



Effective Early Literacy Practices: What We've Learned and How to Replicate in Your District

**Pamela Cook, Dyslexia Pilot Program Advisory Group
Special Educator and Education Advocate**

and

**Kathleen M. Hartos, CDP, Board Member,
PA Branch of the International Dyslexia Association
PA Dyslexia Literacy Coalition**

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Pennsylvania Department of Education

What You Will Learn Today

- **Dyslexia: By far the most common type of reading disability**
- **The good news: 90-95% of students can reach average reading levels**
- **The PDE Pilot Program: goals, districts participating, results after year 2**
- **Title 1 federal grants and parent involvement requirements**
- **How one PA district is replicating the pilot program using Title 1 funding**
- **Pilot success stories from parents, teachers, administrators and children**

What is Dyslexia?

“By far the most common type of reading disability”

Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D. (2010)
<https://www.texasldcenter.org/files/resources/cec10-denton.pdf>

- A condition characterized by difficulty with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities,
- which result from a deficit in processes related to the phonological component of language,
- that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction and
- that may result in reading comprehension problems and reduced reading experience that may impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

The Good News!

“...appropriate classroom instruction combined with intensive interventions can bring the early reading skills of 90-95 % of the classroom population to within the average range....

Evidence from...multiple research studies shows that a multitiered approach involving high-quality classroom instruction alone and in combination with targeted, small-group interventions can substantially reduce the proportion of students who struggle to read” from over 30% to approximately 6%.

G. Reid Lyon, Jack M. Fletcher, Joseph K. Torgesen, Sally E. Shaywitz and Vinita Chhabra (2004)
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar04/vol61/num06/-Preventing-and-Remediating-Reading-Failure@-A-Response-to-Allington.aspx>

The PA Dyslexia Pilot Program in a Nutshell

- Legislation – PA Act 69 passed in June 2014 to fund pilot program using evidence-based early screening and reading instruction
- Advisory Group of educators and parents established
- 8 school districts with 21 elementary schools participating in pilot
- Parent Liaisons identified in each district
- Lead Teachers: Each district has one or more lead teachers

Dyslexia Pilot Program Advisory Group

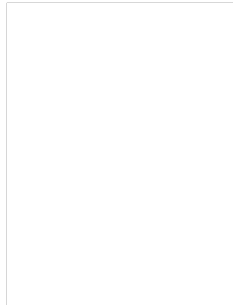
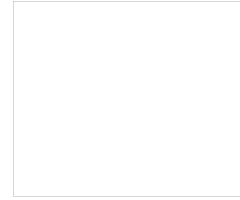
The Pennsylvania Department of Education added an Advisory Group of parents, a researcher, and educators who have advocated for and/or provided evidence-based reading instruction for struggling readers for many years.

Chair: Lynn Dell, Assistant Director, Bureau of Special Education

- David Braze, Ph.D.,
Haskins Lab, Yale University
- Pamela Cook, M.Ed., Special Education
Educational Advocacy, Pittsburgh
- Eugenia Flaherty, Ph.D.,
PA Dyslexia Association, Past President
- Marilyn Mathis, M.Ed., Director,
Children's Dyslexia Association of Allentown
- Monica McHale-Small, Ph.D.,
Retired Superintendent,
Saucon Valley School District
- Diane Reott
Co-Director, PA Dyslexia Coalition
Instrumental in passage of PA Act 69 of 2014
- Daphne Uliana
Co-Director, PA Dyslexia Coalition
Instrumental in passage of PA Act 69 of 2014

Goals of the Pilot

- Early identification of students with reading difficulties
- To provide an evidence-based K-2 core reading program for ALL student plus “intensive evidence-based” interventions to improve reading skills of those most at risk
- To reduce special education costs by providing evidence-based instruction for ALL students



Definition of "intensive intervention" according to legislation

- Explicit
- Multisensory
- Synthetic phonics instruction
- Structured language program
- Delivered with fidelity by a trained interventionist
- Using targeted instruction with strategic re-teaching.

Pilot Districts

- **Eastern Region:**
Delaware Valley and Pen Argyl
- **Central Region:**
Blue Mountain and Governor Mifflin
- **Western Region:**
Bentworth, Crawford Central,
Ellwood City, and Millcreek Township

Required Activities

- Ongoing professional development for staff in assessment and multisensory structured language programs
- Parent education about dyslexia and recommended evidence-based practices
- Methodology for evaluating effects of the project with assistance from a nationally recognized educational evaluation institution
- Annual report to the Pennsylvania Department of Education

Required Activities (cont.)

- Screening 3 times per year in grades K-2
- Diagnostic assessments administered
- 30 minute daily lessons using multisensory approach
- Administration of evidence-based core reading program and intervention services
- Notice of eligibility for those students who can receive these intervention services
- Parental notification for voluntary participation

Dyslexia Pilot Program Results So Far

Kindergarten children improved results on key indicators for reading. End of 2015-16 year results: significant progress over pretest scores in DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) **Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)**, an important predictor of passage reading skill.

End of the 2016-17 school year results: significantly better outcomes for all spring kindergarten DIBELS scores: **Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)**, **Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)**, **Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)**, **Correct Letter Sounds (CLS)**, and **Whole Words Read (WWR)**, suggesting that classroom instruction has improved.

How Districts Can Fund These Interventions via Title 1 Federal Grants

- Title 1 is the largest source of federal education funding.
- Funds are based on number of low-income families in school. (Students most in need of help need not be from low-income families.)
- Funds can provide additional teachers and professional development for school staff.
- Funds can be used to develop programs that add resources to regular class instruction which may include literacy programs.

Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy Requirements

To receive Title 1 funds, school districts must:

- involve Title I parents in the planning, review and improvement of the school's Parent Involvement Policy
- involve parents in the planning, review and improvement of the school's Title 1 program.
- provide parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, forms of academic assessment used, and expected proficiency levels.

Flying without the Pilot



**How Saucon Valley School District
provides multisensory structured
language programs
without the Pilot Grant**

Saucon Valley Title 1 Reading Program in a Nutshell

- Saucon Valley Title 1 program mirrors the PDE Dyslexia Screening & Early Literacy Pilot Program screening, diagnostic assessment, & intervention
- Intervention for at-risk students delivered by Title 1 Reading Specialists.
- Orton-Gillingham (O-G) Training for two Title 1 Reading Specialists via Fairleigh Dickinson University using tuition reimbursement funds.
- Students identified for special education who need O-G are taught by O-G trained special education teachers.

Saucon Valley Reading Interventionists

- 2 Certified Reading Specialists - Orton-Gillingham (O-G) trained
- 2 Special Education Teachers (O-G trained)
- 3 Reading Paraprofessionals (Sonday trained)
- 1 Literacy Coach (K-12)
- 1 Literacy Coordinator/Reading Coach K-4 (O-G certified)

Saucon Valley Focus Areas

- Phonological Awareness
- Oral Language
- Handwriting
- Letter Naming Fluency
- Multi-Letter Blending

Saucon Valley Professional Development

- Embedded Professional Development
- English Language Arts (ELA) Time weekly and Team Time
- Language and strategies used in intervention embedded into core classes

Saucon Valley Student Outcomes

Student Outcomes

Kindergarten children improved on key indicators of reading and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments. Pilot started in February 2017. End of year MAP testing showed students made significant progress over beginning of year scores.

Impressions from the Key Players!

Parents, Teachers, Administrators & Children

Parent says program is "fantastic" for daughter!

My daughter was selected to participate in the Orton-Gillingham Program being taught by a group of educators being 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



Parent sees a "big difference" in a short time!

Reading is always a fight for our son, Joey, 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



A Teacher's Life-Changing Experience



My experience has been a life changing one, not only for myself, but for the students that I teach. 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

Teacher sees "huge" boost in self-confidence!



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 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 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

**Administrator sees
"improved results"
for ALL children**

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 continue this positive trend in reading for our students and families. Thank you.

Dr. Frank Musitano,
Director of Pupil Services,
Blue Mountain School District



And, best of all,
many successful children!

Maya Angelou



Do the best you can until you
know better.

Then when you know better, do
better.

For more information about the Dyslexia Screening & Early Literacy Intervention Program, go to:
<http://www.pattan.net/category/Projects/page/Dyslexia.html>