

1 **H. B. 4608**

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3 (By Delegates Barrett, Lawrence, Young,  
4 Tomblin and Campbell)  
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6 [Introduced February 17, 2014; referred to the  
7 Committee on Education.]  
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10 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by  
11 adding thereto a new section, designated §18-20-10, relating  
12 to establishing and requiring a uniform definition of  
13 dyslexia; application of definition; and specifying  
14 legislative findings.

15 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

16 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended  
17 by adding thereto a new section, designated §18-20-10, to read as  
18 follows:

19 **ARTICLE 20. EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN.**

20 **§18-20-10. Dyslexia defined.**

21 (a) The Legislature finds as follows:

22 (1) Reading difficulties are the most common cause of academic  
23 failure and underachievement;

24 (2) Approximately twenty percent of young students demonstrate

1 significant weaknesses with language processes that are the root  
2 cause of dyslexia and related learning difficulties. Of those who  
3 are referred to special education services in public schools,  
4 approximately eighty-five percent are referred because of problems  
5 with language, reading, writing, or a combination of each;

6 (3) Teaching reading effectively, especially to students  
7 experiencing difficulty, requires considerable knowledge and skill.  
8 Informed and effective classroom instruction, especially in the  
9 early grades, can prevent and relieve the severity of language  
10 difficulties, and significantly improve literacy development;

11 (4) For those students with dyslexia who need specialized  
12 instruction, competent intervention can lessen the impact of the  
13 disorder and help the student overcome the most debilitating  
14 symptoms;

15 (5) The majority of practitioners at all levels have not been  
16 prepared in sufficient depth to recognize early signs of risk, to  
17 prevent reading problems or to teach students with dyslexia and  
18 related learning disabilities successfully;

19 (6) While dyslexia programs that certify or support teachers,  
20 clinicians or specialists differ in their preparation  
21 methodologies, teaching approaches and organizational purposes,  
22 they should ascribe to a common set of professional standards for  
23 the benefit of the students they serve. Compliance with such  
24 standards can assure the public that individuals who serve dyslexic

1 students in public schools are prepared to implement scientifically  
2 based and clinically proven practices;

3 (7) The International Dyslexia Association offers standards to  
4 guide the preparation, certification and professional development  
5 for teachers of reading and related literacy skills in classroom,  
6 remedial and clinical settings; and

7 (8) The basis of ascribing to common standards to benefit  
8 dyslexic students requires adopting a common definition of  
9 dyslexia. The Legislature finds that the definition of dyslexia  
10 prescribed by the International Dyslexia Association is the  
11 appropriate measure for recognizing dyslexia in students.

12 (b) The state board shall ensure that any rule, policy or  
13 Individualized Education Program regarding dyslexia or services for  
14 students with dyslexia, which is developed, adopted or implemented,  
15 remains consistent with the International Dyslexia Association  
16 definition of the term.

17 (c) "Dyslexia" is defined as follows, unless and until the  
18 term is modified by the International Dyslexia Association: A  
19 specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is  
20 characterized by difficulties typically with accurate or fluent  
21 word recognition, or both, and by poor spelling and decoding  
22 abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in  
23 the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in  
24 relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of

1 effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include  
2 problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience  
3 that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to define dyslexia in accordance with the definition established by the International Dyslexia Association.

This section is new; therefore it has been completely underscored.