



NOTRE DAME  
OF MARYLAND  
UNIVERSITY

**Bill Number:** HB237/SB126

**Position:** Letter of Support

**Bill Title:** State Department of Education - Early Literacy and Dyslexia Practices - Guidance and Assistance

**Committee(s):** Ways and Means / Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Bill Hearing Date(s):** January 20 & 27, 2021

In May 2015, the Maryland General Assembly authorized a Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program (HB278, 2015). The final report of the Task Force (2016)<sup>1</sup> stated that “*across the State, many teachers report limited knowledge regarding dyslexia and practices that produce results for this populations of learners*” and recommended that curriculum and instructional strategies utilized in teacher preparation programs be reviewed and revised to include Structured Literacy and targeted evidenced-based intervention practices. In response to the report’s findings, starting in spring 2018, Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) began offering a new graduate Dyslexia Certificate Program in partnership with Jemicy School, nationally known for educating for students with dyslexia and other related language-based learning disabilities. This twelve-credit program, which also addresses dysgraphia and dyscalculia, aligns with the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading developed by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). Upon completion, the candidates are prepared to take the IDA certification exam for classroom educators. The program has now expanded to include teacher cohorts in several large school districts in Maryland and incorporated as a master’s program concentration area.

NDMU supports HB237/SB126. Our work with teachers throughout Maryland shows that there is an ongoing need for them to have access to current resources and evidence-based practices related to early literacy and dyslexia. The proposed handbook, coupled with professional development, would provide classroom teachers with the knowledge and skills to instruct the struggling readers more effectively in their classrooms. NDMU would be willing to recommend and support a NDMU faculty member with expertise in early literacy and dyslexia be considered for appointment to the advisory group.

NDMU requests the committee return a favorable report on House Bill 237 and Senate Bill 126.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Greg FitzGerald, Chief of Staff, at (410) 532-5109 or [gfitzgerald@ndm.edu](mailto:gfitzgerald@ndm.edu), or Dr. Kathryn Doherty, Dean of the School of Education, at (410) 532-4597 or [kdoherly1@ndm.edu](mailto:kdoherly1@ndm.edu).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/021600/021654/20170046e.pdf>