



127th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2015

Legislative Document

No. 231

H.P. 163

House of Representatives, February 3, 2015

An Act To Ensure That Schoolchildren with Dyslexia Receive the Assistance Needed

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative MORRISON of South Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator MILLETT of Cumberland and
Representatives: BATTLE of South Portland, FARNSWORTH of Portland, HARLOW of
Portland, MAKER of Calais, MONAGHAN of Cape Elizabeth, VEROW of Brewer, Senator:
GRATWICK of Penobscot.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §7001, sub-§1-D** is enacted to read:

3 **1-D. Dyslexia.** "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurological in
4 origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by
5 poor spelling and decoding abilities that typically result from a deficit in the phonological
6 component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and
7 to the provision of effective classroom instruction and the secondary consequences of
8 which may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience
9 that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

10 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §7202-A** is enacted to read:

11 **§7202-A. Dyslexia screening**

12 A school administrative unit shall annually screen students from kindergarten to
13 grade 2 for dyslexia, except that, for the 2016-2017 school year, the school administrative
14 unit shall screen students from kindergarten to grade 3 for dyslexia. The students
15 screened must include students who have not previously been screened and have
16 transferred from outside the State. A school administrative unit shall screen students in
17 grades 3 to 12 who have difficulty, as noted by a classroom teacher, in an area described
18 in subsections 1 to 6. The screening of a student must include an evaluation of the
19 student's:

20 **1. Phonological and phonemic awareness.** Phonological and phonemic awareness;

21 **2. Sound-symbol recognition.** Sound-symbol recognition;

22 **3. Alphabet knowledge.** Alphabet knowledge;

23 **4. Decoding skills.** Decoding skills;

24 **5. Rapid naming skills.** Rapid naming skills; and

25 **6. Encoding skills.** Encoding skills.

26 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §7211** is enacted to read:

27 **§7211. Dyslexia consultant**

28 There is created within the department the position of dyslexia consultant to assist the
29 department in complying with the provisions of this chapter and chapters 301 and 305 as
30 they pertain to students with dyslexia. The dyslexia consultant must be a professional
31 highly trained in dyslexia with a minimum of 3 years of field experience in screening,
32 identifying and treating dyslexia. The dyslexia consultant shall serve as the primary
33 source of information and support for school administrative units addressing the needs of
34 students with dyslexia and shall provide school administrative units dyslexia professional
35 awareness training including training on the indicators of dyslexia and the science behind
36 teaching a student with dyslexia. The dyslexia professional awareness training must

1 include courses specifically designed to prepare educators to provide structured language
2 intervention techniques and strategies needed for students with dyslexia, including the
3 following specialized skills: phonology and decoding skills, handwriting, composition,
4 reading fluency and comprehension, writing mechanics and spelling and learning
5 strategies and study skills. Dyslexia professional awareness training may be provided
6 online, at a venue provided by a school administrative unit or at another venue approved
7 by the department and may also be provided through published programs that meet the
8 criteria outlined in this section and that have been selected by the dyslexia consultant.

9 **Sec. 4. Appointment of dyslexia consultant.** The Commissioner of Education
10 shall appoint a dyslexia consultant pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A,
11 section 7211 by July 1, 2016.

12 SUMMARY

13 This bill defines dyslexia as a specific learning disability that is neurological in
14 origin. It requires school administrative units to conduct screenings of students from
15 kindergarten to grade 2 for dyslexia, except that, for the 2016-2017 school year, school
16 administrative units must screen students from kindergarten to grade 3. It requires school
17 administrative units to screen certain transfer and older students. It also creates the
18 position of dyslexia consultant within the Department of Education and provides for the
19 dyslexia consultant to provide school administrative units with dyslexia professional
20 awareness training.