulties not caused by fine-motor or visual-motor difficulties.
 - Low performance on the school's approved English language arts standards.
 - Low performance on the school's approved standardized assessments.
 - Reading deficiency.

Pupils in grades K to 3 who are required to be screened by their school would have to be screened at least three times during a school year. Pupils who changed schools would have to be screened within 90 days of enrollment at their new school, and then screened thereafter on the same screening schedule as the other pupils in their grade.

Required actions for pupils exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia

Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, if a reliable and valid universal screening assessment indicates that a pupil is exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia, or the assessment indicates that the pupil is experiencing difficulty in learning to decode accurately and efficiently, then their school would have to ensure that a tiered delivery system, which includes word recognition instruction, is provided to the pupil. The reading intervention program provided would have to be part of an MTSS. The MTSS framework would have to meet all the following:

- Include multiple distinct tiers of instructional support framework (MTSS models typically feature three tiers of support).
- Be a comprehensive framework composed of a collection of evidence-based strategies designed to meet the individual needs and assets of the whole pupil at all achievement levels.
- Tier 1 support of the distinct tiers of instructional support would have to meet at least all of the following:
 - Encompass a combination of evidence-based strategies that are available to all learners.
 - Effectively meet the needs of most pupils.
 - For the instructional methods and curriculum resources used to address the decoding and word-recognition components of reading, use a code emphasis instructional approach, and be supported by the science of reading. Except as otherwise provided elsewhere in section 1280f, the instructional methods and curriculum resources must not minimize the importance of primarily using letter-sound information to decode or recognize unknown words. The bill specifically mentions the following as being ineligible to be used as part of this tier as well as Tier 2:
 - Prompting pupils to guess unknown words using pictures and illustrations.
 - Skipping over an unknown word or words to use the meaning of the passage to recognize the unknown word or words.
 - Identifying only the first sound of an unknown word and then being prompted to guess the word using the word's initial sound and the meaning of the text surrounding the word.
 - Memorizing a word in its written form.
 - Using predictable text and leveled text to provide initial word recognition instruction and practice in reading new learned letter-sound correspondences.
- Tier 2 support would have to be provided to small groups of pupils to whom at least one of the following applies:
 - Screening-assessment data indicate a need for intervention to address difficulties in the pupils' learning to decode and recognizing words accurately and efficiently.
 - Tier 1 instructional data indicate a need for intervention to address difficulties in learning to decode and recognizing words.

- Provide that Tier 2 support must include instructional methods and curriculum resources that use a code emphasis approach to address the decoding and word-recognition components of reading and that are supported by the science of reading. The instructional methods and curriculum resources would have to include specialized instructional procedures, duration, and frequency.
- Provide that pupils receiving intervention consisting of Tier 2 support must have their progress monitored by the individuals providing the intervention instruction using appropriate assessments to determine the pupils' response to intervention instruction.
- Provide that, if pupils who are receiving intervention at the Tier 2 level are not making measurable progress in response to reading intervention at a rate that will result in meaningful improvements in performance, intensive Tier 3 support must be provided to the pupil using evidence-based instructional adaptations that must be documented in the pupil's individual reading improvement plan. If the pupil is determined to have a specific learning disability in reading, these interventions could instead be provided through the student's individualized education plan.
- Provide that a pupil with a Tier 2 level intervention has a current individual reading intervention plan
- Provide that, for a pupil with a Tier 2 level intervention, an intervention response team at the pupil's school refine the pupil's individual reading improvement plan with the teacher providing the intervention instruction to the pupil to meaningfully accelerate reading outcomes.
- Provide that, if a pupil's response to the intervention instruction is insufficient for accelerating reading outcomes after repeated attempts to adapt and intensify the instruction, subject to state and federal laws concerning special education, the pupil's school must consider the need for a full and comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services.

Students who would be receiving a Tier 2 level support would have to receive a notification, and certain information would have to be sent to their parent or legal guardian, within 30 days after the determination is made.

If it is determined by the public school in which the pupil is enrolled that they have functional difficulties due to characteristics of dyslexia or underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently, then the board of that school must ensure that the necessary accommodations or equipment are provided to the pupil as required under section 504 of Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

MCL 380.1280f

Senate Bill 568 contains the proposed requirements for teacher preparation programs and alternate teacher preparation programs regarding dyslexia training for their respective candidates. The following would be required to be taught as part of teacher preparation programs under the bill:

- The characteristics of dyslexia and underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
- The secondary consequences of dyslexia, such as problems in reading comprehension and a reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and

background knowledge and that can lead to social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties.

- Instructional adjustments for pupils with dyslexia and instructional adjustments for addressing underlying factors that place pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
- Methods for developing schoolwide and classroom infrastructure that meet the collective and individual needs of pupils using an MTSS framework.³
- For a teacher preparation program or an alternative teaching program that prepares individuals for certification or endorsements that involve reading instruction, language arts, or special education, as appropriate, or for school psychologist licensure, in addition to the above requirements, both of the following:
 - Evidence-based instructional methods and features of evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the science of reading and principles of structured literacy that are designed for pupils with characteristics of dyslexia and pupils at risk for difficulties in learning to decode accurately and efficiently.
 - Evidence-based instructional methods and features of evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the science of reading and principles of structured literacy that are designed to effectively meet the needs of most pupils.

If these elements are not incorporated into a teacher preparation or alternate teacher preparation program by September 30, 2027, MDE could revoke the program’s approval, and approval for programs lacking these elements would not be granted.

However, if the program did not prepare individuals for certification or endorsements that involve reading instruction, language arts, or special education, or for school psychologist licensure, then MDE could issue a waiver for one or more of the requirements listed above. Such a waiver issued would then have to be reviewed at least every two years to ensure the waiver is still appropriate and aligned with the department’s goals for teacher preparation.

Proposed MCL 380.1531e

The bills are tie-barred to each other and to House Bill 5098, meaning that they cannot take effect unless all three bills are enacted into law.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Senate Bill 567 would create costs for the state and could create costs for local school districts, intermediate school districts, and public school academies.

MDE has noted that they already meet some of the requirements in the bill, including developing dyslexia expertise to provide technical assistance, updating a dyslexia resource guide every five years, and providing guidance on screening English Language Learner pupils in their native language. In order to meet the requirements to provide a list of screening and progress monitoring reading assessments and to publish a list of evidence-based reading curricula, MDE has noted that they would need \$300,000 and an additional FTE.

³ [Michigan’s MTSS Framework](#)

The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) would incur new costs to meet the new data collection requirements, including data on which assessment was selected by a district, ISD, or PSA and the threshold score selected to determine proficiency. CEPI estimates the cost to modify current data collection systems would be \$20,000. CEPI also notes an estimated \$100,000 in additional costs to the state under section 152a of the School Aid Act, which pays the necessary costs related to state-mandated data collection.

In addition, CEPI would incur costs through the requirement to identify grade 3 pupils not yet reading at grade level and notifying their parents or legal guardians through certified mail within 14 days of receiving assessment scores from MDE. CEPI notes that under a previous similar requirement to send notifications via certified mail, more than 60% of the letters were returned. As a result, the requirement was revised to the current practice of sending notifications through first class mail. CEPI estimates the return to certified mailings would cost \$175,000 for staff time, processing, and postage.

Districts, ISDs, and PSAs could incur new costs through new requirements for literacy coaches, reading assessments, and reading intervention plans. Under the bill, literacy coaches would have additional responsibilities that may be absorbed using existing staff time and have additional training requirements. Certain districts, ISDs, or PSAs with literacy coaches who do not meet the new requirements may incur costs for professional development or hiring additional staff.

The bill requires districts, ISDs, and PSAs to conduct three reading assessments per year for pupils in grades K-3 and additional assessments for pupils in grades 4 to 12 as determined to be necessary by a teacher, support staff, or parent or guardian. Districts, ISDs, or PSAs may incur potentially significant costs if the reading assessment implemented is not aligned with current practice. These costs would include implementing a new resource, providing assessment tools, and providing professional learning.

Districts, ISDs, and PSAs would be required to ensure reading instruction is evidence-based and ensure reading intervention is part of an MTSS framework. MDE notes that many of these requirements are at least partially in place, but costs to locals for additional intervention time and evidence-based programs could be high.

Senate Bill 568 would have no fiscal impact for the state and could create costs for certain institutions of higher education.

Under the bill, public institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs that do not currently offer instruction on dyslexia would be required to add it to their curriculum. MDE has noted that most institutions already meet this requirement.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.