

By: Senator(s) Simmons (13th), Boyd

To: Education;  
Appropriations

## SENATE BILL NO. 2621

1       AN ACT TO ENACT THE MISSISSIPPI DYSLEXIA EDUCATION FUNDING  
2 ACT; TO DEFINE TERMS; TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL SCHOOLS  
3 FUNDING GRANT PROGRAM TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
4 EDUCATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING DYSLEXIA THERAPY TO AID  
5 STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA AS WELL AS TO FUND DYSLEXIA THERAPISTS OR  
6 SUPPORT STAFF IN SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE THAT EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
7 SHALL RECEIVE A MINIMUM AMOUNT UNDER THE GRANT PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE  
8 THAT THE REMAINING FUNDS IN THE GRANT PROGRAM SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED  
9 UPON APPLICATION; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO PROMULGATE RULES  
10 AND REGULATIONS TO ADMINISTER THE GRANT PROGRAM; TO CREATE THE  
11 DYSLEXIA EDUCATION FUND AS A SPECIAL FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY;  
12 TO PROVIDE THAT MONIES APPROPRIATED OUT OF THE FUND MAY BE USED TO  
13 REIMBURSE ACTUAL OVERSIGHT COSTS UP TO A CERTAIN AMOUNT; AND FOR  
14 RELATED PURPOSES.

15       BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

16       SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the  
17 "Mississippi Dyslexia Education Funding Act."

18       SECTION 2. For purposes of this act, the following words  
19 shall have the meanings ascribed herein unless the context clearly  
20 requires otherwise:

21           (a) "Department" means the State Department of  
22 Education.

23           (b) "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability  
24 that is neurological in origin, characterized by difficulties with

25 accurate and fluent word recognition and poor spelling and  
26 decoding abilities, which typically result from a deficit in the  
27 phonological component of language that is often unexpected in  
28 relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of  
29 effective classroom instruction, and secondary consequences which  
30 may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading  
31 experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background  
32 knowledge.

33 (c) "Dyslexia therapy" means an appropriate specialized  
34 dyslexia instructional program that is delivered by a Mississippi  
35 Department of Education licensed dyslexia therapist which is  
36 scientific, research-based, Orton-Gillingham based, and is offered  
37 in a small group setting to teach students the components of  
38 reading instruction which include:

39 (i) Phonemic awareness to enable students to  
40 detect, segment, blend and manipulate sounds in spoken language;

41 (ii) Graphophonemic knowledge (phonics) for  
42 teaching the letter-sound plan of English;

43 (iii) The entire structure of the English language  
44 that encompasses morphology, semantics, syntax and pragmatics;

45 (iv) Linguistic instruction directed toward  
46 proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that  
47 words and sentences are carriers of meaning; and

48 (v) Strategies that students use for decoding,  
49 encoding, word recognition, fluency and comprehension.

50        These components shall be taught using instructional  
51    approaches that include explicit, direct instruction which is  
52    systematic, sequential and cumulative, following a logical plan of  
53    presenting the alphabetic principle commensurate with the  
54    students' needs, with no assumption of prior skills or language  
55    knowledge; individualized to meet the specific learning needs of  
56    each individual student in a small group setting; intensive,  
57    highly concentrated instruction that maximizes student engagement  
58    and uses specialized methods and materials; meaning-based  
59    instruction directed toward purposeful reading and writing, with  
60    an emphasis on comprehension and composition; and multisensory  
61    instruction that incorporates the simultaneous use of two (2) or  
62    more sensory pathways during teacher presentations and student  
63    practice.

64                (d) "Dyslexia therapist" means a professional who has  
65    completed training in a department approved Orton-Gillingham based  
66    dyslexia therapy training program attaining an AA license in  
67    dyslexia therapy or a professional participating in a state  
68    approved dyslexia therapy training program to attain an AA license  
69    in dyslexia therapy.

70                (e) "Grant program" means the Mississippi Dyslexia  
71    Education Funding Grant Program established in this act.

72                (f) "Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for  
73    Students with Dyslexia Program" means a scholarship to provide the  
74    option to attend a public school other than the one to which is



75 assigned, or to provide a scholarship to a nonpublic school of  
76 choice, for students in Grade 1 through Grade 12 diagnosed with  
77 dyslexia in order to receive comprehensive multisensory dyslexia  
78 therapy delivered by holders of an appropriate license in dyslexia  
79 therapy issued by the department.

80 (g) "School" means any public school district, any  
81 agricultural high school, the Mississippi School for the Deaf and  
82 Blind, the Mississippi School of the Arts and the Mississippi  
83 School for Mathematics and Science and any public charter school.

84 **SECTION 3.** (1) There is established the Mississippi  
85 Dyslexia Education Funding Grant Program which shall be  
86 administered by the department for the purpose of providing  
87 dyslexia therapy to aid students with dyslexia as well as to fund  
88 dyslexia therapists or support staff in schools.

89 (2) The department shall distribute grants to each school.  
90 Each school shall receive a grant in the amount of at least One  
91 Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) under the grant program by  
92 October 1, 2025. The remaining funds in the grant program shall  
93 be distributed upon application to the department until the funds  
94 are depleted.

95 (3) The department shall promulgate rules and regulations to  
96 administer the grant program.

97 (4) The department shall provide an annual report to the  
98 Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House and Governor concerning

99 the distribution of funds under this grant program. The report  
100 shall be filed by December 1 of each year.

101       **SECTION 4.** (1) There is created a special fund in the State  
102 Treasury to be known as the "Dyslexia Education Fund" which shall  
103 consist of monies from any source designated for deposit into the  
104 fund. Unexpended amounts remaining in the fund at the end of a  
105 fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any  
106 investment earnings or interest earned on amounts in the fund  
107 shall be deposited to the credit of the fund.

108       (2) (a) Monies in the fund shall be disbursed by the  
109 department for the purposes described in this act.

110       (b) In addition to the purposes in paragraph (a) of  
111 this subsection, monies appropriated out of the fund may be used  
112 to reimburse reasonable actual and necessary oversight costs  
113 incurred by the department in providing grants or loans under this  
114 section. The department shall maintain an accounting of actual  
115 costs and expenses incurred for which reimbursement is sought for  
116 each grant or loan. Reimbursement of reasonable actual and  
117 necessary costs and expenses for assistance shall not exceed one  
118 and twenty-five one-hundredths percent (1.25%) of the monies  
119 appropriated out of the fund. Reimbursements made under this  
120 paragraph shall satisfy any applicable federal tax law  
121 requirements.

122       **SECTION 5.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
123 and after its passage.

