

## MINUTES

### LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON DYSLEXIA

November 9, 2020  
Room 112-N—Statehouse

#### Members Present

Jim Porter, Chairperson  
Representative Brenda Dietrich, Vice-chairperson  
Senator Bruce Givens  
Senator Ty Masterson  
Jennifer Bettles  
Sarah Brinkley  
Jamie Callaghan  
Tally Fleming  
David Hurford  
Jennifer Knight  
Alisa Matteoni  
Christina Middleton  
Jeanine Phillips  
Jeri Powers  
Angie Schreiber  
Mike Burgess, Ex Officio  
Laura Jurgensen, Ex Officio  
Lori McMillian, Ex Officio

#### Members Absent

Sonja Watkins

#### Staff Present

Jessa Farmer, Kansas Legislative Research Department (KLRD)  
Norma Volkmer, KLRD  
Nick Myers, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Deborah Bremer, Committee Assistant

#### Conferees

Dr. Jim Truelove, Dean, College of Education, Pittsburg State University  
Dr. Cameron Carlson, Dean, School of Education and Social Work, Newman University  
Jennifer Hanni, Director of School Improvement Services, Greenbush Education Service Center  
Doug Anderson, Executive Director, Keystone Learning Services  
Kim Mauk, Chief Executive Officer, Southwest Plains Regional Service Center  
Cindy Hadicke, Elementary Education Program Consultant, Kansas State Department of Education

## Others Attending

See [Attached List](#).

## MORNING SESSION

### Call to Order, Welcome, and Introduction of Task Force Members and Norms

Chairperson Jim Porter called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and stated the purpose of the meeting was to update the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia (Task Force) members, share progress, and continue the work of helping Kansas students with dyslexia become competent and confident readers.

Nick Myers, Office of Revisor of Statutes of Statutes, provided an overview of remote meeting procedures with instructions for accessing documents and testimony and observing the meeting.

### General Review

Dr. David Hurford, Pittsburg State University, provided a historical perspective of the Task Force, which has arisen out of 25 years of gathering concern for the issue of dyslexia and reading. Dr. Hurford stated the Task Force has created positive movement and change for the young readers of Kansas. He provided the four primary charges given to the Task Force and affirmed each charge was completed.

Dr. Hurford stated despite his early fears this group would not be effective, he has been very pleased with the connections that have been made among the different members. He noted in the first meeting, each member shared their background, taking time to connect meaningfully. He stated Chairperson Porter helped the group find common ground and work together productively. He stated from that positive start, the Task Force has been able to accomplish something very few states have done legislatively.

Dr. Hurford stated one-third of Kansas children cannot read at the basic level, and the recommendations created by the Task Force will make significant contributions to changing this situation, which he described as dire. He listed the recommendations and noted the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the process of implementing the recommendations, but he feels progress is still being made. Dr. Hurford stated the focus must not be on adopting recommendations, but on ensuring those recommendations are being put in practice. He noted the Task Force gave the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) an extensive list of recommendations, and he is very thankful for the hard work done in this area and the incorporation of many changes planned and implemented ([Attachment 1](#)).

In closing, Dr. Hurford stated he has a deep gratitude for the “remarkable” work done in Kansas. He stated from his observation and experience, no other state has addressed dyslexia to the extent Kansas has been able to, and it is thanks to this Task Force.

## **Presentations on Teacher Preparation**

Dr. Jim Truelove, Dean, College of Education, Pittsburg State University, appeared on behalf of public institutions of higher learning across the Kansas Board of Regents (Regents) system. Dr. Truelove stated the Regents colleges and universities are taking a multifaceted approach toward adapting teacher training and professional development to incorporate dyslexia training and the Science of Reading. He stated several faculty members have completed the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training in both professional development and facilitator training. He testified conferences, classes, and workshops centered on dyslexia and the Science of Reading are being offered to teachers through training, and training for both faculty and students has been implemented. Dr. Truelove stated the curriculum of current training is being reassessed, so dyslexia and Science of Reading training will be incorporated into the teaching of existing courses. He stated both basic teacher training and specialist reading courses have been reassessed, and training specifically for teaching reading to children with dyslexia has been incorporated and will continue to be updated and improved.

Dr. Truelove noted new training courses have been developed, and existing courses have been updated. He stated the fundamentals of dyslexia and Science of Reading are being introduced throughout the teacher preparation curriculum, not only in the reading classes, but in all classes, because reading is needed in learning other subjects. He provided an example from his own teaching experience involved a student whose challenges in a math class were reading-based. Dr. Truelove also provided examples of different universities that are incorporating dyslexia training into all parts of education, rather than only in literature, literacy, or reading courses ([Attachment 2](#)).

There was a short discussion about new teachers, particularly school psychologists, who have recently been hired and are not familiar with assessment procedures for dyslexia students. Chairperson Porter noted this issue would be explored with the relevant entities.

Dr. Cameron Carlson, Dean, School of Education and Social Work, Newman University, appeared on behalf of private colleges in Kansas through the Kansas Association of Private Colleges of Teachers of Education (KAPCOTE). He stated dyslexia has been an important topic of discussion for the past two years within KAPCOTE. He stated curriculum changes are implemented slowly within academia due to accountability procedures, but these changes are being implemented. Dr. Carlson stated private schools often make changes faster than the public schools because there are fewer layers of decision-making. He stated many courses are being updated, and he noted specific schools that were early adopters of the changes in teacher training for dyslexia ([Attachment 3](#)).

There was discussion about the practicum section of teacher training in dyslexia, theory advancing to practice, and the accountability a Dyslexia Coordinator could provide.

## **Presentations on Professional Development and Related Topics**

Kim Mauk, Chief Executive Officer, Southwest Plains Regional Service Center, reviewed the support the seven Kansas Association of Education Service Agencies (KAESA) service centers provide to students in Kansas. She provided an overview of service centers and how they have been involved with issues related to dyslexia.

Doug Anderson, Executive Director, Keystone Learning Services, thanked the Task Force for its work on dyslexia and stated the focus on helping students that struggle with reading and who have dyslexia has resulted in a concerted effort to make changes based on a scientific understanding of reading. He stated the Science of Reading is technical and specific, and it is important to ensure providers receive information to address the specific needs of struggling readers. He stated one of the unintended consequences of this discussion has been the blurring of the line between general and special education. Mr. Anderson noted the importance of assisting struggling readers in secondary schools and delivering services to these students as well. He testified communication is key between teachers, parents, professionals, and students.

Jennifer Hanni, Director of School Improvement Services, Greenbush Education Service Center, addressed the theory-to-practice issue that arises during the transition from teachers receiving training in the Science of Reading and LETRS to those teachers implementing that training in the classroom. She reviewed her service center's work with administrators to help them understand literacy instruction and best practices for the classroom ([Attachment 4](#)).

Mr. Anderson reviewed potential next steps for addressing dyslexia in Kansas and stated every child is important, and one student who struggles with reading that does not receive support is one student too many. He stated the issues presented will be ongoing, and the changes needed will take time, and they must be kept in focus. Mr. Anderson stated education service centers are uniquely positioned to help implement and support changes in the local schools.

In response to a question relating to training thresholds for teachers and special education directors, Chairperson Porter stated the Task Force had not previously recommended a minimum number of hours, but the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) requires six hours of training. Ms. Hanni and Mr. Anderson provided information on the six-hour training, and the Task Force discussed requirements for individuals providing training.

### **Presentation on Professional Development, Screening, Assessment, and Related Topics and Distribution of Draft Copy of Dyslexia Handbook**

Cindy Hadicke, Elementary Education Program Consultant, KSDE, reviewed the progress of the Task Force recommendations related to higher education. Ms. Hadicke provided timelines for recommendation implementation and reported the progress made in modifying program standards for a variety of teacher training programs. She stated August 2021 was the goal for such standard modifications to be implemented, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such implementation has been pushed to August 2023. She provided an overview of professional learning, which had an original implementation deadline of August 2020 to complete initial training that was extended to August 2021. Ms. Hadicke stated thousands of teachers and administrators have had training sessions in the Science of Reading so far, and teachers continue to request more information from her. She stated screening is being implemented, with a timeline of August 2021 for every accredited school district to universally screen students. She noted KSDE is starting to collect data for kindergarten and first- and second-grade students to ensure students are on a trajectory to read at grade level by third grade. She reviewed information on screening assessments, evidence-based reading instruction, and the Dyslexia Coordinator position funding that has been requested from the Kansas Legislature for Fiscal Year 2021 ([Attachment 5](#) and [Attachment 6](#)).

Ms. Hadicke presented the Dyslexia Handbook, which she noted was developed by KSDE in coordination with a broad array of stakeholders ([Attachment 7](#)).

Chairperson Porter noted the Task Force is not where members want to be in terms of recommendation implementation, but is better than where it was when the Task Force began. He stated despite this, “incredible” progress has been made even through this difficult time during the COVID-19 pandemic when all the work has been done online and remotely. He thanked everyone for participating.

### **Discussion of Request to Kansas Legislature to Fund the Dyslexia Coordinator Position**

Chairperson Porter introduced the issue of funding for the Dyslexia Coordinator position.

*Senator Masterson moved, and Representative Dietrich seconded, to request funding for the Dyslexia Coordinator position from the 2021 Kansas Legislature. The motion passed.*

Chairperson Porter adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Prepared by Deborah Bremer

Edited by Jessa Farmer

Approved by the Committee on:

December 16, 2020

(Date)