



June 19, 2023

We have had an exciting spring in British Columbia as it relates to dyslexia and literacy! There is lots to celebrate, and there is a pathway of awareness being built to affect change so that students with dyslexia can have better access to education, community and the workforce in BC.

It's hard to believe that the last Dyslexia BC newsletter was in January 2023, so much has happened since then!



We are going to start with our **LAST** “scheduled” event. There will be more events but we are pretty excited about this one. **Come join us at “Say Dyslexia at the BC Legislature”** happening on **October 3, 2023** to help kick off Dyslexia Awareness Month! We are hoping **all of you** can come. If you can't come to Victoria, we are thinking of ways to

include you, stay tuned! **Say Dyslexia at the Legislature** is first on this newsletter so that you can start planning to come to Victoria; or start to think about ways to celebrate Dyslexia Awareness Month **NOW**. We will give an update about the plans Dyslexia BC has for the rest of October in about a month. We already have the Dyslexia Training Institute lined up to do an on-line **Dyslexia For A Day** simulation (date to be determined)!

By signing up on Eventbrite for **Say Dyslexia at the Legislature with Dyslexia BC** you will also be on the mailing list for the Event.

[Here is a link to sign up for: Say Dyslexia at the Legislature with Dyslexia BC](#)

Now back to the correct order of our newsletter!


In January we had **Dr. Steve Truch** from the **Reading Foundation** who presented a session called **Defining and Treating Dyslexia**. Dyslexia BC always likes hearing the sessions that Dr.Truch does because he really understands the need for “**intense remediation**” for students who have moderate to severe dyslexia. He realizes that it does take more than one method of structured literacy to reach all students and that tutoring does not equal remediation. During the session with Steve, he commented that BC is one of the **only provinces** that has a specific special needs category for learning disabilities. He thought that it was a good thing. Dyslexia BC also thinks it is a good thing to have a specific category, because then it is easier to tailor

services towards it, and of course not mistake it for something else. He also mentioned that in the US they have a federal definition for dyslexia, which makes it a bit easier to get services specific for dyslexia.

On March 28th there were lots of “**Questions About Dyslexia and Literacy in the BC Legislature**” during the BC Budget discussions. The questions were posed to the Honourable Rachna Singh; BC Minister of Education [by MLA Elenore Sturko lasted for at least 2 hours.](#)

There were questions about dyslexia and literacy in both morning and afternoon sessions in the legislature. Q (learning disability(LD)) Designation is mentioned specifically at 11:39 am. **Dyslexia BC** had suggested to some of the politicians to watch “**The Right to Read**” movie by **Jenny MacKenzie** and the **Education Critic Elenore Sturko** quoted the movie in the questions directed at the **Honourable Rachna Singh**. At 1:34 pm **MLA Elenore Sturko** also asks the **Education Minister** “*without diagnosis, how do you know that you are giving the right interventions?*”

Here is a quick youtube video of one of the questions posed. -

 Lots of Questions about Dyslexia Today for the Education Minister....Thank you.

April was a bit of a blur for **Dyslexia BC**, we did some behind the scenes work to help support some Motions and Resolutions through the **BCSTA** (British Columbia School Trustee Association) and the **BCCPAC** (BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils). Three Motions/Resolutions collectively were passed in the first couple of weeks of May between the two Provincial Associations at their spring AGM's. **The Motions/Resolutions passed were:**

1. **Screening starting in Kindergarten (BCSTA)**
2. **Structured Literacy in all Classrooms (BCCPAC)**
3. **Literacy Learning Centers in ALL Districts in (BCCPAC)**

Dyslexia BC was delighted to hear that **Rick Moore** spoke about **Parent Advocacy** on **May 5th** at the **BCCPAC AGM**. You can read about the **Moore Case** here: [Moore vs British Columbia](#) **The Moore Case** went all the way to the **Supreme Court of Canada**. Rick's son had severe dyslexia and the North Vancouver School District closed the remedial center that Jeffery needed to get “meaningful” access to the curriculum and help remediate his disability. The Moore case is used as a precedent in other special education cases across Canada.

From Moore vs British Columbia “It was therefore the combination of the clear recognition by the District, its employees and the experts that Jeffrey required intensive remediation in order to have meaningful access to education, the closing of the Diagnostic Centre, and the fact that the Moores were told that these services could not otherwise be provided by the District, that justified the Tribunal's conclusion that the failure of the District to meet Jeffrey's educational needs constituted *prima facie* discrimination.”

We ended up having **Rick** present with **Dyslexia BC** on zoom May 23, 2023. If you want to see this session. Please let us know. We have asked Rick to say a few things at our **Say Dyslexia at the BC Legislature on October 3, 2023!**

In April as well, Dyslexia BC started to try to get more information “out” about concerns we have had regarding the [2019 Arbitration Decision](#) and what it has done to the **Learning Disability Category Q Designation** in BC. Families from across the Province have been experiencing **more difficulties** getting a Designation for learning disabilities like dyslexia and in many districts such as Coquitlam, Surrey and the VSB the **number of Q Designations has gone down**. Some families are reporting that they are being told that students with LD **no longer get an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) because the district is using Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**. If you read through the Arbitration Decision the government asks the Districts to **eliminate the Q Designation and revert back to the J Designation (which is only Severe LD)**, without giving any direction to the districts or any indicating whether or not there is still a Q Designation.

Tracy Sherlock wrote an article you can read it hear - [Dyslexia Advocate worried students not getting support](#)

At the end of May we had a meeting with the **Honourable Rachna Singh, Education Minister and the Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of MCFD**. The meeting was our opportunity to ask for “the usual” screening starting in kindergarten, replacing all curriculum from balanced literacy to structured literacy (from the Ministry Down), funding for the changes to curriculum and a funded special needs category for students with learning disabilities like dyslexia. We also suggested that MCFD should consider screening for dyslexia, since their new special needs Hubs have absolutely nothing for dyslexia. We told them both that 80% of street youth and incarcerated individuals were illiterate and most likely had undiagnosed learning disabilities. We suggested they should have a plan to cover the cost of diagnosis, and have literacy remediation programs (that use structured literacy) for children in care (because there is nothing in schools either).

We let them know the entire system (even nonprofits trying to improve literacy) is riddled with programs rooted in balanced literacy (which is proven by science to be outdated) and they could have better programs to bring literacy levels up in schools and for youth in care. There was not enough time for questions but we will still follow-up to ask our questions...and hopefully get answers.

On May 30, 2023 Cathy McMillan presented for **Dyslexia BC** to the **Select Standing Committee for Finance and Government Services**. It went well!

Dyslexia BC asked for:

1. **Legislation and Mandatory Dyslexia Screening using Evidence based screeners starting in kindergarten**
2. **Legislation and Policy from the Ministry to switch from Balanced Literacy to Structured Literacy**

3. Legislation, Policy, Teacher training for Mandatory remediation programs, which can be accessed by both general and special education populations

We also asked the government to reverse the **2019 Arbitration Decision**.

[The Presentation by Dyslexia BC can be found here!](#) (Audio Version)

On June 7th, Dyslexia BC was interviewed for a series called “**The Right to Read**” for the **CBC On the Coast Show with Kathry Marlow**. [Here is the Interview with Dyslexia BC](#)

Discussions about literacy and dyslexia are on the rise since the discussions in the Legislature and the Motions brought forward by the BCCPAC and the BCSTA.

Dyslexia BC hopes to see you at the **BC Legislature on October 3, 2023!** If you would like to speak or be involved in anything for Dyslexia Awareness Month please email DyslexiaBCinfo@gmail.com.

Thanks,
Cathy McMillan
Dyslexia BC

p.s. We have a **new** “Private Facebook Advocacy Group for Parents” Feel free to join into the discussions- [Dyslexia BC Parents Advocacy Group on Facebook](#)

