PBIDA Spring Conference

Dyslexia Today 2018:
Beyond Research – Knowledge to Practice

Saturday, April 14, 2018
7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

DoubleTree at the
Monroeville Convention Center
101 Mall Boulevard
Monroeville, PA 15146

Keynote Speaker: Timothy Odegard, Ph.D., CALP
Understanding Developmental Dyslexia

15 Breakout Sessions following the Keynote

Registration and Information at pbida.org
Children with dyslexia flourish in a learning environment where their success is the driver of every decision. At Provident Charter School, our specialized, multi-sensory curriculum allows our teachers to ensure academic success for all students. Through diagnostic and prescriptive teaching, we are able to capitalize on each student’s strengths while we address individual areas of need.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSLEXIA
By Timothy Odegard, Ph. D., CALP, Middle Tennessee State University

Keynote Speaker for PBIDA’s April 14, 2018, Pittsburgh Area Conference,
Dyslexia Today 2018: Beyond Research-Knowledge to Practice

Dr. Timothy Odegard has described himself as a developmental cognitive scientist who has a passion for studying literacy acquisition and atypical forms of literacy development in children. Dyslexia and reading achievement is multi-faceted with many different complex components. Dr. Odegard along with staff at Middle State University have granted permission for Characteristics of Dyslexia to be reprinted so we may all attend Dr. Odegard's keynote presentation with a common understanding of dyslexia. Characteristics of Dyslexia is part of a larger publication titled, Dyslexia Within RTI, which can be requested by emailing dyslexia@mtsu.edu. Please see pbida.org for complete conference information and for registration.

What is dyslexia?
Dyslexia is the most well researched learning difference, having been characterized at the behavioral and neurobiological levels. It is associated with processing differences that negatively impact the ability of individuals to learn how to read and spell words accurately.

Individuals with dyslexia struggle to read words accurately and/or fluently, in spite of receiving the same reading instruction as their peers who acquire the ability to read words.

Dyslexia negatively impacts more than reading and spelling. However, the reading and spelling deficits are the learning differences most commonly noticed by parents and teachers of school-aged children.

Primary Reading Skills Deficits Associated with Dyslexia
Educators commonly report challenges identifying students with dyslexia. As depicted in the graphic to the right, the primary reading skills deficits characteristic of dyslexia are the ability to read words accurately in isolation and fluently within text. These individuals also struggle to decode words. However, they can memorize words and read words by sight although they learn these words more slowly than typically developing readers. Also, the processing differences that cause dyslexia do not directly impair their ability to comprehend language.

What Does Dyslexia Look Like?
In the early grades, students with dyslexia often perform well when reading text made up of high frequency words that have been drilled for memorization. Given that language comprehension is not a characteristic of dyslexia, it is common for students with dyslexia to perform well when answering comprehension questions about text that they can read.

When these same students are required to accurately read words that they have not memorized or are asked to pronounce nonsense words, they typically struggle to do so, which indicates a weakness in decoding.

In third grade and above, educators experience an additional challenge when trying to identify students with dyslexia. This is because the tests used to gauge how well students are performing in the area of reading transition from word reading tasks to measures of text reading fluency and comprehension.

Students who fall into this category are said to exhibit characteristics of dyslexia. These students will still require more intensive instruction than their peers to develop word reading skills in support of their current and future academic success, even though they do not qualify for services in special education. These students can receive the more intensive instruction they require within the general education setting through RTI.

Poor Responders
Students with characteristics of dyslexia who receive intervention services within the general education setting who exhibit minimal gains in response to Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction can be formally assessed for a specific learning disability. The category of specific learning disability includes dyslexia. This is because dyslexia is a cause of a specific learning disability in the areas of basic reading and/or reading fluency.

(Continued on page 4)
In its most severe form, dyslexia is a specific learning disability. However, it does not always cause levels of academic underachievement that result in the identification of a specific learning disability under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA).

Students identified with a specific learning disability receive intensive, sustained intervention services to address their area of academic underachievement within special education. In many instances, the instructional focus of the intervention will not change from Tier 3 to Special Education. Special education services are considered the most intensive level of intervention and provide eligible students with legal protections under IDEA. Typically, these students receive accommodations and modifications, based on individual need.

Box 1.1
The processing differences that distinguish individuals with dyslexia from their typically developing peers result in these students struggling to learn the structure of words at several levels. Individuals with dyslexia require additional instruction to learn word structure.

Letter - Sound Associations. Typically developing readers learn that words are made up of individual sounds and that these sounds correspond to specific letters. This forms the basis of the print-sound nature of words in English and other alphabetic languages, and it is called the alphabetic principle. Typically developing readers readily learn the associations between letters and sounds in response to direct phonics instruction provided as part of a core reading curriculum in the early grades.

Multi-Vowel Patterns. In addition, students with dyslexia struggle to learn multiple vowel patterns within words that are used to represent different spoken sounds. For example, typically developing readers more quickly learn that certain pairs of vowels produce reliable vowel sounds (e.g., ee, ea, ie), or that pairing a vowel with an r will produce certain sound patterns (e.g., ar, ir, er). Typically developing readers also more quickly learn that certain vowels combine to produce unexpected sounds (i.e., diphthongs; e.g., oi, oy). These vowel patterns are taught during phonics instruction provided as part of a core reading curriculum, and typically developing readers will learn these patterns in response to this instruction.

Complex Word Structure. As students progress beyond 3rd grade, they encounter more complex words made up of multiple syllables. Multi-syllable words present a challenge to students with characteristics of dyslexia because when they are formed they often result in violations to the typical patterns of sound symbol correspondences. Letters are sometimes dropped from words, in some instances letters are added, and vowels in unaccented syllables in the final position are very often pronounced as a schwa. Students with dyslexia who respond to direct phonics instruction in letter sound correspondence and vowel patterns may experience deficits in accurate or efficient reading of multi-syllable words in later grades.

Spelling Patterns (i.e., orthographic structure). Students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia also struggle to spell as well as their peers. While their peers learn the orthographic structure (i.e., letter structure) of words, a characteristic of dyslexia is to not learn these letter patterns as well. As a result, students with dyslexia require even more intensive direct instruction in spelling than their typically developing peers.
Gow is a college preparatory boarding and day school, grades 7-12, for students with dyslexia and related language-based learning disabilities. Gow provides the right environment and the right tools for dyslexic students to rethink the learning process and reinvent themselves. By combining a structured program and environment with flexibility, individualization, and room for fun, Gow provides a rich school experience. This is precisely what dyslexic students need to learn.

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299 Le Roi Road Pittsburgh, PA 15208 412-731-0122
Plan to be in Pittsburgh on April 14, 2018, to learn about dyslexia from national experts. Conference Co-Chairs Mindy Bramer and Maria Paluselli have planned an exceptional program for this event. There will be sessions for teachers, tutors, parents, psychologists, administrators, and other educational professionals.

Keynote Speaker

**Dr. Timothy Odegard** will be giving the keynote address on *Understanding Developmental Dyslexia*. Dr. Odegard is a cognitive psychologist and professor of psychology. He holds the Katherine Davis Murfree Chair of Excellence in Dyslexic Studies at Middle Tennessee State University. His research focuses on memory and language. In particular his research in the area of reading strives to improve intervention efforts to meet the needs of individuals with dyslexia and specific reading disabilities.

Following Dr. Odegard’s address, participants will be able to choose from 2 of 15 breakout sessions for the remainder of the day. Highlights of some of the sessions include:

- **Dr. Rita Bean**, Emerita Professor of Education at the University of Pittsburgh known for her work training reading specialists, will present on how teachers, administrators and other school personnel can facilitate change in their schools and learn strategies for working effectively with colleagues.

- **Dr. Nancy Dyson**, Math Education Specialist from the University of Delaware, will present sessions on developing number sense and fraction sense in students with language based learning disabilities.

- **Dr. Timothy Rasinski** from Kent State University, known for his innovative and effective methods of teaching vocabulary and fluency, will present two sessions on his methods for helping students delight in learning words and in using fluency as a means of improving comprehension.

- **Samantha Shinsky**, Educational Technology Specialist, Provident Charter School, will demonstrate how teachers in the classroom can use Google’s G suite for Education and Chrome Extensions. She will also present an interactive session on apps available for students to use for accessing both printed and digital text.

Additional Breakout Sessions:

- **Dr. Eric Bieniek**: *Using Visual Based Instructional Systems for Classroom Planning and Intervention.*

- **Dr. Erika Buchanan**: *What is Executive Functioning?*

- **Dr. Lisa Goldstein**: *When Emotional and Learning Needs are Intertwined: A Child Psychiatrist Talks About Attention, Anxiety, and Mood in Children with Dyslexia.*

- **Sarah Lipinski and Rachel Swartz**: *Collaborative Relationship Training.*

- **Dr. Timothy Odegard**: *Sources of Information to Identify Characteristics of Dyslexia.*

- **Maria Paluselli**: *Orton Gillingham Basics.*

- **Jeff Ruder**: *Educational Rights for Students with Dyslexia.*

- **Dr. Susan Snyder**: *The Connection Between Central Auditory Processing Deficits and Dyslexia.*

**ACT 48 and CEUs for Social Workers and Psychologists**

**Optional Graduate Credit through Robert Morris University**

Detailed Information and Registration at PBIDA.org
Laughlin Children’s Center believes that all children are unique and deserve their own specialized path to learning success. That is why we take a multi-disciplinary approach to educational support.

Our Academic Department includes the NAEYC-accredited Village Preschool and certified Orton-Gillingham instructors for those with dyslexia, as well as traditional academic tutoring services. Children dealing with communication difficulties can visit one of our licensed Speech-Language Pathologists for screenings, evaluations, or therapy. Our Psychology Department offers students an array of psycho-educational evaluations, along with individual & family counseling and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT). Finally, our Occupational Therapists work with children on graphomotor skills, the cognitive, perceptual, and motor skills which enable a child to write, using a multisensory approach.

Each program caters to the individual child with the goal of developing personal growth and confidence as a learner.

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The Pittsburgh Regional Group of the Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association is pleased to present

The Christopher Gardner Award for Excellence in the Field of Dyslexia to

Bob and Joan Peirce

In recognition of their work to expand the number of Orton-Gillingham tutors in the Pittsburgh region and to increase the number of teachers who understand dyslexia.

In 2013 Bob and Joan Peirce approached the Laughlin Children’s Center in Sewickley about the need for additional opportunities in the Pittsburgh area for children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties to receive Orton-Gillingham instruction. The Laughlin Center already offered tutoring in a variety of subjects including reading, but they did not have tutors certified in Orton-Gillingham instruction. The Peirces committed to fund the establishment of a dyslexia program with Orton-Gillingham certified tutors at Laughlin. With support from the Peirces, Laughlin hired a Pennsylvania certified special education teacher to serve as the Center’s Dyslexia Program Coordinator. Since that time, the Center has trained and certified her, along with seven other teachers, in the Orton-Gillingham method. The program at Laughlin currently serves 15 children and has a wait list for Orton-Gillingham tutoring.

The Peirces support a generous financial aid program that allows children to receive Orton-Gillingham tutoring at Laughlin regardless of their family’s ability to pay for services. They have also committed to support the Laughlin Center’s Dyslexia program with a generous annual grant for the next ten years.

In addition to establishing the Laughlin Center’s Dyslexia Tutoring program, the Peirces saw the need for classroom teachers to better understand dyslexia and to be able to help students in their classrooms. They approached the School of Education and Social Sciences at Robert Morris University about establishing a center to prepare teachers to work with children with dyslexia. The Bob and Joan Peirce Center for Structured Reading Teacher Training will build upon an existing partnership between the university, the Laughlin Children’s Center, and the Children’s Dyslexia Center to train teachers to work with children with dyslexia both in the classroom and in an individualized tutoring setting. The new center’s budget includes funding for scholarships for teachers each year to receive the training. In the past two years, 19 teachers have enrolled in the program, providing 32 more children with Orton-Gillingham tutoring services.

Through their creativity in establishing partnerships and their financial support, Bob and Joan Peirce are touching the lives of hundreds of children each year from Allegheny, Beaver, and Lawrence Counties, and are poised to significantly impact the number of Orton-Gillingham certified teachers available to help those children. We believe the Peirces embody the principles that Christopher Gardner’s wife and daughter hold dear: creating greater awareness of dyslexia, spreading knowledge of best practices throughout the Western Pennsylvania region, and making a true difference in the lives of children with dyslexia and their families.

The Christopher Gardner award was established to honor those who make a significant difference in the lives of people with dyslexia in the Pittsburgh Region. Christopher Gardner, who was dyslexic, had to struggle to find the resources he needed to help him learn to read. His wife, Carrie, and daughter, Valerie, chose to support the Pittsburgh Regional Group of PBIDA in his memory, to help create greater awareness of dyslexia and to spread knowledge of best practices for helping people with dyslexia. Their gift made possible the first IDA-sponsored conference in Pittsburgh.
Robert Morris University Helps Fight Dyslexia

With the support of a $2 million, 20-year founding pledge from Bob and Joan Peirce, Robert Morris University has announced the creation of a center within its School of Education and Social Sciences to prepare teachers to work with children with dyslexia, both in the classroom and as tutors.

The Bob and Joan Peirce Center for Structured Reading Teacher Training will supply a steady stream of teachers and tutors in structured reading approaches, including the Orton-Gillingham approach, a method of reading instruction for students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. In addition, the center will provide outreach services to parents and professional development for school districts.

Demand currently outstrips supply for tutors prepared in the method. Both the Laughlin Children's Center in Sewickley and the Children's Dyslexia Center in Pittsburgh have waiting lists for Orton-Gillingham tutoring.

"So many children are in need of explicit, multi-sensory reading instruction and yet very few graduate programs offer such training," said Carianne Bernadowski, professor of education and the director of the Bob and Joan Peirce Center for Structured Reading Teacher Training. "With this funding, we will be able to provide both training for teachers and tutoring for the children who desperately need it."

The new center will build upon an existing partnership between the university, the Laughlin Children's Center and Children's Dyslexia Center. In that partnership, which also was supported by the Peirces with a $54,000 contribution, the university developed a graduate-level training program, including a practicum with 100 hours of supervised tutoring, to certify instructors in the Orton-Gillingham method.

In the last two years, 19 instructors have enrolled in that program, offering tutoring in one-hour evening sessions at the RMU Literacy Center on the university's Moon Township campus and at the Laughlin Children's Center. Thirty-two children have received Orton-Gillingham tutoring in the program. Along with its partners, the center will continue to provide direct tutoring services to area children.

The new center's budget includes funding for scholarships for teachers each year to receive the training. It also includes scholarships for families unable to pay for their children's reading instruction.

RMU offers Graduate Credit Course Options

Robert Morris University will be offering PBIDA: Conference Continuing Education Course options following Dyslexia Today 2018: Beyond Research - Knowledge to Practice. Candidates must attend the April 14 conference. Proof of attendance is required when registering through the Office of Graduate Admissions.

The first option is a 1-credit course reflecting on strategies learned while attending the Dyslexia Today 2018 conference. It will also analyze and synthesize research in structured literacy, learning disabilities and dyslexia. Candidates will better understand the connection between reading, writing, and the components of early literacy.

The second option is a 3-credit course which includes the same outcomes as the 1 credit course. In addition, candidates will extend their skills in structured literacy by implementing developmentally appropriate, evidence-based structured literacy lessons. After exploration of supporting literature, candidates will reflect on effectiveness of instruction.

These online, graduate credit course options are scheduled to begin April 23. Courses satisfy Act 48 requirements. Submit application, review tuition and fee information at http://admissions.rmu.edu/graduate.

For more information contact Carianne Bernadowski at bernadowski@rmu.edu or 412-397-5463.
Founded in 1980, Neuhaus Education Center is a 501 (c) (3) educational foundation dedicated to promoting reading success for all. Neuhaus provides evidence-based training and support to teachers, supplies information and resources to families, and offers direct literacy services to adult learners.

Neuhaus has more than 35 years of experience in research, instruction and teacher training in the areas of dyslexia and related reading disabilities. We also have evidence-based, independently verified professional learning programs designed specifically for teachers of children from economically disadvantaged families.

Neuhaus meets the standards of the International Dyslexia Association and is accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council. Our professional staff members are certified by the Academic Language Therapy Association.

What We Offer Districts or Campuses:
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What We Offer Educators:
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- Complimentary web-based resources
- Dyslexia Specialist Program

What We Offer Families:
- Referrals to dyslexia interventionists
- Information about dyslexia and related disorders
- Twice-monthly information sessions

What We Offer Adult Learners:
- Reading and spelling classes for adults
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Contact: Sam McComb
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**Calendar of Pittsburgh Events**

**MARCH**

*Provident Charter School* open enrollment period for grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 for the 2018-2019 school year begins March 1. Call 412-709-5160 or visit [www.providentcharterschool.org](http://www.providentcharterschool.org)

*Early Reading Screening, Laughlin Children’s Center*, March 6. More information, call 412-741-4087 or visit [www.laughlincenter.org](http://www.laughlincenter.org)


*Multidisciplinary Screenings, Laughlin Children’s Center*, March 23. More information, call 412-741-4087 or visit [www.laughlincenter.org](http://www.laughlincenter.org)

*Dyslexia Parents Connection Meetings*, check Facebook Pittsburgh Dyslexia Community for dates and locations, or email Pittsburgh.dyslexia@pbida.org

**APRIL**

*PBIDA Pittsburgh Conference, Dyslexia Today 2018: Beyond Research-Knowledge to Practice*, April 14, Doubletree by Hilton Pittsburgh - Monroeville Convention Center. Visit [PBIDA.org](http://PBIDA.org) for information and registration.

*Provident Charter School* open enrollment period for grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 for the 2018-2019 school year ends April 20. Call 412-709-5160 or visit [www.providentcharterschool.org](http://www.providentcharterschool.org)

*Early Reading Screening, Laughlin Children’s Center*, April 3. More information, call 412-741-4087 or visit [www.laughlincenter.org](http://www.laughlincenter.org)


**MAY**

*Tutor Training, Pittsburgh Children’s Dyslexia Center*, begins May 7. More information, call 412-931-3181 or contact pghdyslexiacenter@comcast.net

*Early Reading Screening, Laughlin Children’s Center*, May 1. More information, call 412-741-4087 or visit [www.laughlincenter.org](http://www.laughlincenter.org)

*Little Explorers, Laughlin Children’s Center*, May 1, 8, & 15. More information, call 412-741-4087 or visit [www.laughlincenter.org](http://www.laughlincenter.org)


*Dyslexia Parents Connection Meetings*, check Facebook Pittsburgh Dyslexia Community for dates and locations, or email Pittsburgh.dyslexia@pbida.org

**JUNE**

*Multisensory Math 1 Strategies for Teaching All Kinds of Learners, Marilyn Zecher* 5-day course, June 25-29, 2018, in Pittsburgh. Visit [PBIDA.org](http://PBIDA.org) for information and registration.

*Early Reading Screening, Laughlin Children’s Center*, June 5. More information, call 412-741-4087 or visit [www.laughlincenter.org](http://www.laughlincenter.org)

*Dyslexia Parents Connection Meetings*, check Facebook Pittsburgh Dyslexia Community for dates and locations, or email Pittsburgh.dyslexia@pbida.org
MULTISENSORY MATH 1 STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ALL KINDS OF LEARNERS
Presented by Marilyn Zecher, MA, CALT

5 DAY COURSE!

DATES:  June 25 - 29, 2018
LOCATION:  Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center
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PRICE:  Special Advance Pricing Available until April 30, 2018
        See website for complete fee schedule

Based on the Orton-Gillingham philosophy of teaching, Multisensory Mathematics combines the research-based Concrete-Representation-Abstract (CRA) approach to teaching mathematics with recommendations from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the What Works Clearinghouse, the National Math Panel and Universal Design for Learning. Participants learn to apply this methodology in guiding students from foundation skills and numeracy to place value, basic operations, fractions and decimals. Participants learn to use manipulatives effectively to reinforce concepts, aid memory, and enhance performance for all students. The approach balances conceptual understanding with procedural fluency and incorporates strategies for helping students learn and retrieve math facts. This approach is especially effective with students who learn differently, inclusion classes and ESL learners. The approach is effective for initial instruction as well as remedial work at all levels and is compatible with all curricula and programs.

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For more information & registration visit www.pbida.org
On November 8th the IDA conference offered a symposium on Mathematical Literacy to explore the possibilities of creating a math program for students who have dyslexia and related learning difficulties. We have known for a very long time that dyslexia can impact math. The reasons may be found in the neuroscience and recent explorations of how the human brain processes mathematics.

The goal of the symposium was to look at several schools and programs designed to meet the needs of students with dyslexia and to compare how and when they decided to create an approach to teaching math, how they handle ongoing professional development, how they assess student progress and how they ultimately help students with dyslexia succeed in the area of mathematics.

Marilyn Zecher from The Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Center opened the symposium with a review of the neurological evidence of a core deficit in mathematics. Through the work of neuroscientists studying how the brain processes mathematics, we have learned about our ability to recognize quantity and quantity-relationships without counting. This is called subitizing and it is considered a core deficit in mathematics disabilities. Students must be able to automatically recognize small quantities of four or less and then recognize larger quantities as being composed of a combination of smaller numbers of objects. For example, the student may see seven objects as composed of groups of 3 and 4. If a student cannot recognize these relationships, that student may be at risk for mathematical disability.

The major evidence concerning dyslexia has demonstrated that once a student begins to learn math facts that cannot be seen through subitizing, the language hemisphere of the brain is engaged. When students impacted by dyslexia begin learning their times tables, it is as much a language retrieval task as a math one, so many students with dyslexia take a long time and require alternative instructional strategies in order to learn multiplication facts.

The introduction to the evidence behind dyslexia and math was followed by successive presentations by schools that serve students with dyslexia. Each presented its own unique model for developing a mathematics curriculum and approach to serving its students. Presentations were made by faculty from the following schools: La Key Academy in Baton Rouge, a public charter school serving over three hundred students with dyslexia; The Shefa School in New York City, a Jewish day school serving children with language-based learning disabilities; the Key Learning Center at the Carolina Day School, an Orton-Gillingham and IMSLEC accredited training center; and Carroll School in Massachusetts, a school for students with specific learning difficulties in reading and writing.

The final presentation of the symposium was by Christopher Wooding from Landmark School. He provided a synopsis of the collective approaches presented by all the schools. He concluded that there is no single or typical math student with dyslexia. One must teach each student where that student is and develop foundation skills using specific strategies which move that student toward grade level content. There is no single math program or curriculum as written that meets the needs of these students. Schools and teachers should expect to create models that work for their students, develop foundation skills and move students toward mastery incrementally, sequentially, and thoroughly as possible.

The collective reasoning from the workshop is that the student with dyslexia needs a diagnostic prescriptive approach to instruction as much in math as in reading. There is no quick fix or scripted program that will do this. Teachers knowledgeable in math must create instructional models that move students as quickly as possible but as slowly as is necessary, so they gain the skills they need to reason mathematically. All the schools demonstrated significant growth in skills in their students. The general consensus was that these students can achieve in the area of math. We need to teach them differently because they learn differently. The multisensory model was found to be as valuable in math as in reading and the general IDA approach was found to be valid, workable, and beneficial.

Marilyn Zecher is a Certified Academic Language Therapist specializing in the application of Orton-Gillingham Multisensory Strategies to the teaching of math. She is a former classroom/demonstration teacher who currently trains nationally for The Multisensory Training Institute of the Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center in Rockville, MD. She has developed the Multisensory Math Program and graduate level math methods courses for which she is the instructor. She also gives professional development workshops on multisensory applications in math and maintains a private practice supporting older students who have dyslexia and related learning differences. Marilyn will be teaching her Multisensory Math I Strategies for Teaching All Kinds of Learners 5-day course from June 25-29, 2018, in Pittsburgh. See www.pbida.org for details.
If you have struggling readers, we can help.
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To find out more about 95 Percent Group please contact:
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Understanding Dyslexia™ is designed to provide educators with a deeper understanding of what dyslexia is, how to identify the signs and symptoms.

Early Identification is Key
Understanding Dyslexia will better prepare you to meet student needs and provide effective reading intervention.

Course Highlights
95 Percent Group’s Co-Founder and CEO, Susan Hall, Ed.D. is the lead trainer and the narrator. Understanding Dyslexia engages learners through the use of:
- nine integrated videos,
- narrated interaction slides,
- downloadable resources.

The training can be completed 24/7. Visit our website for more info.
I recently had the opportunity to speak with Megan Maguire-Nicoletti about her parents and the work of the Maguire Foundation. In October, the Maguire Foundation sponsored PBIDA’s 39th conference in Philadelphia on Literacy and Learning Disabilities. With his wife Frances and daughter Megan in attendance, we recognized James Maguire because he has spoken so publicly of his own challenges with dyslexia and how he used his disability as a source of motivation. His remarkable ‘rags to riches’ story, documented in his book, *Just Show Up Every Day*, details his humble beginnings and the academic struggles that ultimately caused him to lose a basketball scholarship and an opportunity to pursue college education. Because James Maguire is not one to give up, the story did not end there. After military service in Korea, Maguire once again enrolled in higher education. His great fortune this time was to be accepted at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. There he gained the attention of the Rev. Hunter Guthrie, an early pioneer in dyslexia, who recognized what was at the root of Maguire’s struggles. With Guthrie’s help, Maguire eventually graduated with a 3.0 GPA. After graduation, Maguire went into the insurance business and he eventually built what would become a one billion dollar company.

In October of 2000, James, together with his wife Frances, created the Maguire Foundation. As noted on the organization’s website, the foundation is committed to improving the quality of life for people through investing in education, arts, and humanities and through helping to alleviate hunger and homelessness. As Megan described, her parents are now focusing on giving away the fortune they worked so long and diligently to build. “The money isn’t the success, it is the giving back”, she shared emphatically. In December of 2016, Megan Maguire-Nicoletti, the fifth of the Maguire’s nine children, became the president and CEO of the Maguire Foundation and she is now leading the work of giving back.

After meeting with Megan Maguire-Nicoletti, I have no doubts that the Maguire Foundation and her parents intentions are in excellent hands. What struck me most about our conversation was the seriousness of purpose and passion Megan is bringing to her work. It is clear that she has been reflecting on the responsibility bestowed upon her. She understands her role in the organization as one of honoring and protecting the vision and mission her parents have had for the foundation and its work. Megan stresses that the foundation was made possible by the work of both of her parents. James Maguire gets much of the recognition because he was the one who earned the fortune that now funds the work of the Maguire Foundation. However, Megan emphasizes that equal credit goes to her mother Frances. It was Frances, with her constant and heart-filled work of raising a large family and building a stable home life, who gave James the foundation that enabled him to focus his energies on building and managing his business.

When Megan speaks of her parents, her love and admiration for them is readily apparent. She describes her mother as all heart and love and noted that she is also an accomplished artist. Of her father, she states that he is proof that a businessman can have integrity and generosity and achieve great success because of, and not despite, high moral character. The motto of the Maguire Foundation, “We are men and women for others”, is based on the teachings of St. Ignatius Loyola. The Maguieres are indeed a man and a woman for others and they raised their children to be the same. My conversation with Megan suggests that her parents were quite successful in raising their daughter to be a passionate, generous and spiritual person. She speaks of the opportunity to head the foundation and work with her father as “…a gift from God; an opportunity to slow down, listen and be present” for her father and to learn from him. Megan conveyed awe as she spoke of being able to be part of work that is so critical and to have the opportunity to serve as a role model.

I asked Megan if she felt in any way fearful or hesitant about the vastly important work that has become primarily her responsibility. Megan has thought deeply on this topic. She shared, “Not fear but an awareness. It is really important to stay focused. You want to be generous and compassionate but we have a social responsibility to have a greater impact.” As a former teacher, education is important to Megan. “The greatest gift we can give a child is education.” She went on to speak about education as a source of opportunity and what will have the greatest eventual impact on hunger and homelessness. It is clear that as Megan strives to sharpen the Maguire Foundation’s focus, education will continue to be central. She suggested that the foundation and the work of giving away a fortune to serve the greater good, calls for a second book picking up the story from where *Just Show Up Every Day* ends. No doubt, Megan Maguire-Nicoletti will have a critical role in this sequel!
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In her keynote presentation at the PBIDA’s 39th Conference on Literacy and Learning Disabilities, Professor Nancy Mather of the University of Arizona, who specializes in the areas of literacy, assessment, and learning differences, presented a series of significant problems or controversies related to dyslexia that have been ignored or overlooked for so long, and by so many, that each is like the proverbial elephant in the room. We can try to ignore them, but we do so at our own peril. Dr. Mather used an interesting blend of historical and current research to describe these problems and, importantly, offer solutions to each one. Citing significant new research as well as reading research completed by legends in the field of reading such as Mykelbust, Monroe, and Dolch, she demonstrated that although many of these problems and their solutions are the subject of cutting-edge research, many have also been staring us in the face for decades.

Dr. Mather is perhaps best known as a co-author of the Woodcock-Johnson IV (Fourth Edition), a battery of tests used to measure cognition, language, and achievement across the lifespan. The WJ-IV is one several standardized, norm-referenced assessments traditionally used in psychoeducational evaluations to help identify or diagnose students with learning differences. Dr. Mather is also the author of several books on assessing and teaching students with learning differences like dyslexia. Given her background as an author of the WJ-IV, it is not surprising that one of the “elephants in the room,” one of the significant or controversial issues she presented during her keynote, was that all of the major methods used to identify students with a learning disability have problems. There is a seemingly intractable tension between the use of a discrepancy model, the hallmark of tests like the WJ-IV, and other methods for identification including profiles (looking at patterns of strengths and weaknesses across component reading skills), and the newer Response to Intervention models (RTI).

The original discrepancy model used measures of cognition (IQ) and achievement in reading to look for significant differences between a child’s potential (based on cognitive ability) and their reading ability (based on standardized tests, such as the WJ-IV). For some schools, this meant plugging student scores into a formula used to measure the size of this discrepancy. There are many measures for cognition and achievement and it has been found that if the wrong measures are used, for example, the formula may not detect a reading disability like dyslexia, may detect it too late in a child’s life, or may be insensitive to gradations in reading ability. The use of profiles and RTI can help with these and other problems associated with the discrepancy model. Mather noted in her presentation, for example, that careful monitoring of all students’ responses to reading instruction will help ensure timely interventions for students who need them. But RTI may have some problems as well, according to Mather, including the inability to determine why a student is not responding. This understanding is necessary so that appropriate instruction targeting specific areas of need can be implemented. Mather suggested using clinical judgement to determine the best method or combination of methods in identifying students with disabilities and determining the most efficacious treatment interventions.

Professor Mather’s expertise in assessment was also apparent in her discussion of a significant problem with screening for dyslexia in schools, and in the solution she suggested. One-stage screening, using one measure of reading ability in a group-administered test, is a problem because it yields too many false positives. Too many children without dyslexia are placed in special, time-consuming and expensive reading programs when they do not need them. Mather suggested a two-stage screening process to identify only those likely to have a reading disability. Those selected through a more rigorous, two-stage screening process could then be administered a comprehensive evaluation.

This comprehensive evaluation should include more than just an assessment of phonological processing, or the ability to perceive and manipulate the sounds represented by letters and letter-combinations. In her presentation, Mather said that the phonological deficit view of dyslexia that has dominated the field for years is inadequate, another significant problem or elephant in the room that must be dealt with. The solution to this problem is to use an additional set of assessments that measure other factors found to be associated with reading problems: attention, orthography (including recall of spelling patterns and word reading speed), and rapid automatized naming of colors, objects, letters, and digits.

Dr. Mather presented other significant problems and their solutions during her keynote address with the below list including just some of those presented:

- We do not pay enough attention to the history of reading research and instruction. Many of today’s best practices have been advocated for decades. Examples include matching the reader to texts at the appropriate level; intervening early; using one-to-one and small group instruction in reading; and realizing that reading problems affect emotional well-being.
- Instruction is not preceded by careful diagnosis. Comprehensive evaluations should be used to determine why a student is struggling and which aspects of reading are affected.
- Gifted children with reading difficulties are often excluded from receiving services. Reading specialists often encounter school policies that exclude services to students who are not failing but who are nevertheless functioning well below what they are capable of in reading. According to Mather, we need to recognize that even with average scores, gifted children can have reading problems.
- Teachers are not sufficiently trained and need better knowledge of language, reading, and writing processes.
- Teachers often do not have the time to provide the systematic, intensive instruction that students with dyslexia need, but we should make sure that adequate instructional time is provided to all students who struggle with reading.

One final problem, or elephant in the room, that Dr. Mather spent a lot of time on during her keynote was the labeling of students with reading difficulties and the failure to have a commonly accepted term to describe dyslexia. While the term dyslexia has
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been around for over a century and used in medicine for a long time, it has not been used in many schools until recently. Schools use terms similar to those defined in federal and state education laws: specific learning disability in reading. Lack of knowledge about the connection between the terms dyslexia and learning disability sometimes leads to confusion for teachers and, especially, parents with children newly diagnosed with dyslexia. Reading specialists belonging to PBIDA have probably experienced the parent who reports, “I notified the school that my son has dyslexia but they told me that dyslexia does not exist.” Mather suggested the following solution to this problem: Use any of the terms currently in use (specific reading disability, specific learning disability in reading, and so on) but always add, “also known as dyslexia,” as in, “a specific learning disability in reading, also known as dyslexia.” We can also add that the term dyslexia is now included in IDEA (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act), the federal law governing special education services in public schools.

Dr. John R. Kruidenier is a literacy and technology consultant and heads Kruidenier Education Consulting (KEC) in Horsham, Pennsylvania.

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How do you know if you or someone you love has a learning difficulty? What are some of the causes of learning disabilities? What are some of the symptoms? The following examples may surprise you:

- Buzz has learned phonics and can sound out words, but he reads paragraphs very slowly. He often has to sound out the same word multiple times, not remembering it. He makes mistakes such as reading “basket” for “breakfast” and struggles with spelling.

- The primary cause of the difficulty with reading and spelling is weak symbol imagery—the ability to visualize sounds in letters in words. Many individuals, even those who have well-developed phonetic processing, have difficulty rapidly perceiving sounds in words, and are thus slow to self-correct their reading errors. Their spelling is often phonetically accurate, but they cannot remember the visual patterns of words.

- In contrast, Sophie reads words accurately, but she cannot comprehend the content. She has difficulty connecting to language she reads or language she hears. Words seem to go in one ear and out the other. People think she is not trying, and she has been labeled with a “motivation” or “attention” problem.

- The primary cause of language comprehension problems is difficulty creating an imaged gestalt, or whole, from oral and written language. This is called weak concept imagery. This weakness causes individuals to only process “parts” of information they read or hear, but not the whole.

- These individuals have difficulty with reading comprehension and critical thinking, and may not easily follow directions or connect to conversations. They may also have a hard time expressing ideas in an organized manner.

While individuals may have differences in their abilities, the processes needed for reading and comprehension are universal.

Reading is an integration of processing skills: word attack, sight word recognition, contextual fluency, oral vocabulary, and comprehension. There are three sensory-cognitive functions that underlie reading and comprehension, and which need to be in place to support development in literacy and numeracy:

1. Phoneme awareness is the ability to auditorily perceive sounds within words.
2. Symbol imagery is the ability to create mental imagery for sounds and letters within words.
3. Concept imagery is the ability to create mental representations for the whole; it is dynamic imagery of actions, scenes, movement, etc.

An accurate diagnosis is the first step in teaching individuals to learn to their potential. Our Learning Ability Evaluation identifies a student’s strengths and weaknesses that may affect his or her performance in reading, comprehension, and math. Our instruction develops sensory-cognitive functions and changes an individual’s ability to read and comprehend.

Additionally, Lindamood-Bell continually analyzes the data generated at our learning centers and at schools across the country. We partner with researchers to study the psychological, neurological, and cognitive processes involved in reading, spelling, and comprehension. We have an established body of independently reviewed results reflecting our ability to help students meet their learning potential.

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The Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot program was signed into law in June of 2014; the first school year of the Pilot started in September of 2015 and the third and final year began in September 2017.

The program runs in eight school districts, kindergarten through second grades, covering 21 school buildings, 85 classrooms, 1,591 kindergarten students; 603 students qualified for intervention and 484 (80.3%) participated through the end of the school year. There are 72 Interventionists, 50 implemented Orton-Gillingham (OG) and the other 22 implemented similar Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) programs. The 2015-2016 cohort are being followed for three years, with a new kindergarten cohort added each year, totaling three cohorts.

The outcomes of the first two years are outstanding but more importantly children entering first and second grades are much better prepared. The program supports two levels: (1) a classroom component, which enhances core instruction for all students focused on phonemic awareness and MSL; and (2) the Intervention component, MSL intervention for students to provide intensive additional instruction. The program began with the professional development for the Intervention component of the program, and the second year introduced a more systemic approach to the early literacy instruction in the classroom with the assistance of speech/language pathologists and a focus on oral language. Four days of training based on the National Reading Panel and the work of Shanahan and Foreman with the K-3 Comprehension and Foundational Skills was developed by our consultants and PaTTAN staff for classroom teachers. The interventionists who received training the first year followed up in the classroom with model lessons and demonstrated how to incorporate MSL strategies within the classroom. The improved student results after just two years is remarkable! Teachers recognize that the children are coming to the next grade at a much higher level in their reading skills, close to where they exited the previous class. The self-esteem of ALL the children has been consistently strong and teachers feel much better about their training and skills, and it shows with the successful outcomes of their students.

The Pilot, with the ongoing data collection, has been used to inform and improve literacy outcomes for children. We applaud the ongoing and consistent direction and redirection of our wonderful consultants, Fran Warkomski, Maria Abbazio, and John Dellegrotto, overseen by the experienced Speech/Language Pathologist and Assistant Director of Special Education, Lynn Dell, all under the supervision of the Director of Special Education, Pat Hozella. All of these professionals have brought many years of knowledge and experience in the field of education and policy to the Pilot Program. Pat Hozella had the vision and determination to bring together this experienced team to work side by side with the teachers and administrators in, what began as three but she increased to eight school districts, to develop the first unified school district/literacy team to support and create an effective pilot program. The Advisory team consists of Senior Scientist for Literacy and Language Disorders from Haskins Laboratory at Yale University, Dave Braze, School Superintendent and School Psychologist, Monica McHale-Small, Past President of PA Branch of the International Dyslexia Association and School Psychologist from Bryn Mawr Child Study Institute, Eugenie Flaherty, President of ALTA and Director of the Children’s Dyslexia Center in Allentown, Marilyn Mathias, long-time Advocate for children with learning disabilities, Pam Cook and two parents of children with dyslexia, founding members of the PA Dyslexia Literacy Coalition and the driving force behind the drafting and passage of Act 69, Diane Reott and Daphne Uliana. The knowledge, experience and background of the Consultant/Advisory team working with each teacher and administrator in each school district to design and redesign the Pilot has been the catalyst to making the PA Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program the single most successful literacy program in terms of efficient funding use that demonstrated improved results for children and effective practices for teachers in a two-year time period. It has also been one of the most highly regarded Pilot programs in the country as acknowledged by many national experts in the field of literacy and language development. We are currently working with legislators in the hopes of extending the Pilot program for an additional two years so that we can continue to collect more data and follow the third and fourth grade cohorts as they participate in standardized tests and prepare for middle school.

I want to end this article with a much deserved thank you to Pat Hozella, Director of Special Education who retired from the PA Department of Education in March 2017. We congratulate Pat on her leadership and ability to support and effectively fund the Pilot program to advance student literacy in our state. Pat worked tirelessly on the Pilot program day in and day out to make it the success it has been in its first two years while under her direction. Under Pat’s supervision we are happy to say we have the data to prove that the literacy rate for the children in the eight school districts of the Pilot program has improved. We hope that the PA Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Pilot Program will serve as a blueprint for early classroom instruction in PA and other school districts around the nation.
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At first, education was as an uphill battle for Will Marsh ’18. The Saint Joseph’s University political science major and educational studies minor from Rahway, New Jersey, was diagnosed with a Specific Learning Disability - Written Expression in the third grade. Marsh shared: “I had delayed speech problems, along with a hard time reading and spelling. The signs were very evident towards dyslexia.”

Since then, Marsh has sought to help others affected by dyslexia. Most recently, he was invited to share his advocacy on a national stage. South By Southwest’s educational conference (SXSW EDU) and the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) asked Marsh to be a panelist on “Why I Won’t Ask For Help: Self Advocacy For All.” This event focuses on the education of students with disabilities during the growth of innovative learning environments.

“I was honored and grateful to be asked by the NCLD to join their panel,” says Marsh. “When only five percent of the participants are students, it’s imperative that they hear the voice of the person with whom they hope to engage.”

The SXSW EDU program includes hundreds of speakers, as well as workshops, discussions and film screenings that focus on diverse education topics such as special needs, leadership, early learning and employability. The conference will be held Mar. 5 - 8 in Austin, Texas.

Marsh began his advocacy as a high school student in 2013 by founding a nationwide virtual conference, Spotlight on Dyslexia, which ran annually until 2016. The event brought together in the virtual space students, teachers and anyone affected by dyslexia. At the conference, advocates provided information about diagnosis, applying to colleges and other topics.

“The conference was recorded and made available online,” says Marsh. “Parents could go back and re-watch all of the sessions as a virtual resource. The site gathered over 6,000 viewers during its four-year span.”

Marsh chose to attend Saint Joseph’s because of its comprehensive dyslexia program. The University was recognized in 2012 by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) as one of nine schools that met the standards and qualifications of accommodating dyslexic students.

“All of my decisions tie together, in that working with my dyslexia has always been the common factor and my main drive,” says Marsh.

In 2015, he was awarded the Remy Johnson Certificate of Merit by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). Each year, the IDA honors a youth with dyslexia who acts as a role model for others. Marsh was chosen for his commitment to dyslexia advocacy and because he has refused to let his disability limit him.

As an SJU student, Marsh was elected to be a University student senator, organized a campus-wide World Dyslexia Awareness Day on Oct. 15, 2016, and as a member of SJU Pride, led the initiative for all-gender restrooms on campus. Marsh has also developed his natural talent for web development by working on the online presence of various SJU organizations such as Student Leadership and Activities, the Office of Inclusion and Diversity and the Office of Marketing and Communications.

Upon graduating from the University in May, Marsh plans to continue working in web development, hoping to land a position in the Washington, D.C. area to advocate for special education at the federal level. He credits SJU for allowing him to pursue his dreams.

“My experience at SJU has taught me that it is important to have an end goal, but to understand that the plan is always changing,” says Marsh.

About Saint Joseph’s University: Founded in 1851 in the Jesuit tradition of academic excellence, Saint Joseph’s University is a top-ranked Catholic University that provides a rigorous, student-centered education. With a total enrollment of 8,500 undergraduate and graduate students, SJU offers a wide array of academic programs designed so that each graduate enters the world with a competitive resume and global perspective. This is achieved through intense academic study led by thought-leading faculty scholars, a comprehensive campus experience and robust study abroad, service-learning, internship and co-op programs. Upon graduation, nearly 100 percent of students are employed, pursuing advanced degrees or volunteering in prestigious service programs. A member of the Atlantic 10 Conference, SJU offers 20 Division I intercollegiate men’s and women’s sports. SJU alumni — over 60,000 strong — provide a powerful network that spans the globe.
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Reading Assist Introduces New Certification Program in Delaware
By Vickie Innes, Reading Assist Executive Director

“The children at Carrie Downie Elementary face many challenges that I have never experienced, my friends have never experienced, and my children have never experienced. It has touched me how hard life can be for them and how difficult it is in school for them, and yet so many come to school with smiles on their faces, with a longing to learn.”

That’s the voice of Liberty Breen, an AmeriCorps member reflecting on her year of service with the Reading Assist Intervention (RAI) Corps inside Carrie Downie Elementary in Delaware. Carrie Downie serves a student population from a disadvantaged area outside Wilmington with 53% of the students coming from lower-income homes and 15% being English Language Learners. Many of the student Liberty served live a day-to-day life that neither she nor I could imagine – facing traumatic events in their homes and neighborhoods, wrestling with food insecurity and, on top of all that, experiencing reading disorders that have made it nearly impossible to learn alongside their peers.

These children need our help. Unfortunately, Delaware does not require structured literacy instruction for reading specialists or special education teachers, and structured literacy is not included in pre-service curriculum at any of Delaware’s universities.

While there is great need for such programs in every school – in our private schools, in our charter schools, and in all of our public district schools - our public schools in Delaware specifically struggle with a lack of knowledge, skills and resources necessary to implement structured literacy programs.

Our Board at Reading Assist recently tweaked our mission to reflect a vision for a future where every student in Delaware who struggles with reading challenges can gain access to high-quality, multi-sensory language instruction delivered by trained, certified professionals.

That’s every student. We quickly realized there is no single solution that could span the diversity in our educational system, and even in a small state like Delaware, the sheer scope of the need can seem daunting. Our first steps toward realizing that vision starts with two programs working in tandem – our RAI Corps in low-income schools and our certification process for those who want to be trained in our IMSLEC-accredited program.

After seeing the first end-of-year results from the RAI Corps (our AmeriCorps pilot program) in 2016 – results that blew away expectations – we committed ourselves to a full revamp of our original program and the way we deliver intervention. Using our RAI Corps pilot program as a living laboratory, we designed the new Reading Assist Intervention Program specifically to deliver this direct, intensive intervention for 45 minutes a day, five days a week, to Tier 3 public school students. We tested new iterations of the program throughout the year, and by the end of our second year of the program, we were well on the path toward IMSLEC accreditation, which we received this October.

Our third year of RAI Corps members, now in schools, were the first to receive this new IMSLEC-accredited training, and they will finish their year with coursework and a practicum experience that will qualify them to be Certified Reading Assist Interventionists (CRAIs) and to sit for the CERI exam. In coming years, we hope that Delaware teachers and reading specialists will also come to Reading Assist for training to become CRAIs.

Yet even if we had trained teachers inside every school, we believe most schools would still need additional resources like the RAI Corps. The one-to-one ratio that the corps employs – possible at this time only through the support of a public-private-nonprofit partnership – would be beyond the budget for many schools.

Educators see the value in having highly skilled interventionists inside the schools. This year, the third year of the pilot program inside the Colonial School District, we added two additional corps members to the roster and placed them at Thomas Edison Charter School in Wilmington. That school has already asked for a third corps member for the 2018-19 school year. We plan to add two more schools to the program by next year (the first year of what we call “Phase 2”), for a total of 20 RAI Corps members in schools around the state. That number could grow even more in coming years with support from AmeriCorps.

Between our partnership with AmeriCorps and our own fund-raising as a nonprofit organization, we have been able to place interventionists in schools at a cost of about $10,000/year to the school, with support from AmeriCorps and Reading Assist covering an additional $20,000 in costs per interventionist.

One leg of the stool supports the other. The more RAI Corps members we can support, the more Certified Reading Assist Interventionists we will have graduating at the end of the school year. If even a fraction of those AmeriCorps members stay in education – as 60% of our first two RAI Corps cohorts have – they will carry their credentials, knowledge and experience with them into their new roles.
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Experience Dyslexia®
A Simulation

"You can read and read and read about various learning disabilities, but until you actually feel what it may be like, it is difficult to understand."

"The simulation opened my eyes to my daughter's world. That is a precious gift which I will be forever grateful."

"It prepared me to better spot 'red flags' for early intervention."

“Dyslexia has more faces than I thought.”

The Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (PBIDA) has reached over 2,000 people in Pennsylvania and Delaware with Experience Dyslexia®, A Simulation.

This lively and thought-provoking activity has received very positive feedback from teachers in both public and private schools, college students in an education course, multiple community groups, and staff of Intermediate Units.

PBIDA is able to tailor the simulation to the size and background of your audience and to the physical facilities of your meeting location.

Experience Dyslexia® is available through PBIDA in Pennsylvania and Delaware.

What is the Simulation?

Participants take part in six simulated activities which mimic the processing and experiences of those with dyslexia.

The program also includes an introductory power point on multiples aspects of dyslexia and a concluding questions and answer session with an experienced panel.

The program is approximately 2-1/2 hours in length.

COMMUNITY GROUPS
$15 per person for a minimum of 20 people

IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS
$400 for 40 people
$500 for up to 90 people

For Further Information
Contact PBIDA @dyslexia@pbida.org
Summer Learning & Summer Fun at AIM

Summer Enrichment Program for Students
A 4-week enrichment program with morning academic skills building & afternoon STEAM and sports activities starting July 2 at AIM Academy

Summer Institute Training for Teachers
An intensive 5-day course, Pathways to Proficient Reading, starting June 18 at AIM Institute for Learning & Research

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