

## **Alabama's Dyslexia Advisory Council Update:**

Twelve members of the Alabama State Department of Education's (ALSDE) Dyslexia Advisory Council (DAC) had the opportunity to meet with interim State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Phillip Cleveland, and newly appointed Director of the Alabama Reading Initiative, Mrs. Karen Porter on May 31, 2016. The members of the DAC were appointed in August 2015 in compliance with the Alabama Administrative Code Amendments that became regulatory law on October, 8, 2015. The mandate of the DAC which is appointed by the State Board of Education is to: advise the ALSDE on dyslexia support needs throughout the state, provide feedback regarding the implementation of the support activities and offer guidance and resources based on particular expertise. The purpose of the meeting was to understand the dyslexia implementation plans moving for 2016-2017 to learn how the DAC can facilitate the continuation of the dyslexia work that began during the 2015-2016 school year.

The members of the DAC sent a list of questions and concerns to Dr. Cleveland and Mrs. Porter prior to the meeting. Please find a short summary of the topics of discussion below.

- **What does the 2016-2017 dyslexia implementation plan contain with regard to professional development for teachers in all grades across Alabama?** A plan is currently being developed by Mrs. Porter and her ARI staff. Regional ARI coaching staff is being hired or reassigned to schools at this time. Mrs. Porter stated that up to 98% of the school districts report that at least one member of school staff has received the dyslexia stimulation (dyslexia awareness training) this past school year. Many school systems trained far more members of staff including many teachers in kindergarten through second grade. Training modules on the following topics are beginning to be developed: dyslexia screening, dyslexia specific interventions, appropriate multi-sensory classroom strategies, accommodations and assistive technology. A dyslexia strand of professional development activities is being offered at the MEGA Conference on July 11-15, 2016 in Mobile, Alabama. For more information on the MEGA Conference and registration go to: <http://www.alsde.edu/ofc/ols/Pages/mega-all.aspx>
- **How is the on-line Dyslexia Resource Guide (DRG) being monitored and updated?** At this time, the most recent update to DRG was made on May 1, 2016. In the future the members of the DAC will be sent an email containing the proposed changes to the DRG forty-eight hours before the release to give members the opportunity for review and comment on the changes. The new information/changes can then be circulated through the members of the DAC to the school districts as well as on-line availability.
- **How will the restructuring of the Alabama Reading Initiative staff impact dyslexia services for grades K-2 and 4-12?** At this time, Mrs. Porter is hiring ARI regional support staff. Staff will be assigned to a Tier II schools according to the school's performance on the ACT *Aspire* Test scores. ARI regional support staff will then be centrally trained and will work within a school district to train others and support staff on the district level. Staff training and support should be inclusive of all grade levels in a school.

- **Will the Multi-Sensory Language Education (MSLE) training continue?** Yes. The application packets and memoranda went to the District Superintendents on May 26, 2016. Cohort 6 will provide training for 25 public school teachers over a two-year period. The application and memo release will be moved up to January, 2017 for the next school year. The 2016 application is available on-line at:  
<http://www.alsde.edu/sites/memos/Memoranda/FY16-2064.pdf>
- **How can the DAC and the ALSDE partner together during 2016-2017 to keep the dyslexia work moving forward for the students of Alabama?** Dr. Cleveland and Mrs. Porter both endorsed the work of the DAC members. They ask the members of the DAC to continue working in collaboration with the ALSDE to advise staff in an open and honest manner. Mrs. Karen Porter is the point of contact person for DAC members and anyone having questions regarding dyslexia services and professional development. Mrs. Porter's contact information is [kporter@alsde.edu](mailto:kporter@alsde.edu).