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<b>Department Name:</b>	Leadership Development
<b>Date Email Sent:</b>	March 6, 2019
<b>Email Subject Line:</b>	2019 March Early Bird Follow-Up
<b>Recipient Groups:</b>	March 2019 Early Bird Attendees Executive staff

### Email body:

Here's a message from Sonya Yates, dyslexia therapist for Saraland City Schools and presenter of the March 2019 Early Bird Session.

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Thank you so much for allowing me to share my passion for reading with board members! Since participants were still asking questions at the end of the session, I failed to ask everyone to leave simulation materials on the tables. **Please throw away all of these materials since they are copyrighted.**

I've attached some documents for school board members and included some promised info below. Please feel free to contact me if you need any help accessing the resources I've linked you to below.

#### **Podcast mentioned in the session**

*Hard Words: Why aren't kids being taught to read?*

**\*\*Make sure you listen to the podcast after reading the article!**

#### **What is a preventative model?**

- The opposite of the "wait to fail" model.
- Strong fundamental reading and spelling skills are offered to all students.
- Teaching ALL students using structured literacy (the science of reading) so we do not miss any students!
- Screening for students who are at risk of dyslexia or other reading challenges.
- Intervening early, before students begin to fail.
- Creating a strong plan for dyslexia implementation for whole group, small group, and intervention settings.
- A preventative model includes teacher training in foundational reading skills. A specific example which is offered FREE in Alabama is LETRS (see below).
- Implementing structured literacy in core instruction and intervention is part of a preventative model. Ask your superintendent to be skeptical of promises made by sales people which sound incredible. Encourage him/her to check with a member of the Dyslexia Advisory Council before committing to a plan or service.

#### **Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) grant:**

<https://www.voyagersopris.com/info/al-solutions/>

- LETRS...
  - Is independent of any boxed curriculum or intervention program
  - Connects research to practice

- Creates a common language for teachers and administrators
- Is intensive and takes 2 years to complete
- Builds teacher background knowledge on how students learn to read
- Let your superintendent know about this great option. Mention that teachers need to submit their names ASAP since they are already planning for next year. Contact info: Dr. Barbara Cooper [barbara.cooper@ece.alabama.gov](mailto:barbara.cooper@ece.alabama.gov), or Gay Finn, [gfinn@alsde.edu](mailto:gfinn@alsde.edu)

**What can you as a board member do to help?**

- Support this initiative by declaring October as Dyslexia Awareness Month in your school system.
- Be positive and encouraging for staff and families. Yes, dyslexia support is an unfunded mandate, **but that does not release us from our responsibility to these students**, and it IS possible to implement.
- Advocate for funding from local and state legislators. [[Reach out to AASB](#) for help with this!]
- Ask to see your school system's implementation plan.
- Ask your superintendent what you can specifically do to help, then do it.
- Be PROACTIVE as a board.

**Helpful Links:**

[International Dyslexia Association \(IDA\)](#)

[Dyslexia Help at the University of Michigan](#)

[Understood.org](#)

[The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity](#)

[Accredited Teaching Programs](#)

Again, thank you so much for allowing me to share my heart with you. I'm looking forward to hearing any feedback. Please let me know if you have any questions or need help!

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Best,

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**Attachments (if any):**

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