

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to exceptional student education;
 3 creating s. 1003.5712, F.S.; providing legislative
 4 findings; defining the term "dyslexia"; requiring the
 5 Department of Education to establish the Dyslexia
 6 Choice Academy Pilot Project; requiring the department
 7 to consult with the Duval County School Board for
 8 specified purposes; requiring the Duval County School
 9 Board to provide mentoring services to participating
 10 school districts; providing for pilot project
 11 participation; providing Dyslexia Choice Academy,
 12 school district, department, and legislative funding
 13 requirements; requiring the department to submit a
 14 report to the Legislature at the conclusion of the
 15 project; providing for rulemaking; providing an
 16 effective date.

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 18 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 20 Section 1. Section 1003.5712, Florida Statutes, is created
 21 to read:

22 1003.5712 Dyslexia.—
 23 (1) The Legislature finds that:
 24 (a) Dyslexia, if not diagnosed early, can be severely
 25 detrimental to a student's academic success, as well as his or
 26 her self-esteem.

27 (b) Most students identified as having markers of dyslexia
28 can be successfully treated.

29 (c) The cost of screening and treating dyslexia early is
30 significantly less than the cost of intensive remediation in
31 later school years for a student with dyslexia.

32 (2) The term "dyslexia" means a specific learning
33 disability that is:

34 (a) Neurological in origin.

35 (b) Characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent
36 word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities that
37 typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of
38 language.

39 (c) Often unexpected in relation to other cognitive
40 abilities.

41 Section 2. Dyslexia Choice Academy Pilot Project.—

42 (1)(a) Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, the
43 Department of Education shall establish the 5-year Dyslexia
44 Choice Academy Pilot Project to expand the Duval County GRASP
45 Academy and to create a Dyslexia Choice Academy in five
46 participating school districts to provide evidence-based
47 instruction to meet the needs of students with dyslexia.

48 (b) The department shall consult with the Duval County
49 School Board in implementing the pilot project. The Duval County
50 School Board shall also provide other participating school
51 districts with mentoring services, including advice and guidance
52 on establishing and operating a Dyslexia Choice Academy.

53 (2) The pilot project shall expand the Duval County GRASP
54 Academy by an additional 128 students and create Dyslexia Choice
55 Academies in two school districts with a population of greater
56 than 500,000, two school districts with a population of at least
57 100,000 but not greater than 500,000, and one school district
58 with a population of fewer than 100,000. A school district must
59 submit an application to participate in the pilot project on a
60 form prescribed by the department by a date established by the
61 department. A selected school district may partner with an
62 adjoining school district with a population of 500,000 or fewer
63 to reach the required enrollment numbers.

64 (3) A Dyslexia Choice Academy shall:

65 (a) Enroll up to 128 eligible students, but not fewer than
66 96 students, in grades 1 through 8. During the first year of
67 operation, a Dyslexia Choice Academy may choose to serve
68 students in grades 1 through 5 only; however, the Dyslexia
69 Choice Academy must add an additional grade level during each of
70 the following school years until the Dyslexia Choice Academy
71 serves students in grades 1 through 8. To be eligible for
72 enrollment, a student must be diagnosed as dyslexic or, in the
73 absence of a formal diagnosis, be identified as having met the
74 characteristics of a dyslexic student.

75 (b) Provide evidence-based instruction with an Orton-
76 Gillingham approach, which must include:

77 1. Direct instruction that is systematic, sequential, and
78 cumulative.

79 2. Individualized instruction in a small group setting
80 that meets the specific needs of each student.

81 3. Meaning-based instruction directed at purposeful
82 reading and writing, with an emphasis on comprehension and
83 composition.

84 4. Multisensory instruction that incorporates the
85 simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways during teacher
86 presentations and student practice.

87 5. Instruction in all core curriculum subjects.

88 6. Structured language instruction to enhance students'
89 reading, writing, and spelling skills.

90 (c) Provide a one-to-one student-to-electronics ratio for
91 remediation, enrichment, writing practice, and keyboarding
92 skills.

93 (4) A school district participating in the pilot project
94 shall:

95 (a) Identify and screen students who demonstrate the
96 characteristics of dyslexia for enrollment in the Dyslexia
97 Choice Academy.

98 (b) Provide transportation to students attending the
99 Dyslexia Choice Academy.

100 (c) Select an evidence-based curriculum with an Orton-
101 Gillingham approach to be used in the Dyslexia Choice Academy.

102 (d) Provide training for the instructional personnel of
103 the Dyslexia Choice Academy in the selected methodology and
104 curriculum.

105 (e) Select the following personnel for the Dyslexia Choice
 106 Academy:

107 1. A principal or lead teacher with specific education,
 108 training, and experience in teaching students with dyslexia.

109 2. A school psychologist or appropriate professional with
 110 training in dyslexia to screen students for dyslexia.

111 3. A guidance counselor with training in dyslexia to
 112 provide advice and guidance on the appropriate education for
 113 students with dyslexia.

114 4. Teachers and paraprofessionals trained in appropriate
 115 evidenced-based, dyslexia-specific methodologies.

116 (5) The department shall:

117 (a) Provide funding to:

118 1. The Duval County School Board for planning and
 119 mentoring purposes.

120 2. Each participating school district for the purchase of
 121 an appropriate curriculum for the Dyslexia Choice Academy.

122 3. Each participating school district to supplement
 123 transportation costs, ensuring that students from all areas of
 124 the school district may attend the Dyslexia Choice Academy.

125 (b) At the conclusion of the pilot project, conduct an
 126 evaluation of the learning gains of students enrolled in a
 127 Dyslexia Choice Academy and submit to the President of the
 128 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report
 129 that must include a recommendation for continuing or terminating
 130 the project.

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131 (6) The Legislature shall appropriate funds in the General
132 Appropriations Act to participating school districts to provide
133 a teacher-student ratio of 1 to 16 and a paraprofessional-
134 student ratio of 1 to 48 in each Dyslexia Choice Academy.

135 (7) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to
136 administer the pilot project.

137 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.