



Bureau Brief



TO : Senator Joyce Elliott

FROM: Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research

DATE : May 31, 2016

SUBJECT : District and School Survey Responses Regarding Dyslexia

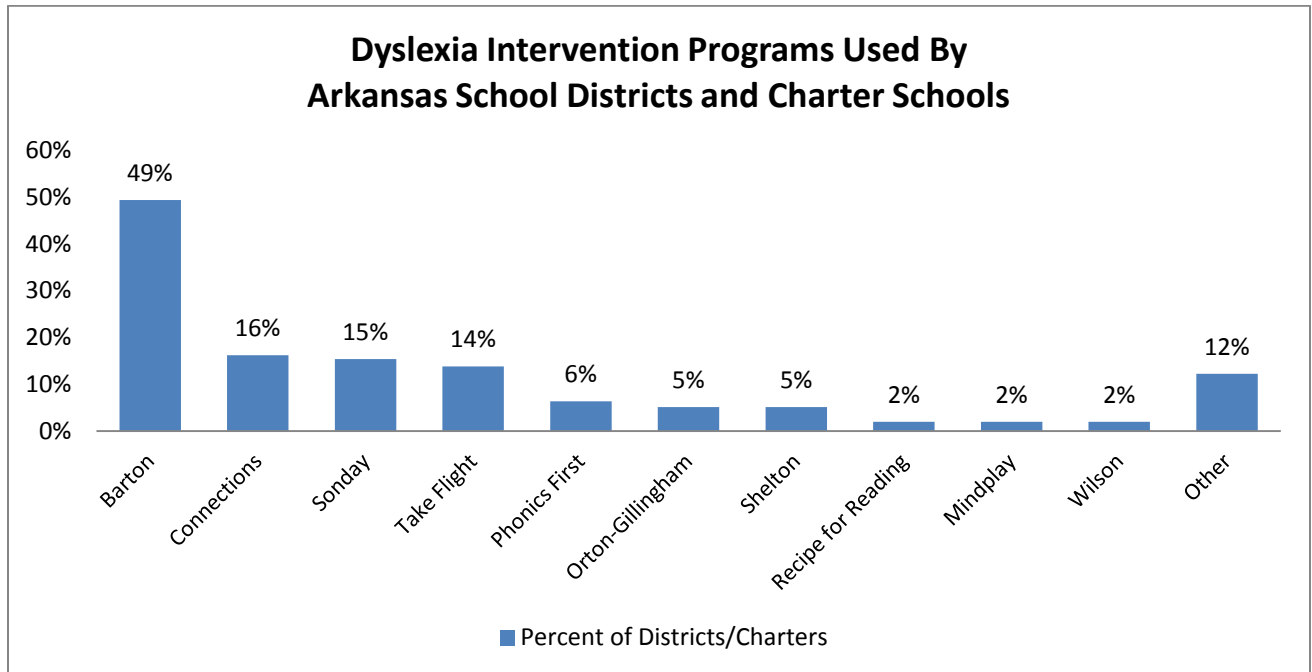
PROJECT # 15-193

The Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) surveyed school districts on their dyslexia screening/identification and intervention programs. The BLR sent the questions to all 234 school district superintendents and to 22 open-enrollment charter school directors. The BLR also sent this questionnaire to the special education supervisors in each district and charter school. The BLR received a response from all 234 school districts and 19 of the 22 charter schools. This memo provides questions and responses that are related to the dyslexia survey.

The district-level survey was conducted using an online questionnaire. The survey was distributed to the districts beginning October 27, 2015 and the last district responded April 11, 2016. The questionnaire allowed BLR to collect specific, quantitative data from the districts on the number of students identified with dyslexia and the number of students receiving dyslexia services in their districts (regardless of whether or not the students had a medical diagnosis of dyslexia), as well as qualitative data on districts' dyslexia programs through open-ended questions.

Question: What intervention program(s) is your district using in 2015-16 that is (are) specifically responsive to helping students with dyslexia? Please provide the name of the intervention program(s).

Three of the 19 charter schools responding to the survey did not answer this dyslexia question and two of the school districts left this question blank. Of the Arkansas school districts that responded to this question in the survey (N=248), 49% of respondents reported using the Barton program. The percentages of districts using Barton as well as other commonly named programs, such as the Apple Group's Connections, Sonday, Take Flight, and Phonics First are shown in the following graph. About 12% reported using other programs than the most commonly named programs. The percentages in the following graph sum to more than 100% because many school districts use more than one program for their students.



Note: Many of the districts that listed a program categorized here as “Other” listed more than one program in this category.

Orton-Gillingham is a methodology used to instruct students with dyslexia, while programs such as Shelton and Take Flight are specific, proprietary curricular programs that employ the Orton-Gillingham methodology or approach. The districts that listed only Orton-Gillingham are counted in “Orton-Gillingham” in the chart above.

Question: If your district is using more than one intervention program, please explain why.

A total of 74 school districts and charter schools responded to this question. Of these, most said they offer more than one program because different students have different needs. Some districts noted that programs are designed for different ages and developmental stages of children. Other districts said their staff is trained in a variety of programs and methods.

Question: List the name(s) of your district’s dyslexia interventionist(s). Please also list where each interventionist received training in a dyslexia program. If the interventionist(s) received dyslexia training somewhere other than an institution of higher education, who arranged the training? Where was the dyslexia program training located? What was the name of the entity that arranged the training?

Districts listed nearly 900 dyslexia interventionists in the state of Arkansas. (Two districts and two charters that responded to the survey did not respond to this question.) Nearly 60% of the districts and charter schools (151) that responded to this survey indicated that they employ more than one interventionist to conduct their dyslexia programs, while 102 school districts indicated that they have only one interventionist. In many districts (about 100), dyslexia interventionists received their dyslexia training from their education service cooperative or at the location of their cooperative. (More specific numbers cannot be obtained due to the lack of uniformity in the responses.) More than two dozen districts said their interventionists received training from The Apple Group in Jonesboro. Other districts said their interventionists received training on-site at the district itself, or through a higher education institution. Others indicated they completed training online or through a computer-based program on disk.

Question: During the 2014-15 school year, how many students in your district have been identified with characteristics of dyslexia following the level II dyslexia screening?

Statewide, there were 1,326 students in Arkansas identified with the characteristics of dyslexia following the level II dyslexia screening in the 2014-15 school year. One hundred twenty-nine districts/charter schools left this question blank, which may mean they identified zero students in 2014-15.

Question: During the 2015-16 school year, how many students in your district have been identified with characteristics of dyslexia following the level II dyslexia screening?

Statewide, there were at least 2,496 students in Arkansas identified with the characteristics of dyslexia following the level II dyslexia screening in the 2015-16 school year (including one district that indicated the number of students identified was “30+”). Sixty-five districts/charter schools left this question blank, which may suggest zero students identified. Four districts indicated that no students had been identified, but that screenings were still in progress.

Question: During the 2014-15 school year, what was the TOTAL NUMBER of students in your district who had ever been identified with dyslexia?

Statewide, there were 2,166 students in Arkansas who had ever been identified with dyslexia in the 2014-15 school year. Ninety-six districts/charter schools left this question blank, which may indicate zero students had been identified.

Question: During the 2015-16 school year, what was the TOTAL NUMBER of students in your district who had ever been identified with dyslexia?

Statewide, there were 4,388 students in Arkansas public schools who had ever been identified with dyslexia in the 2015-16 school year. Forty-six districts/charter schools left this question blank, which may indicate zero students identified in some districts.

Question: How many students in your district received services through your dyslexia program in the 2014-15 school year?

Statewide, there were 2,305 students in Arkansas who were receiving services through their district’s dyslexia program in the 2014-15 school year. One hundred thirty-nine districts/charter schools left this question blank, which may indicate zero students receiving services.

Question: How many students in your district received services through your dyslexia program in the 2015-16 school year?

Statewide, there were about 5,400 students in Arkansas who were receiving services through their district’s dyslexia program in the 2015-16 school year (including one district that indicated the number of students receiving services is “600+”). Thirty-one districts/charter schools left this question blank, which may indicate zero students receiving services.