

AN ACT

REQUESTING THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT A SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF DYSLEXIA, IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA AND ESTABLISH CERTIFICATION CRITERIA FOR SPECIALISTS SO THAT THEY MAY PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO ASSIST STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA.

WHEREAS, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act recognizes that individuals with dyslexia must be provided with educational services that address their disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the state department of public education has not defined dyslexia or instituted educational diagnostic evaluations and has not recommended educational services to address this specific disability; and

WHEREAS, scientists and leaders from the national institute of child health and human development, the international dyslexia association and the national center for learning disabilities have developed the following working definition: Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the

result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems with reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling; and

WHEREAS, a wide body of research indicates that up to fifteen percent of the general population lives with the disabling limitations of dyslexia and that dyslexia can affect individuals in varying degrees, requiring a continuum of services to include specialized teaching in the general classroom, small group and one-to-one therapy; and

WHEREAS, there are specialized methods of instruction that effectively treat individuals with dyslexia and that require specialized training of teachers and therapists; and

WHEREAS, there are nationally recognized organizations such as the international multi-sensory structured language education council, the academic language therapy association and the international dyslexia association that have identified the skills needed by teachers and therapists, have developed certification requirements for specialists in this field and accredit professional training programs that prepare these individuals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state board of education be requested to adopt a specific definition of dyslexia and

establish effective interventions and specialized public school education programs for students that address this specific language disability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state board of education begin to establish certification criteria for specialists to carry out public school education programs to assist students with dyslexia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state department of public education report the state board of education's findings and recommendations to the legislative education study committee by November 2001; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the president of the state board of education and the superintendent of public instruction.