

# MEMO

**To:** Dr. Bruce Messenger, Superintendent

**From:** Angel Stobaugh, Director of Literacy, Instructional Services & Equity  
Michelle Brenner, Director of Elementary Special Education, Instructional Services & Equity

**Date:** September 24, 2015

**Subject:** Board Member Questions - Support for Students with Dyslexia

**In response to questions from the Board of Education, below is information regarding current district actions for students who are identified with dyslexia or displaying dyslexic behaviors.**

**What data we have regarding dyslexia in the district. How many dyslexic students do we have in the district and how are they progressing, given the interventions we have in place?**

- We do not have data on how many students have dyslexia in BVSD. As we don't diagnose dyslexia, instead we identify students with a learning disability. That data can sometimes align with a dyslexia diagnosis and other times not. We also have many students with this diagnosis who do not need an IEP. So, we can't respond to this question with a specific value.

**Do we have reading specialists and materials in all of our schools to address situations like the one described?**

- In recent years we have funded a minimum .5 FTE literacy interventionist in each school. Based on data, some schools receive an additional .5 to 1.0 FTE to provide direct intervention services to students. These teachers have been trained in either Leveled Literacy Intervention or Reading Recovery and have the materials needed for implementing these programs.
- Last spring we began a pilot of the Barton Gillingham method of intervention for students showing dyslexic behaviors. Materials were purchased for the teachers involved in the pilot. Due to funding constraints, we haven't been able to increase FTE in schools and therefore Barton-Gillingham is offered as a tutoring program occurring before or after school, paying teachers curriculum pay. This [link](#) outlines BVSD's implementation of Barton-Gillingham.

**Are we providing PD for our specialists so they are well-versed in the most effective programs?**

- Yes, BVSD's Literacy Specialists continually investigate the many program options developed nationally and internationally. To respond to the needs of students displaying dyslexic behaviors, Orton-Gillingham and an adaptation called Susan Barton - Gillingham Method, were researched. Last spring 15 teachers were trained in Barton-Gillingham and this year District Literacy Specialists are training 23 more teachers, including 11 special education teachers, three classroom teachers, and five literacy interventionists.
- Boulder Valley's Literacy Department provides robust professional learning opportunities for the interventionists servicing students who are reading below grade level. In the initial year of training, teachers meet every two weeks for in-depth study of the theory and practices of the intervention being provided. In the second year teachers attend follow-up training monthly. Then, in future years, each teacher must attend continuing contact meetings held 4 to 5 times per year for as long as the teacher is providing the intervention. These interventionists also receive job-embedded coaching throughout these training years.