



Top stories in this newsletter

Virginia Chapter News
Pg. 1

Rocky Mountain
Pg. 2

Texas Legislation
Pg. 2

Ohio Happenings
Pg. 3

The President, Janna Curry-Dobbs, says....



A Good Book....

A good book is a little thing that can make a big difference! Encouraging readers to go to places that books can take them when they aren't able to go otherwise opens a world of opportunity. Choose a book, any book and start reading today!



Virginia Chapter News



The ALTA Virginia Chapter held its Spring membership meeting March 25, 2017. Chapter members were able to earn CEUs as Dr. Sabine Heisman of Mindwell Psychology presented *Understanding Psycho-educational Diagnostic Reports* and answered many member questions. In

September, Dr. Heisman is hosting several representatives of the Virginia Chapter at a meeting with other psychologists that specialize in diagnostic evaluations, for the purpose of increasing their understanding of the unique benefits of Academic Language Therapy.

In May, Christina Seabold Fox, CALT and Susan Louchen, CALT attended the annual conference in Richardson, TX, and Susan joined the ALTA Board of Directors as Vice President of Public Relations.

Elizabeth Gordon, of Smart Cookie Reading, LLC completed the IMSLEC accredited training at the Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center and in June passed the Alliance exam to achieve the distinguished designation of *Certified Academic Language Therapist*.

Texas Legislation

The 85th Regular Legislative Session ended on Memorial Day with the filing of 7051 bills and resolutions. Only 1285 reached the Governor's desk, a smaller percentage than has been passed in two decades. The Governor vetoed 50 bills passed by the legislature and quickly made the decision to call a 30-day Special Session on July 18 to address an additional 20 items.



The three main initiatives for ALTA and Texas ALTA during the regular session were funding for dyslexia, early intervention for dyslexia and mandatory licensure for Licensed Dyslexia Therapists.

The funding for dyslexia got a huge amount of traction with the Chair of House Education, Rep. Dan Huberty, placing it in one of the Speaker's funding bills. Unfortunately, the bill was used by the Senate to include an amendment for vouchers for students with disabilities and died without agreement from both Chambers during the regular session. But the bill was resurrected in the Special Session prompting Texas ALTA to write a letter to the Governor to consider per pupil funding for dyslexia in public schools. There was much support right down to the wire but the passage of a Commission to study public school finance in the upcoming interim caused the Senate to pull back on any initiatives creating new per pupil funding allotments until next session.

Instead, the legislature created a two-year grant program for dyslexia to begin in the 2018 school year. As many as 10 grants will be awarded across the state for public and/or charter school collaborations, allowing private dyslexia providers to participate. Each grant is limited to \$1M in the 2018 school year. A committee will be assembled by the TEA Commissioner to choose the grant awards, another possible opportunity for ALTA members and parents of students with dyslexia to be a part of the process. ALTA members are encouraged to check with your area school districts or charter schools to see if they plan to apply for the grant.

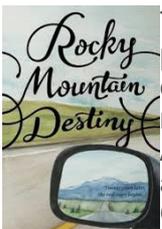
The topic of early intervention was well received with Rep. Rick Miller's bill, HB 1886, sponsored by Sen. Joan Huffman to require screening of kindergartners and 1st graders for dyslexia. This bill became law with the Governor's signature and will be effective in the 2017-2018 school year. The screening should raise awareness amongst teachers in the early grades to watch for the signs of dyslexia in young learners. The same bill also requires all of the Education Service Centers to have a Licensed Dyslexia Therapist on staff, since they are the ones fielding questions from parents and school districts regarding dyslexia. HB 1886 requires TEA to post a list on its website of the trainings available to teachers regarding dyslexia, including online offerings.

HB 1131, also by Rep. Rick Miller, required Licensed Dyslexia Therapists operating outside of a school, learning center or hospital to be licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. Currently, in Texas, anyone can hang out a shingle and provide dyslexia services without a background check or any vetting. Schools, learning centers and hospitals typically perform background checks and have knowledge of their employees' credentials but families who hire therapists outside of those settings are not protected. This bill was referred to the House Education Committee but did not get a hearing and did not pass this session.

The Dyslexia Therapists and Practitioners Advisory Committee met at the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) on August 8. Members of that group include Robin Cowsar (Presiding Officer), Helen Macik, Misty Demsey, Leticia Niegos, and Beatriz Daniels. If you have any questions regarding your license, please contact one of the Advisory Committee members.

Now that we are entering the Interim period, legislators will either be running for reelection or stepping down from their seats. This is a time when your elected officials in Austin are home traveling their legislative districts, providing a wonderful opportunity for you to share with them the importance of what you do. Feel free to share your success stories and the need to get the evidence-based services you provide to students throughout Texas.

Rocky Mountain Chapter Welcomes New Professionals



This summer the Rocky Mountain Chapter welcomed new professionals to the fold: 7 CALPs and 4 CALTs. A grassroots effort to reach the community has been occurring including multiple viewings of the movie "The Big Picture", Question and Answer panels of professionals involved in the field of dyslexia, and better on-line information and links on the regional website. Our members are also having a greater presence at regional and national reading conferences in the exhibit hall and as presenters.

Ohio Chapter Happenings



Seventeen Children Dyslexia Center graduates sat for the Alliance national Practitioner and Therapy level certifying exam on August 5, 2017 at the Children's Dyslexia Center in Dublin, Ohio.

ALTA Ohio Chapter conducts a professional development opportunity annually. One of our founding members, Kara Lee Ausmann, recently moved back to Ohio from Germany and she will chair the ALTA Ohio Committee to plan a late spring or early summer workshop in Columbus.

Save The Date

2018 Annual ALTA Conference Friday-Saturday, April 27-28, 2018



ALTA's conference will be held at the Renaissance Dallas Richardson Hotel in Richardson, Texas. Fumiko Hoeft is one of our many fabulous presenters joining us this year. Dr. Hoeft comes to us with a rich background of experience including Professor of Psychiatry and Weill Institute for Neurosciences, UCSF; Director of UC-Stanford Multi-Campus Precision Learning Center (PrecL.org) and UCSF Laboratory for Educational Neuroscience (brainLENS.org); Deputy Director of UCSF Dyslexia Center (dyslexia.ucsf.edu); and Research Scientist at Yale Haskins Laboratories.

Hoeft was trained in medicine, neurophysiology and systems/cognitive neurosciences, at Keio University (Tokyo), Harvard, Caltech and Stanford. Hoeft's program of research focuses on the neuroscience of skill acquisition such as literacy, neurodevelopmental disorders such as dyslexia, and socio-emotional competencies such as motivation and resilience in those with dyslexia. Her team also specializes in R&D of cognitive science-based tools that can be deployed in educational practice to maximize personalized learning. She has received numerous federal and private foundation grants, published over 120 articles, and delivered over 150 talks including remarks at the White House. Hoeft currently serves on over a dozen boards and committees, including CA Department of Education Dyslexia Guideline Work Group, IDA Executive Board and NCLD Professional Advisory Board.

Honors she has received include the 2014 Norman Geschwind Memorial Lectureship from the International Dyslexia Association, 2015 Transforming Education through Neuroscience Award from Learning & the Brain Foundation, and 2017 Multicampus Research Program Award from the University of CA Office of the President. Her work has been widely covered in media such as The New York Times, NPR, CNN, the New Yorker, and Scientific American.

Dr. Hoeft will present on the neuroscience of dyslexia: At-risk populations, early identification, developing compensatory mechanisms and building cognitive and socio-emotional resilience. In this talk, she will cover a wide range of topics related to the neuroscience of dyslexia. She will discuss the latest neuroscience research on how the brains of at-risk populations differ from those with low risk, and the key predictors of successful early literacy acquisition in young children drawing from the behavioral and brain imaging literature. Hoeft will discuss the emerging trends in how we think about the cause of dyslexia, from the idea that multiple factors contribute to the overall liability of a child in developing dyslexia disorders, as well as our latest comprehensive neurobiological theory of dyslexia, which we call the 'Neural Noise Hypothesis of Dyslexia'. Finally, she will close by presenting work on the concept of normalization versus compensation after intervention in dyslexia, as well as how we can help promote resilience (cognitive as well as socio-emotional) in children with dyslexia, now known as the 'Resilience Framework of Dyslexia'.

To submit articles for future ALTA newsletter contact Tammy Tillotson at tammyt1@charter.net

Contact Us:

