

MANITOBA LITERACY ALLIANCE

The Manitoba Literacy Alliance is a coalition of individuals with diverse backgrounds, united in our shared mission to advocate for systemic change within Manitoba public education to better support students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties. As members of the Manitoba Literacy Alliance, we will act as a network of support for one another in the work that we do to promote early literacy outcomes for all students.

Our Goal

Members of the Manitoba Literacy Alliance are committed to working collaboratively together and with all stakeholders, including Manitoba Education, The Manitoba Human Rights Commission, and others to identify the barriers that currently exist as well as practical solutions for moving forward. In addition, it's crucial to emphasize the importance of using the term "Dyslexia" in educational discourse, recognizing that respecting and acknowledging individuals' preferred self-identifications, fosters a more inclusive and understanding environment. Through our collective efforts, our goal is to ensure that every student in Manitoba, regardless of their background or learning differences, has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Reference Information

On October 22, 2022, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission (MHRC) announced the launch of a special initiative, "The Right to Read: Human Rights Issues for Students with Reading Disabilities in Manitoba." This is a timely reminder of the importance of addressing the needs of students with reading disabilities. The MHRC will be using the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) *Right to Read Report* to guide its inquiry. Recently, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission also released a report titled, *Equitable Education for Students with Reading Disabilities: A Systemic Investigation*.

- *Manitoba Human Rights Commission*
- *Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission*
- *Ontario Human Rights Commission*

The OHRC report highlights five key requirements to successfully teach and support all students, we believe that these are equally as important in Manitoba. They are:

1. **Curriculum and instruction** that reflects the scientific research on the best approaches to teach word reading. This includes explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, which teaches grapheme to phoneme (letter sound) relationships and using these to decode and spell words, and word-reading accuracy and fluency. It is critical to adequately prepare and support teachers to deliver this instruction.

2. **Early screening** of all students using common, standardized evidence-based screening assessments twice a year from Kindergarten to Grade 2, to identify students at risk for reading difficulties for immediate, early, tiered interventions.

3. **Reading interventions** that are early, evidence-based, fully implemented, closely monitored and available to ALL students who need them, and ongoing interventions for all readers with word reading difficulties.

4. **Accommodations** (and modifications to curriculum expectations) should not be used as a substitute for teaching students to read. Accommodations should always be provided along with evidence-based curriculum and reading interventions. When students need accommodations (for example, assistive technology), they should be timely, consistent, effective and supported in the classroom.

5. **Professional assessments**, particularly psychoeducational assessments, should be timely and based on clear, transparent, written criteria that focus on the student's response to intervention. Criteria and requirements for professional assessments should account for the risk of bias for students who are culturally or linguistically diverse, racialized, who identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit, or come from less economically privileged backgrounds. Professional assessments should never be required for interventions or accommodations.

Source: OHRC Right to Read Executive Summary (pg.12)

We call upon everyone to join us in our mission, inviting and encouraging all Manitobans to actively engage in productive conversations aimed at achieving our shared goal. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of Manitoba's students.

Members

- **Carrie Wood**
 - Parent, educator, dyslexia advocate, and President of the Manitoba Reading Association
- **Dr. Tannis Wiebe**
 - MD, FRCPC Developmental Pediatrician
- **Dr. Jina Pagura**
 - MD, FRCPC Community and Consulting Pediatrician
- **Alicia Smith**
 - Executive Director of Dyslexia Canada
- **Dr. Valdine Bjornson**
 - EdD, Certified Reading Clinician, President Manitoba Teachers for Students with Learning Disabilities, Board member Dyslexia Canada
- **Britney Morrish**
 - MSc-SLP (C) R.SLP Speech Language Pathologist
- **Tianna Voort**
 - Community Connections Coordinator, Dyslexia Canada
- **Sandra Janzen**
 - Certified Reading Clinician, Past-President of the Manitoba Council of Reading Clinicians
- **Della Magnusson**
 - Parent and Educator
- **Ron Cadez**
 - Educational Leader
- **Robert George**
 - School Psychologist
- **Robin Norquay**
 - Educator, OG Practitioner and Trainer
- **Cathy-Ann Winters**
 - Educational Leader
- **Dr. Natalie Riediger**
 - Parent, PhD, Associate Professor
- **Board, Dyslexia Champions of Manitoba**

Supporters

- Alden Wood
 - Parent
- Dr. BJ Hancock
 - Member Manitoba Pediatric Society
 - Physician and Surgeon
- Dr. Marni Hanna
 - Pediatrician
- Dr. Audrey Javellana
 - Pediatrician
- Dr. Rachael Gardner
 - Paediatrician
- Dr. Annika Klopp
 - Physician
- Jaymi Thiessen
 - Certified Reading Clinician (M. Ed.)
- Victoria Lee-Wing
 - Paediatric Resident
- Varsha Jayasankar
 - Pediatrics Resident Physician
- Dr. Meghan Cranston
 - Pediatrician
- Kim Siwak
 - Certified Reading Clinician
- Kara Loney
 - Educator
- Susan C. Riediger
 - Grandparent of person with dyslexia, retired teacher
- Eric Riediger
 - Educator
- Monica Cyr
 - Indigenous healthcare leader
- Meaghan Wlock
 - Learning Support Teacher
- Rosana Montebruno
 - Certified Reading Clinician
- Sabrina Manicom
 - Dyslexic, Early Childhood Educator III

Supporters Continued...

- Ayma Proven
 - Educator
- Katie Prescott
 - Educator

Members and supporters of the Manitoba Literacy Alliance have signed the position statement as individuals, separate from any other professional affiliations they may hold.

Views and opinions expressed by members and supporters of the Manitoba Literacy Alliance beyond this position statement may not necessarily represent the perspective of the other members of the Manitoba Literacy Alliance.



Scan the QR code to sign your support to our position statement. Or [click here](#).