



October 26, 2019

RE: Endorsement of California State PTA Dyslexia resolution

Dear Members of PTAs in Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD),

Palo Alto PTA Council has endorsed California State PTA Dyslexia resolution: ***Addressing the Educational Implications in Public Schools (2016)*** (a.k.a CAPTA Dyslexia Resolution) at our board meeting on October 16, 2019. Resolutions call attention to a problem and a need for action on a particular issue. They are a major source of policy for the CAPTA and its units, councils and districts. The position was well-researched using credible and current information from multiple independent sources with assistance from Decoding Dyslexia CA (DDCA).

Please join us in endorsing The CAPTA Dyslexia Resolution. By endorsing the resolution, we re-affirm the California PTA's position and respond to ***PAUSD Dyslexia resolution No. 2017-18.09***. Both of the resolutions send a strong message of certifying the commitment to supporting educators and families in addressing the needs of students with dyslexia from parents, teachers and communities. We attached a copy of both resolutions.

Your support for the position will support every child with one voice!
We thank you again for your commitment to our children and to this community.

Respectfully,

The Palo Alto Council of PTAs

**DYSLEXIA:
ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2016

- WHEREAS, Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, which typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction, whose secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge; and
- WHEREAS, Up to 20% of the general population, or over 1 million students in California K-12 public schools, display signs or symptoms of dyslexia; and
- WHEREAS, The term dyslexia is found in twenty-two states' laws, including California Education Code, and in Federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) within the broad eligibility category of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), yet many public schools have historically avoided the term "dyslexia" in evaluations, when determining special education eligibility, and in Individual Education Program (IEP) documents; and
- WHEREAS, Without appropriate remediation, most students who struggle to learn to read, continue to struggle with reading, with lasting consequences including not reaching college and career readiness, increased risk of not earning a high school diploma, not attending or completing college, and social/emotional problems; and
- WHEREAS, There is compelling scientific evidence that early identification and intervention using an evidence-based multisensory, direct, explicit, structured and sequential approach to instructing pupils with dyslexia (defined as "Structured Literacy Instruction" by the International Dyslexia Association) improves literacy outcomes for most students with symptoms of dyslexia; and
- WHEREAS, Most teacher preparation programs provide no training regarding dyslexia, appropriate accommodations or evidence-based Structured Literacy Instruction, leaving most teachers unprepared to adequately address the learning needs of children with dyslexia; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts recognize that dyslexia has significant educational implications that need to be better addressed by public schools and school districts; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts hereby adopt the following definition of dyslexia (previously adopted by the Board of Directors of the International Dyslexia Association and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)):

“Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge”; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts support teacher/staff training necessary to improve the understanding of dyslexia and its warning signs, including training in appropriate evidence-based Structured Literacy Instruction for students with dyslexia in accordance with the International Dyslexia Association’s Knowledge & Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading, and to promote knowledge of appropriate accommodations for dyslexic students; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts support early screening for signs and symptoms of dyslexia in kindergarten through the third grade, with parental notification; the use of evidence-based Structured Literacy Instruction as defined by the International Dyslexia Association; and the use of appropriate accommodations in order to provide students with dyslexia equitable access to the general education curriculum; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by the delegates at the National PTA Convention in June 2017.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Dyslexia is a language-based disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is also the most common learning disability in the nation. Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, and it occurs in a continuum from mild to severe. Scientific research from the past few decades has resulted in remarkable progress in the understanding of reading and reading disorders; however, this knowledge, particularly about dyslexia, has yet to bridge the gap between academia and educational practice in public schools, despite the longstanding efforts of the International Dyslexia Association. That is now changing as parents from across the country are coming together in grassroots movements such as Decoding Dyslexia which now has chapters in every state. The U.S. Congress has formed a bipartisan Dyslexia Caucus, and several federal dyslexia initiatives are underway. In addition, as of July 2012, twenty-two states have passed laws regarding dyslexia. Continued legislation, advocacy, training and research is necessary to address the educational implications of dyslexia in public schools.

Dyslexia: Addressing The Educational Implications In Public Schools - continued

Research shows that if students who display the characteristics of dyslexia are provided with evidence-based, multisensory instruction in a structured and explicit manner, most of them learn to read and spell successfully. This instructional approach is defined as “Structured Literacy” by the International Dyslexia Association. Early identification and intervention with the appropriate duration and intensity are critical because the longer students struggle with basic reading and spelling skills, the more difficult the task of remediation and the lower the rate of success. Currently, most general education teachers, special education teachers, and reading specialists, and other professionals in our public schools do not have training in dyslexia. Many teachers don’t know what dyslexia is or how to identify it, nor do they have access to, and training in, evidence-based Structured Literacy programs.

There is also a lack of knowledge about appropriate classroom accommodations and modifications necessary for dyslexic students to be able to access the curriculum.

Although dyslexia is recognized under federal and California special education law under the broad eligibility category of “Specific Learning Disability,” most public schools and school districts do not identify dyslexia or use the term. Without identifying dyslexia, it is unlikely that appropriate remediation and accommodations will be provided. This issue has become so significant that the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services issued guidance to states and local education agencies stating the importance of using the term dyslexia. The majority of students with dyslexia are not identified for special education services until after the third grade, if identified at all in public school. Studies show that the likelihood of successful remediation decreases significantly for students who are not identified before third grade.

In order to address this critical literacy issue, it is imperative that our schools identify students with the symptoms of dyslexia as early as possible and provide evidence-based Structured Literacy instruction by trained teachers.

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
DYSLEXIA RESOLUTION
No. 2017-18.09

WHEREAS, dyslexia is a disorder in one or more of the basic neurobiological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may have manifested itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, and spell; and

WHEREAS, these difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction; and

WHEREAS, dyslexia occurs on a continuum of severity affecting individuals from different cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that up to 20 percent of the overall population displays some signs and/or symptoms of dyslexia, impacting up to 1 million children in California; and

WHEREAS, students who have dyslexia are "general education students" FIRST and learning needs related to dyslexia exist on a continuum; and

WHEREAS, systems of support including universal screening, identification, and evidenced-based interventions address the needs of individual students within an integrated and tiered system; and

WHEREAS, systems designed to address the needs of dyslexic students will be anchored in instructional approaches that are direct, systematic, explicit, cumulative, and multisensory; and

WHEREAS, PAUSD believes that the six principles that form the foundation of the California Dyslexia Guidelines are essential to ensure our capacity to educate students with dyslexia; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the PAUSD Board of Education, hereby proclaims a commitment to supporting administrators, teachers, and other school personnel in identifying and addressing the needs of students with dyslexia; providing professional learning for educators; and providing education and support to students and families to promote self-awareness, self-empowerment, and overall success in school and life.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY: the Board of Education of Palo Alto Unified School District this 30th day of January.

AYES: Dauber, DiBrienza, Baten Caswell, Collins, Godfrey

NOES:

ABSENT:

I, Karen Hendricks, Secretary to the Governing Board of the Palo Alto Unified School District of Santa Clara County, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Board at a meeting thereof held at its regular place of meeting on the date shown above and by the vote above stated, which resolution is on file in the office of said Board.

Date: January 30, 2017

Signed: Karen Hendricks