

For Immediate Release:
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Decoding Dyslexia Maryland Urges Legislature to Fund Dyslexia Task Force Report Recommendations *Early Screening for Reading Difficulties Helps Reduce Reading Failure in Maryland*

ANNAPOLIS, Md., Feb. 1, 2017 -- The impacts of reading failure are common knowledge, yet Maryland continues to churn out graduates with low literacy. Statistics from the Maryland Higher Education Commission show 70 percent of students admitted to Maryland community colleges in 2012-2013 school year required remediation.

Decoding Dyslexia Maryland will host a discussion on the impact of misinformed reading instruction in MD and how this instruction negatively affects students with dyslexia and reading difficulties. The panel includes testimony from students, teachers and a Pennsylvania school district that has changed how teachers are trained to teach reading to students. The panel discussion will include solutions for policymakers.

WHAT: Panel Discussion on Reading & Dyslexia Policy Solutions

WHO: Ella-Jane Miller, student Montgomery County Public Schools; Dayne Guest, recent graduate, Baltimore County Public Schools; Amy Siracusano, teacher trainer, Calvert County Public Schools; Monica McHale-Small, Superintendent, Saucon Valley School District, PA & Dr. Fran Warkowski, Dyslexia Pilot Coordinator, PA Dept. of Ed; Q&A

WHEN: Thursday, February 2, 2017, 12:00pm-1:00pm

WHERE: Room 180, Lowe House Building, 6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, 21401

"Although the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is taking steps to help students who are at risk for reading failure," said Pamela Guest, a Baltimore-area parent and President of the Baltimore County Special Education Advisory Committee, "we must do more. My son struggled with reading throughout his school years and teachers would say that he just wasn't trying hard enough. No matter how hard he tried, his reading skills didn't improve and prevented him from entering the plumbing work study program. He is not 'college and career ready' and that's a big problem."

Maryland's focus on college and career readiness must address all students, not just those who read early and easily. The recent "Report of the Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program," commissioned by the Legislature, recommends that the state transform teacher reading preparation at Maryland universities by ensuring all teacher candidates have the knowledge and practice required to identify struggling readers and to teach them how to read.

The Dyslexia Task Force Report also recommends "universal early screening for reading difficulties in K-2." The full report includes 6 recommendations, Best Practices for Dyslexia, and a Dyslexia Pilot Program. Dyslexia Task Force members met for 30 hours over several months and the recommendations and pilot program were developed public school teachers, school psychologists, dyslexia specialists, parents, MSDE and school administrators.

This report contains valuable research, solutions and a pilot program that should be reviewed by the Maryland COMMISSION ON INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION and included in the FY2019 budget and funding formulas.

Decoding Dyslexia Maryland is a grassroots movement of parents, students, teachers and related professionals concerned with the limited access to educational interventions for dyslexia in Maryland public schools.
www.DecodingDyslexiaMD.org

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