

**I. Request that Administration explore the feasibility of implementing the Orton – Gillingham model for Dyslexic students for those students in need of specific services**

- **Request that the Administration provide a summary of the Orton-Gillingham model program:**

Orton- Gillingham (OG) is a systematic intensive multi-sensory reading intervention that requires educators to complete a coursework (30-40 hours) as well as (50) hours of a supervised practicum which must also include 1:1 observations. The Orton Gillingham Classroom Educator is qualified to apply the principles of the Orton-Gillingham approach to modify and provide literacy instruction for a classroom or small groups (Tier 1), and targeted direct instruction to individual students which can also include (Tiered 3) service delivery intervention model.

**Certification Requirements - Coursework & Practicum:**

Each of the four levels requires coursework hours and supervised practicum:

1. Orton-Gillingham Classroom Educator, OGCE/AOGPE
2. Associate Level, A/AOGPE
3. Certified Level, C/AOGPE
4. Fellow Level, F/AOPGE

**Elements of Orton-Gillingham:**

Reading acquisition in all learners and the nature and needs of the dyslexic learner includes the following components:

- Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Reading Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension

**Orton-Gillingham Instruction Principals of Instruction:**

- Explicit
- Systematic & Structured
- Sequential & Cumulative
- Multisensory
- Individualized
- Diagnostic & Prescriptive
- An approach not a curriculum where all concepts, words, sentences, reading etc. involved in the lesson are teacher created based on diagnostic evaluation of previous lesson.

**Standardized Materials:**

- Phonogram drill cards
- The Gillingham Manual 8<sup>th</sup> edition (1997) By Anna Gillingham and Bessie Stillman

**Progress Monitoring Tools/ Mastery Criteria:**

- Teacher subjective based on diagnostic notes and analysis of previous lesson
- Pretests and post-tests levels

## **Sample on-line Training:**

### **Online Basic Training Institute to be held Feb. 25 - May 26, 2019**

This academy accredited Program has a national reputation. The 120 hour course is spread out over 12 weeks, and broken down into 12 modules. This is largely a 1:1 training and trainees will meet regularly online with their master teacher throughout the course.

**Tuition paid in full is due at the time of registration: \$2,095**

Each trainee must find a student (grade 2-4) local to their area that is willing to dedicate the time required to be screened online by a Master Teacher (to determine appropriateness for the practicum). Beyond the initial screening, the student will need to be available two times a week for a total of 12 forty-five minute practicum lesson sessions. Note: All practicum lesson sessions will need to be video recorded.

Minimum technology requirements include: headset, desktop/laptop with camera and microphone, high speed reliable internet connection, printer, and video recording equipment for practicum sessions. Please note a PC is preferred over a MAC when using WebEx software.

### **Overall Impact of District to Implement the Orton- Gillingham Program:**

The feasibility of the district to implement the OG program will involve the district to identify school(s) and staff that would commit to the aforementioned training modules. In order for staff to become certified OG providers/teachers must enroll in a certified program and fulfill the mandatory requirements which includes practicum hours. Given all of the prerequisites of what is required to become OG certified may also be a challenge for the district due to the mandatory practicum hours which are a key component of this program. Most importantly, the time constraints that are embedded throughout the OG program ensures intensive and explicit training of staff which is essential to the implementation of the OG program with fidelity and accountability.

The district may also have to select and/or hire additional special needs teachers and /or reading specialist who must demonstrate a commitment and competencies in order to be selected into an OG training program. The district must also allocate resources to invest in a strategic training program for all participants to ensure that each participant completes required practicum hours and video taping of lessons given the outlined training requirements.

It is also important to note, that the monetary impact to train individual participants ranges from (\$1,175 to \$2,095). Additionally, effective implementation of an OG program in our schools can only be achieved with administrative investment and committed staff. At this time, we do not have the capacity to launch an OG program within the district to include students from outside the district, on a tuition basis due to the intensive training requirements. With that said, I have included for your review a comparison of DESE approved private schools in order to analyze the tuition cost of these programs. Each of these programs provides multi-sensory language based services which includes a blended approach of Wilson, Orton- Gillingham, Project Read and/or Lindamood Bell.

Please be assured that the district continues to assess the needs of meeting students with language-based disabilities, and as a result has also done extensive training in this area to special needs staff. This is evident in our schools and through our evaluation process given service delivery options that embeds a multi-sensory approach. Also, please note the multi-sensory approach of the OG program does have similarities to the Wilson Language /Reading Program that is currently implemented in the district to meet the needs of students with a language-based disabilities and/or dyslexic students. I have also included a listing of targeted reading and language-based programs that are currently being provided to students with disabilities in the district: (See Enclosure: *Special Education Reading & Language-Based Programs, summary of Specialized District Initiatives 2018 – 2020*).

### **District Implementation of Wilson Reading and Language-Based Programs:**

Wilson Language is a research based multi-sensory language based program. The district has invested in providing extensive Wilson training to moderate special needs and learning disabilities teachers throughout the district at each level. The Wilson Implementation Network (WIN) as part of a research study also partnered with selected Worcester Public Schools to implement one or more of the Wilson programs: **Foundations, Just Words, and/or the Wilson Reading System**. These schools were invited to participate in WIN after demonstrating a dedication to improving literacy outcomes, commitment to creating systems to develop a culture of learning for students. Throughout the district several teachers including; general educators, moderate special needs and learning disabilities teachers, and specialist have been trained to provide Wilson Programs in schools based on targeted tiered interventions as well as students individualized education plans.

### **Elements of Wilson Language Reading System 4<sup>th</sup> edition (2018)**

- Addresses phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling
- Lessons can be taught individually or in a small group (2 to 4 or 5 students)
- Standardized scope and sequence organized in 12 steps
- Progress Monitoring and Assessment Tools
- Principles of instruction
  - Multisensory: all teaching and learning done through visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic methods
  - Explicit: learning through modeling and doing
  - Systematic: sequential and cumulative
  - Teach to mastery
  - Diagnostic planning and teaching
  - Decoding and Encoding
  - Oral Reading Fluency
  - Curriculum materials are designed for teachers to implement throughout each lesson

### **Wilson Training Requirements and Practicum:**

In order for staff to be certified in Wilson, The district has provided on-going Wilson training to several special needs teachers based on the following professional development:

Please note that all teachers must be certified in order to provide Wilson Language services to students.

- 16.5-hr. introductory workshop
- 15-hr. workshop on group strategies
- Minimum 60-hour practicum for Level 1 certification
- Minimum 100-hour practicum for Level 2 certification
- 90+-hr. online courses for Level 1 and Level 2 certification
- Bi-annual conference for certified teachers
- Wilson Academy website providing additional resources for teachers and students

In reviewing our current census the district has (5,275) students with disabilities (SWD). Here is a breakdown of (SWD) that may benefit from language-based services in accordance to Individualized Education Plans given the following disabilities:

- SWD with Specific Learning Disabilities = (1,577)
- SWD with a Communication Disability = (609)
- Average percentage of SWD equals (41%) *based on current data of both of these disabilities*

The special education department is committed to implementing research based practices initiatives given that (41%) of students in the district has a diagnosis of a communication and/or a specific learning disability which may present in any of these areas; reading, comprehension, written language, and/or math. As a result, schools and IEP teams continuously evaluate tiered interventions, and the need to prioritize service delivery options for students who have a communication and/or learning disability.

Also, throughout the years, the district has made a commitment to provide specialized extensive training to staff given evidenced-based practices of Wilson Language/Reading Programs. Wilson Trainers and Facilitators have provided explicit trainings to staff at all levels to ensure the fidelity of implementation as well as on-going mentoring and coaching. On-going collaboration with Barbara Wilson, founder of Wilson and her team through extensive professional development has refined our practices. The implementation of various Wilson's programs in the district based on coaching and monitoring continues to be a priority and an essential prerequisite to our service delivery options for students who have a language-based disability and/or dyslexia.

**Special Education Department Priorities:**

- [2] Wilson Trainers – Provides on-going training to district staff
- Wilson Language / Reading Programs:
  - [39] Learning Disabilities Specialist – Wilson Reading Program and selected Teachers of Moderate Special Needs
  - Foundations (K-3) General Education and Special Education Teachers
  - Just Words (Middle Schools) Reading Specialist and Special Education Teachers
- [40] Speech and Language Pathologist
  - [5] Speech and Language Assistants
  - Selected Speech and Language Pathologist and Special Education Teachers are trained in Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LiPS) Program
  - **Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing® (LiPS®) Program** develops phonemic awareness—the ability to determine the identity, number, and order of sounds within words. The program teaches students to discover and label the oral-motor movements of phonemes. The established articulatory feedback enables students to verify the identity, number, and sequence of sounds in simple, complex, and multisyllabic words. The sensory-cognitive function of phonemic awareness is applied to reading, spelling, and speech

- [7] Orton - Gillingham Trained Teachers (Certifications may require re-certification program)
- Project Read [ Framing Your Thoughts, Visualization and Comprehension] Implementation Plan for training staff began August 2018 – June 2020

This school year the special education department learning disabilities workgroup focus has been on explicit training for students with language based disabilities. The district is also exploring research options to collaborate with Dr. Tiffany Hogan at MGH in a longitudinal study as a result of the changes to the Dyslexia Law. Priority areas to ensure best practices for students with a language-based disability will address the following areas:

- Child Find Initiatives
- Special education evaluations process
- Dyslexia screenings ( New Dyslexia Law )
- Specialized Programs given comprehensive service delivery options at (Pre-school, Elementary, Middle and High Schools)



Please note that the results of our efforts will guide us in the development of a strategic plan to integrate research and evidence based practices that will involve staff professional development trainings, coaching and modeling. The end result, will provide the district with a comprehensive plan to meet the needs of students with a specific learning disability.

**II. Request that the Administration study the feasibility of including students from outside the district, on a tuition basis – if a proposed program is established in the Worcester Public Schools.**

**FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS OF OUT OF DISTRICT PROGRAMS:**

The following DESE approved private schools services students with Language-based Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, Executive Function Disorder, Dyslexic, Learning Disabled, Mild Learning Disabled, and Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities.

At this time, WPS do not have any students attending these out of district programs who are in need of Language-based services with the exception of Summit Academy due to an Autism diagnosis.

<b>Out of District Approved Schools</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Tuition Cost</b>
Clearway School	Location: West Newton Age Range: 11-18 Staff/Pupil Ratio: 1:8 Enrollment: 30-36	Day Rate: \$269.71 Annual Rate: \$48,548.60
Dearborn Academy High School Program	Location: Arlington Age Range: 14-22 Staff/Pupil Ratio: 2:1 Enrollment: 56	Day Rate: \$395.00 Annual Rate: \$71,099.52
Farr Academy	Location: Cambridge Age Range: 12 -19 Staff/Pupil Ratio: 2:1 Enrollment: 36	Day Rate: \$495.92 Annual Rate: \$89,265.72
Landmark Foundation School	Location: Beverly Grade Range: 2-12 Staff/Pupil Ratio: 1:3 Enrollment: 470	Day Rate: \$303.52 Annual Rate: \$54,634.22
Summit Academy Autism Spectrum Disorder, Communication, Non-Verbal Learning/Executive Functioning	Location: Worcester Age Range: 5-22 Staff/Pupil Ratio: 1:4 Enrollment: 41	Day Rate: \$251.70 Annual Rate: \$49,835.77
The Carroll School Lower School - Waltham Gr: (1-5) Middle School - Lincoln Gr: (6-8) Upper School - Wayland Gr: (8-9)	Location: (3) Programs Age Range: 6-14 Staff/Pupil Ratio: 3:1 Enrollment: 427	Day Rate: \$280.55 Annual Rate: \$50,500
White Oak School	Location: Westfield Age Range: 9-18 Staff/Pupil Ratio: 1:3 Enrollment	Day Rate: \$261.26 Annual Rate: \$54,634.22
<b>IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE</b>	<b>THE SIGNIFICANT COST</b>	<b>OF THESE DESE PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS!</b>

**DISTRICT Capacity to Provide Services to Students  
with Language- Based Disabilities and/or Dyslexia**  
See Enclosure: of Summary of Specialized District Initiatives (2018-2019)

DISTRICT CAPACITY	SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS	MULTI-SENSORY SPED STAFF
<p>Each Elementary, Middle and High Schools in WPS has moderate special needs teachers who are assigned to provide specialized instruction based on individual students' Individualized Education Plans.</p>	<p>The district currently does not fund out of district placements for students in need of language-based services. SWD in need of language-based services are receiving these services in our public schools.</p> <p>The district Language- Based Service Delivery options consist of special needs teachers who have extensive training in teaching students with disabilities:</p> <p><b>Wilson Language Reading Programs:</b> Wilson Reading Grades: (K-12) Elementary Foundations (Tiered 2 Interventions) Secondary Schools – Just Words (Tiered 2 Intervention)</p> <p><b>Project Read – (New Initiative)</b> Framing your Thoughts - Reading Comprehension</p> <p><b>Preschool Literacy Initiative</b> Tellian – Lively Letters</p>	<p>Learning Disability Specialist = 37 FTE's</p> <p>Intensive Specialized Learning Disabilities Programs:</p> <p><b>Elementary</b> – Norrback <b>Middle</b> – Forest Grove <b>LD Specialist</b> are assigned to all <b>District High Schools</b></p> <p>Speech and Language Pathologist = 38 FTE's</p> <p>Speech and Language Assistants = 5 FTE's</p>
<p><b>Central Mass Collaborative (CMC) Programs provides services to five WPS students who have a Primary Disability of Learning Disabilities</b></p>	<p>Central Mass Prep [2] Students Robert Goddard Academy [3] Students</p>	<p>CMC Learning disabilities specialist and speech and language pathologist provides direct services to these five students based on individualized educational plans.</p>

### **III. District Resources and Action Steps :**

**SPED Professional Development:** It is through our network of collaboration that we will continue to explore research based practices to enhance our service delivery options for students who have a specific language-based disability to implement dyslexia screening tools according to the revised Dyslexia law. The following activities will highlight our next steps to address how we continuously assess specialized services and program needs:

- District meeting was held on January 11, 2019 to discuss a possible research collaboration with Mass General Hospital with Dr. Tiffany Hogan, Director of Speech & Language Literacy Lab at MGH. A follow-up meeting has been scheduled to finalize the districts' participation in this research study. This research will focus on early literacy intervention that will assist the district to refine our identification process of students who may be Dyslexic through a research-based early intervention program.
- Carroll School is a DESE approved private school known nationally for servicing students with a language-based and dyslexia. Special education staff have scheduled an on-site visit to Carroll School in Waltham on February 6, 2019. The following district representative will include Sue Gallagher, SPED Dept. Head of LD, Melanie Sullivan-Fogerty, SPED Dept. Head of Speech and Language, Cheryl Koki, Focus Instructional Coach of Specialized Instruction and Learning Disabilities. The purpose of this visit will allow district staff to visit classrooms in order to preview Carroll Schools' program for students with dyslexia and language-based disabilities.
- March 4 - 5 2019 Everyone Reading Conference [ Success for students with Dyslexia & LD]
  - A team of WPS representatives are presenting *Getting "What Works" Going in Classrooms!* Leslie Laud, Instructor, Bank Street College of Education, Susan O'Neil, Deputy Superintendent, Worcester Public Schools, Magdalena Ganas, Professional Development Coordinator, Worcester Public Schools, Colleen Dyer, ELA Coordinator, Worcester Public Schools, and Michelle Maloney, Grade Four Teacher, Worcester Public Schools *Are you expected to support colleagues in improving instruction, particularly for students who struggle? Learn how grade-team, school and district leaders' turn-key cutting-edge literacy practices. Learn "what works" and see data gains from presenters' schools.*
  - The Everyone Reading Annual Conference is a platform to learn about language-based learning disabilities and dyslexia, and the explicit, systematic instruction needed to develop skilled readers. S.P.I.R.E., along with its digital version inspire, is an Orton-Gillingham based reading intervention program designed to help students build reading success through an intensive, structured, and spiraling curriculum
  - The SPED Department will also send participants to engage in several of the PD sessions on Multi-sensory Approaches to Literacy, Specially Designed Instruction in Reading: Intensify Reading Interventions, and Orton- Gillingham



- District on-going partnership with Barbara Wilson, Founder of Wilson Reading System (WRS) who was also trained at Mass General Hospital in Orton Gillingham methodology has extensive background in working with Dyslexic students. WRS is also used in public elementary, middle, and high schools, private schools, private clinics, community colleges, and adult education settings across the United States as well as in the Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, England, Ireland, and Qatar.
  - **When asked the question - What do students with dyslexia require that other students may not?**  
**Ms. Wilson stated:** “The biggest difference is that students with dyslexia need to be taught word structure systematically, incrementally, and with mastery. They need a lot of opportunities to apply their decoding skills in text that is limited to word structures that have been directly taught. Students with dyslexia develop fluency incrementally and they need substantial practice with specific word patterns for mastery.”
  - Ms. Wilson feels strongly that it is the commitment to teacher support that makes Wilson stand out. Also for over 30 years, Wilson has worked collaboratively with school districts to implement achievable and sustainable plans for teacher and student success. Wilson program has provided training to nearly 220,000 teachers across all 50 states. Approximately, 25,000 are Wilson Reading System® (WRS) Level I certified. In 2016, Wilson worked closely with well over 200 districts to develop comprehensive implementation plans that include professional learning to support teachers’ use of the programs with fidelity.

During the period of (2010 – 2016) the district engaged in an extensive implementation plan through Wilson Implementation Network (WIN) within several schools to use various Wilson programs.

- The Wilson Implementation Network (WIN) as part of a research study also partnered with selected Worcester Public Schools to implement one or more of the Wilson programs: **Foundations, Just Words, and/or the Wilson Reading System.** These schools were invited to participate in WIN after demonstrating a dedication to improving literacy outcomes, commitment to creating systems to develop a culture of learning for students.

It is through these efforts that the district will continue to collaborate with Barbara Wilson to ensure that Wilson Language/ Reading Systems is being implemented with fidelity to meet the needs of students with language-based disabilities.

- **Nadine Gaab**, the person whose name is on the screening page to the link below presented at the Dyslexia Foundation conference. A member of the SPED team who attended the conference spoke to her after the presentation regarding Worcester as a possible pilot site for the Dyslexia screening she has developed in conjunction with **Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard.** Dr. Gaab was quite enthusiastic about working with Worcester. It would be exciting to pursue this opportunity for the benefit of our students and for the benefit of forming a collaboration with two great institutions. The outcome will result in the district accessing and implementing a dyslexia screening tool.  
Dr. Nadine and her team has developed neuroscience recommendations regarding dyslexia.  
<https://www.screenandintervene.com/>.

Additionally, on-going professional learning will include district specialist who will work collectively with Barbara Wilson and the Wilson team to continuously improve our service delivery models of the Wilson Language/ Reading Programs. District initiatives will also include various train the trainer series to special and designated general education staff as outlined throughout this response. It is our goal to be reflective in our practice and to strive to provide data-driven and effective specialized services to students with disabilities in schools throughout the district.

In closing, district initiatives and priorities that have been outlined in this response as well as our partnership with MGH and possibly Children Hospital will validate our sense of urgency to engage in research based practices for language disorders and dyslexia. The expected outcome through these efforts and given evidenced based language-based service delivery options is that the special education department will continuously strive to create optimal specialized programs and services for students with disabilities in our district who are presenting with a specific learning disability.

Regards,



Kay C. Seale,  
Manager of Special Education and Intervention Services  
Worcester Public Schools

**Enclosures and Resources:**

1. Massachusetts Dyslexia Screening Law - Screening by schools for Dyslexia will enable early identification. When students are screened for key indicators, including phonemic awareness and naming speed at an early age, intervention can target needs based on explicit systematic instruction.
2. District Special Education Reading & Language-Based Programs  
Summary of Specialized District Initiatives (2018-20)
3. District Special Needs Learning Disabilities Teachers - Evaluate students using WJIV Woodcock Johnson  
Dyslexia Evaluation Checklist: Teacher Form
4. Crafting Minds – Melissa Orkin, Ph.D. – Common Profiles Subtypes of Dyslexia  
Dyslexia is characterized in part by the striking inability to read accurately and or fluently, despite adequate exposure and instruction.
5. Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators <https://www.ortonacademy.org/training-certification/classroom-educator-ogce-level/>  
Children's Dyslexia Center also has professional development and training available that we will share with staff