October has been designated as *Dyslexia Awareness Month* in Alabama by the State Department of Education (SDE). According to the Dyslexia Advisory Council (DAC), dyslexia impacts between 10 and 20 percent of students in Alabama schools. Reading, writing, and spelling are essential literacy skills for all learning. Students who do not develop these skills early on are at risk for school failure and limited life opportunities. In our ongoing effort to prepare all students to graduate college, career, and life ready, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), working collaboratively with the DAC, has established the following goals for *Dyslexia Awareness Month*:

- To create awareness of the needs of students with dyslexia at the school, family, and community level.
- To encourage year-round engagement in events to celebrate and embrace students with dyslexia at the school, family, and community level.
- To make available information to schools, families, and communities regarding support and resources for students with dyslexia.

In order to meet these goals, the ARI and DAC suggest a timeline of activities and events for schools, families, and communities throughout the month of October. Please consider including these activities in your district, school, and community calendar and see them as opportunities to create a culture of understanding, support, encouragement, and learning for dyslexic students.

**October 2-6, 2017: Dyslexia Awareness Month Kick-off Week for School and Community**
Create awareness in schools and communities in your district with “dyslexia day/night,” social media events, school casts, morning messages, etc. using #SayDyslexiaAL17, the official hashtag for Alabama’s *Dyslexia Awareness Month*. Utilize Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE) trained teachers, school reading specialists, coaches, partners, parents, and community experts to host mini-workshops/seminars and open house community events. Create awareness of resources for support of dyslexia by promoting the [International Dyslexia Association-Alabama Branch](https://www.ida-ala.org) and the [Alabama Reading Initiative](https://www.ari.state.al.us) Dyslexia Websites.

**October 9-13, 2017: “Lights, Camera, Action!” Week**
Bring technology into the classroom to highlight the many ways in which students with dyslexia can express themselves and communicate by means other than writing. Encourage students to share stories with oral recounting, storytelling, and/or drama activities. Consider a “No Pencil/Pen Day” storytelling competition by utilizing technology solutions such as text to speech, audio and/or video recordings, and recording through pictures so that all students can enjoy expressing themselves.

**October 16-20, 2017: Show Your Support Week**
Encourage teachers and students to wear red and offer school/class proclamations to demonstrate support for dyslexia awareness. Encourage district communication/media personnel to create public service announcements, local news articles, and district communication posts for local school Websites promoting awareness using #SayDyslexiaAL17, the official hashtag for Alabama’s *Dyslexia Awareness Month*.

**October 23-27, 2017: “Famous Dyslexics” Week**
Create school and community awareness for the many talents and gifts dyslexic students have by engaging in class projects and school-wide activities that feature [famous dyslexic achievers](https://www.dyslexic.org) in America and across the globe.

Please join us in promoting *Dyslexia Awareness Month* in your community during the month of October by supporting an environment of awareness and understanding for dyslexia in your district, schools, and communities. If you have questions, you may contact Mrs. Karen Porter, ARI Program Coordinator by e-mailing dyslexia@alsde.edu.