



Decoding Dyslexia Iowa (DDIA) is a grassroots movement driven by Iowa families and professionals concerned with the limited access to educational interventions for dyslexia within our schools. We aim to raise dyslexia awareness, empower families to support their children, and influence policymakers and educators on best practices to identify, remediate, and support Iowa students with dyslexia.

In response to House Study Bill (HSB) 542, DDIA would like to make the following declarations regarding services provided to families and students impacted by dyslexia:

- It is our priority that students and families impacted by dyslexia have access to trained professionals who have an in-depth knowledge of special education processes and law, including the details of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and all associated duties and responsibilities.
- It is our priority that individuals who hold the Iowa Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement remain in a position to use their expertise to help Iowa students.
- In the current educational system, there is a wide variance in training and services available to educators, students, and families impacted by dyslexia. Inconsistency has led to inequity, and there is no standard of care available to all Iowa students.
- We would support legislation that works to improve these inequities and provides a consistent standard for students with dyslexia. We would support a review of the AEAs and increased accountability.

In response to the proposed HSB 542, DDIA has the following concerns and questions for the Iowa Department of Education and policymakers:

- Families of students with dyslexia are already struggling to get appropriate services in Iowa and the needs of many are not being met. Without additional details, it is impossible to know if this legislation will make the situation better, or worse.
- We are concerned that moving the volume of services currently offered by the AEAs to a division within the Iowa Department of Education would further deteriorate an already weak service model. Historically, responsiveness from the Department to parents and families has been severely lacking.
- If districts do not contract with an AEA, will they still be required to use these funds for the same purpose, or will schools be given the option to spend this money on something other than special education and support services? This could have a significant negative impact on students, especially in smaller districts where sufficient funding is not available for needed services.
- If schools choose to contract with private providers for services currently being provided by the AEAs, who will make sure these providers have appropriate credentials and services are high-quality, evidence-based, and compliant with special education law?

We will continue to monitor the progress of this legislation and actively engage in discussions. We look forward to working together to ensure evidence-based services and supports are available to all Iowa students with dyslexia.