



# Davis Dyslexia Association International

## POSITION STATEMENT – HB 461

(Relating to the Licensing and Regulation of Dyslexia practitioners and therapists)

1. DDAI is **opposed** to the provisions of HB 461 which use general titles such as “dyslexia therapist” and “dyslexia practitioner” to refer to individuals who have training and qualification in only a single instructional method, “multisensory structured language education” (MSLE).
2. DDAI does **not oppose** provisions which would regulate the use of titles that are *specific* to the areas of qualification, such as licensing as an “Academic Dyslexia Therapist” or “MSLE Dyslexia Therapist”, as long as the licensing scheme remains voluntary.
3. DDAI **supports** the provisions of the proposed bill that would establish an interim committee to study and recommend legislation to increase awareness of early detection and treatment of dyslexia and related disorders.

### DISCUSSION

DDAI supports public efforts to increase awareness of dyslexia and to investigate and explore effective strategies to address reading difficulties in children. However, we are opposed to any state legislation, however well meaning, that will either directly or indirectly limit the options available to parents, teachers or students.

As currently worded, the proposed Texas law uses generalized terms, such as “dyslexia therapist” and “dyslexia practitioner” to apply to individuals who have been trained and demonstrated competency in only one method, “multisensory structured language education” (MSLE) which is a specific form of instruction geared to teaching basic reading skills. Studies have shown

mixed results for such methods in comparison to others, and have not shown that method to be effective in helping older children to achieve reading fluency. Scientists at major research universities are continuing to develop and explore new methods, as well to better understand learning characteristics associated with dyslexia.

We do believe that individuals with MSLE training and credentials should be recognized for their dedication and hard work, through a title that accurately reflects their training. They are experts in providing one highly regarded instructional approach to teaching reading. However, their achievements should not be labeled in a way that diminishes the qualifications of others who have pursued other methods and approaches.

We believe that the use of a general term such as “dyslexia therapist” is misleading to the public, because it implies a state endorsement of one method above all others. The implementation of a voluntary licensing scheme is also misleading because it suggests that unlicensed individuals are unqualified, when in fact they may simply be trained in alternative approaches. Parents of dyslexic children, teachers, and dyslexic adults should have choices, and tutors, teachers, therapists or other practitioners ideally should be described in ways that make clear the specific methods that they use in their practice.

We also believe that it is premature to develop a licensing scheme **before** receiving the report of the interim committee. One task of the interim committee should be to determine whether state licensing is necessary or appropriate, as well as to consider what impact such licensing would have on the cost and availability of various services to the public in the future.

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*Davis Dyslexia Association International provides information and professional training and services in more than 40 nations and 30 languages worldwide. The goals of DDAI are to increase worldwide awareness of the perceptual gifts and talents that accompany dyslexia, and to promote effective methods for resolving learning barriers.*

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