

Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program

About the Pilot Program

Act 69 of 2014, the Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program, became effective on June 26, 2014. The Act provides that: The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will establish an early literacy intervention and dyslexia pilot program to provide evidence-based early screening using evidence-based services for students with potential risk factors for early reading deficiencies and dyslexia, such as low phonemic awareness, low letter and symbol naming, and inability to remember sequences.

Focus On Early Literacy Intervention

To support reading success, the Pilot's goal is to provide extra support to students, so they don't have reading difficulties. By providing support to kindergarten and first-grade students, LEAs have the opportunity to provide intensive instruction and make a positive impact on the early outcome of reading results.

Outcomes

- Provide extra support to children so they receive the enrichment services needed for success.
- Incorporate an evidence-based multisensory structured language approach into the school reading program to focus on closing the achievement gap.
- Provide professional development for teachers to incorporate evidence-based practices into core reading program.
- Provide extra support for delivering intensive enrichment to students.
- Reduce the need for extra services in the future, so that a reading gap does not develop.
- Support reading success for all students.

Components of the Pilot Program

The Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program provides many supporting features to ensure student success, so they do not experience reading problems. These features are:

- Provide extra professional development (PD) for kindergarten and first-grade teachers around The Five Essential Components of Reading Instruction (NRP, 2000) and the Practice Guide. The purpose of the PD is to improve the delivery of instruction, so that fewer children need intensive instruction for reading difficulties.



Quotes From Parents

I just have to tell you, I came home from picking my daughter up on Monday to find Joey sitting on the couch reading the library chapter book he had checked out from school. Reading is always a fight, and for once he was doing it on his own. You have no idea how excited I was. I just wanted you to know this program is making a difference for him, and to tell you that I really appreciate you working with Joey. I have seen a big difference in a short time! He loves working with you! Thank you again. —Cristy Little, PenArgyl School District

My daughter was selected to participate in the Orton Gillingham Program, being taught by a group of educators who have been specially trained in this program. It's been about 4 weeks or so, and it's been fantastic! My daughter is showing me the letters and sounds that they make. She is so excited and I am so happy to see her smiling and happy to do this now. —Monica Council-Miles, Delaware Valley School District

- Provide universal screening in the primary grades, so that extra support services may be provided in reading instruction.
- Strengthen the alignment between core reading programs and supplemental intervention materials to increase instructional cohesiveness.
- Deliver additional training for school personnel to perform as interventionists. Interventionists will provide intense intervention for students who demonstrate the need for extra reading enrichment.
- Identify a parent liaison in each LEA as a bridge for communication and support to assist parents in understanding the services that are available for their child.
- Identify lead teacher(s) to communicate information to colleagues about the pilot goals, requirements, and ongoing technical assistance needs.

Advisory Committee

The PDE has established an advisory committee to assist in the pilot's implementation:

Lynn Dell, Chair
Dr. David Braze
Pam Cook
Dr. Eugenia Flaherty

Marilyn Mathis
Dr. Monica McHale-Small
Diane Reott
Daphne Uliana



Team members from Delaware Valley School District

2015-16 Results

The first year of the Pilot was 2015-16, so extensive results on students' performance is not available. However, early results indicate positive trends that mean kindergarten children have improved results on key indicators for reading. The progress has been very promising, and we look forward to providing results at the end of the 2016-17 school year and again after the 2017-18 school year.

Teacher Feedback

As part of the pilot, teachers receive additional training and resources to deliver intervention and support to students. One of the early measures of success is the comments from the teachers on how they see student progress.

Parent Feedback

Parent feedback on their child's success in receiving extra reading instruction is critical. Another early measure of the program is the information parents provide on improved results for their child.

Moving Forward

Students that received extra support will continue into first grade with the reading instruction. The incoming kindergarten students will receive classroom instruction with additional emphasis on foundational reading skills. In late winter, extra support will be provided for kindergarten students for the rest of the year and into first grade.

Second grade teachers will receive training in the spring of 2017 as the professional development and support continues to follow the kindergarten class of the 2105-16 school year.

Ongoing feedback and technical support will be provided.

**Do the best you can until you know better.
Then when you know better, do better.**

~ Maya Angelou

Quotes From Teachers and Administrators

Participation in this pilot has provided our district the opportunity to improve our services, as we see improved results for all children. We are looking forward to continuing this positive trend in reading for our students and families. Thank you. —Dr. Frank Musitano, Director of Pupil Services, Blue Mountain School District

My experience has been a life changing one, not only for myself, but for the students that I teach. I knew before starting this year that there were students that I still had trouble teaching to read. Even with a master's degree in Reading, I could not figure out why, after using all of the strategies I know, there were still students that struggled. The OG approach was the answer I have been searching for all these years. I am amazed at how much I have learned this year. My mind has been challenged as it has never been challenged before. —Amy Lawrence, Crawford Central School District

With the extensive training in instruction and working with the pilot groups, I have become a better diagnostic reading teacher, being able to pinpoint areas of need and remediate. I especially found the great impact that the speech and language training had and how it relates so closely to reading. I was also amazed with the significant progress my pilot student made this year with only 64 hours of intervention. —Sue Wentling, Cumru Elementary, Governor Mifflin School District

Thank you for all your support and guidance throughout the process. For me, to see my staff continuing to learn is the goal. Their new knowledge and understandings will guide them on which products and targeted interventions are most likely to increase student achievement. The grant has increased their abilities and essentially made them much more marketable in the education field. —Scott Martin, Superintendent, Bentworth School District

The training I have received this year has been more powerful and effective than any others I have received in the past...The self-confidence this has given them (my students) is huge! The OG method truly has the power to change the entire course of a reader's life. I am sincerely thankful to have had this opportunity... When I looked at where some of them (my students) started and how far they've come, I felt so much excitement! I am so proud of them! This year has made such an impact on not only the students' lives, but also mine. Thank you! —Rene Vollbrecht, Tracy Elementary, Millcreek Township School District

The Orton-Gillingham approach is the missing tool I've been searching for throughout my teaching career. It is multisensory, explicit, systematic, and sequential. I believe that any child, even one with severe dyslexia, can learn to read using this approach. The skills and concepts are rolled out in a sequential, systematic way. There is no guesswork. The teacher knows what to teach and in what order...not only are the students learning, but they are having fun doing it. They absolutely love the hands-on procedures and routines. Students want to know "the why" behind the English language; 85 percent of our language follows the rules, so why not equip our students with the knowledge they need to crack the code of reading? I believe that this approach could benefit every student. It empowers teachers and students alike! —Kristine Cottone, Delaware Valley School District

This year I have seen the most growth in my students since I began teaching kindergarten 3 years ago. I feel that as a result of the training, I am a much better teacher for my students and a resource to their families. I hope I can continue to help all my students become good readers, writers, spellers, and learners. —Kelly Thomas, Pen Argyl School District

I believe adding the consistent 30 minutes of direct, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonic skills and doing small group interventions were very helpful in moving kids forward. I also believe that a stronger focus on oral language and correct letter sounds have helped our students as well. —Chris Gibson, Principal, North Side Primary, Ellwood City School District

I have had quite a few parents tell me how impressed they are with how much their child has grown academically since the start of the year. —Amy Platt, Kindergarten Teacher, Bentworth School District