

Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks Announce Comprehensive Approach to Supporting Students with Dyslexia

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Video available at: <https://youtu.be/aDP0UpmBV9M>

First-Ever Investment to Support and Screen Dyslexic Students in New York City History

Announcement Comes on Heels of News That NYC Will Host World Dyslexia Assembly in Spring 2023

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Education (DOE) Chancellor David C. Banks today announced the largest, most comprehensive approach to supporting public school students with dyslexia in the United States. For the first time, all New York City public school students will be assessed for being at risk of dyslexia, be supported in their neighborhood school, and receive specialized instruction through the development of special programs and academies.

“As a student, I struggled with identifying my dyslexia until long after leaving the public school system. Today, we are announcing the most comprehensive approach to supporting dyslexic students in New York City to prevent students from experiencing that disadvantage,” said **Mayor Adams**. “By changing the way we approach dyslexia, we can unlock the untapped potential in students who may feel insecure about their dyslexia or any other language-based learning disabilities they may have.”

“Early screening ensures that every child who needs support will get the help and resources they need,” said **Chancellor Banks**. “These screeners are emblematic of this administration’s commitment to uplifting all of our students and making sure they are well equipped to succeed.”

“Every student deserves the resources and support needed to thrive in our schools,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright**. “Today’s announcement on Dyslexia Awareness Day brings us one step closer to living up to that promise. From universal screenings to first-of-its-kind pilots, New York City is leading the way in building a more equitable school system and committing to a comprehensive investment in dyslexic students.”

Beginning in fall 2022, the DOE will pilot two first-of-their-kind programs within New York City public schools, where 80 elementary schools and 80 middle schools across the city will receive targeted support and training to screen and identify students at risk for dyslexia and provide targeted interventions. Every student will participate in short, adaptive literacy screeners as part of the pilot at these schools.

All schools will be supported by district-based Academic Intervention Support coordinators on how to adjust core instruction and provide intervention when screeners, and other evidence of student work, indicate that students are not making adequate progress.

By offering accessible screening across the city, Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks are breaking down a major barrier that has faced working families for many years. For the first time, every child from every zip code will have this important opportunity afforded to them, free of charge. Identifying student needs at an early age while breaking down cost barriers is a win for students, working families, and school communities across the city.

In addition, Literacy Academy Collective in P.S. 161 in the Bronx and Lab School for Family Literacy in P.S. 125 in Manhattan will both offer specialized programs for students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. The DOE will immediately move to build programs at additional schools with the goal of having at least one school offering specialized instruction in each borough by fall 2023.

Teachers are the city's most valuable partners in reimagining literacy instruction in schools. By April 2023, all teachers in kindergarten through 12th grade will participate in Made by Dyslexia's two-hour introductory training. Teachers across the city will have opportunities to participate in training for evidence-based reading programs grounded in explicit phonics techniques, including Wilson and Orton-Gillingham. Teachers will receive additional job-embedded literacy support from trained literacy coaches across all grade levels in targeted schools. As previously announced, over the course of the next year, the DOE will require teachers in grades K-2 to have a phonics-based, proven foundational literacy curriculum.

Keeping Chancellor Banks' promise, the DOE Central Literacy Team convened a Literacy Advisory Council of local community members, experts in literacy, public school staff, students, and parents to help guide the rollout of this and future literacy initiatives. Additionally, the DOE is launching a Dyslexia Task Force that will develop a policy paper on the New York City public schools' vision and approach to supporting students at risk of and/or living with dyslexia inclusive of multilingual learners and students from communities of dense dialect. The DOE looks to have this done by August 2022.

This announcement is coming on the heels of the World Dyslexia Assembly that took place last week in Stockholm, Sweden. New York City will host the next assembly in spring 2023 as a sign of the city's commitment to supporting dyslexic students citywide. Further details will be shared at a later date.

"All students in New York and nationwide deserve the tools to succeed in the classroom," said **U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler**. "These early screenings are a great step toward ensuring that each student is given adequate resources to achieve academic success. This new approach will help New York City public schools break down barriers, and I applaud Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks for their work on this."

"As a former teacher, I have seen firsthand the educational differences between each and every student, and I'm proud to see New York City leading the country in securing the resources children need early on to succeed in school," said **U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney**. "I applaud Mayor Adams' commitment to providing the screening and resources needed to identify dyslexia early and support students. This will strengthen the quality of education and remove barriers for those who need it most: working families and school districts across the city."

“Every child has special needs, and we should be funding our schools accordingly, so we can provide our students with every resource to succeed,” said **U.S. Representative Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.** “Equitable access to dyslexia screening has been a longstanding issue, and I am heartened to see youth in New York City schools will benefit from comprehensive access to screening and be connected to the support needed to thrive in the classroom and be lifelong learners. These measures should be a universal matter of fact for all students without relying on archaic and punitive measures that overlook our children and often force them into a school-to-prison pipeline.”

“This ambitious pilot program will ultimately allow students with dyslexia to be supported and gain more equal footing with their peers and in turn pave the way towards a more equitable education system,” said **New York City Comptroller Brad Lander.** “Identifying needs early and providing resources to educators will ensure that schools can provide the targeted support needed to help all students achieve their full academic potential.”

“Any effort to support students at risk for or already experiencing a learning disability is one we should collectively get behind as a city. The quicker we can connect students to the educational services they need, the stronger our families and our communities will be,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “I look forward to working with the Adams administration on this important initiative.”

“Identifying student needs through early screening will ensure our education system is inclusive and accessible for students who learn differently. Too often, students with dyslexia and specialized needs fall through the cracks and never receive the critical services and support they need,” said **New York State Senator Jamaal Bailey.** “Universal screenings and intervention at an early age will equip our school communities to better identify and address learning differences at the critical moments of a child’s education and development. I applaud Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks for this vital investment in the academic success and future of our students.”

“Ensuring all New York City public school students will be screened for dyslexia is a game-changer — for our students, for their families, and for our city’s future,” said **New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes.** “Without full access to screening, we know that too many students now are falling through the cracks, and unable to achieve their fullest potential. Expanding access to screening and to targeted support services for those children who may need them will change the lives of thousands of New Yorkers. I

am so glad to see the mayor and the chancellor announcing this change, and I look forward to working with them to ensure all southern Brooklyn families receive the screening and support that they need.”

“My husband and I only learned our daughter was dyslexic when she was already in fourth grade,” said **New York State Senator Brad Hoylman**. “In fact, estimates show we have over 200,000 undiagnosed dyslexic students in New York City alone. I applaud Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks for this holistic approach to better supporting the 20 percent of our students affected by dyslexia, which is long overdue and will substantially benefit the educational experience of New York City students. Now, we must use this momentum to extend these findings and measures to the hundreds of thousands of kids affected by dyslexia statewide.”

“Dyslexia is one of the most common learning disabilities globally, yet it is woefully misunderstood and unrecognized. Too many students either graduate without knowing how to read or drop out of school. The statistics are even worse for students of color,” said

New York State Senator Robert Jackson. “Providing access to universal screenings and to evidence-based interventions for an overwhelmingly Black and brown school system is about promoting equity. I welcome this announcement on Dyslexia Awareness Day and commend the city for recognizing that the crisis of dyslexia is real and must be addressed with urgency. New York City must continue building a more equitable school system and set all our students and their educators for success!”

“Early identification of dyslexia among New York City school students is essential,” said **New York State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud**. “The sooner that students have access to services and supports, the better they will thrive. I applaud the department’s initiative to lift up and better serve students with dyslexia.”

“Early intervention is so important to identify and help students with dyslexia, so they can have the best chance at a successful learning experience,” said **New York State Senator James Sanders Jr.** “We don’t want them to fall behind or feel ostracized by their peers. I commend the mayor and his administration for making this a priority for our youth.”

“The mayor is absolutely correct in this approach,” said **New York State Senator Diane Savino**. “For too long, students who have gone undiagnosed suffer the consequences. Early detection is key to helping these students and stemming the tide of dyslexia.”

“Dyslexia is the most prevalent learning disability in children, and yet it is woefully misunderstood, unrecognized, and just plain ignored,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**. “The mayor and the chancellor’s historic initiative forges a new path of hope for young students — to be screened for dyslexia and get the support they need to read and to thrive as their full selves. Literacy is social justice. I’m overjoyed and thankful to the mayor for his leadership, especially on Dyslexia Awareness Day.”

“I want to thank Mayor Eric Adams and Chancellor David Banks for committing to screening public school children for dyslexia and implementing evidence-based curriculum interventions like Wilson and Orton-Gillingham. Dyslexia screening and evidence-based instruction will be life changing for so many students,” said **New York State Assemblymember Robert Carroll**. “As someone who was lucky to have my own dyslexia identified in first grade and receive evidence-based literacy intervention, I know how important early identification and intervention are to making dyslexic students academically successful. Coupling all this with the announcement that the next World Dyslexia Assembly will be held in New York City in the spring of 2023 is thrilling. I was happy to help bring Mayor Adams and Kate Driggs of Made By Dyslexia together to make next year’s World Assembly possible. With these announcements, New York is becoming a leader in educating dyslexic students and solving our literacy crisis.”

“It’s been proven repeatedly that early screening for dyslexia is one of the best tools we have to set students up for success by ensuring they have the resources they need to do their best work,” said **New York State Assemblymember Harvey Epstein**. “This is a great step towards enhancing our school system’s responsive to the needs of all children. As the largest public school system in the country, with over 1 million students, we are taking on an important challenge that has the potential to change the lives of thousands of students and their families.”

“Mayor Eric Adams overcame his own dyslexia and is now the mayor of the greatest city in the world. Today, the mayor is ensuring that every child in our city has a chance to succeed like he did,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar**. “The Department of Education will make dyslexia screening and support services widely

available and commits to the goal of at least one school offering dyslexia support services in every borough. Now, all children in New York benefit by having a mayor who ‘Gets Stuff Done.’”

“For too long, the invisible nature of dyslexia has left students to suffer silently, but this historic investment in dyslexia screenings and services will positively impact the remainder of affected students' lives,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “These early interventions will promote greater literacy equity across our schools.”

“The more resources and specialized instruction we can provide to students with dyslexia, the better their entire academic experience will be,” said **Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella**. “On Staten Island, we are proud to be the home of Bridge Preparatory Charter School, which is the first-of-its-kind public school in the state that is specifically designed to teach students with dyslexia. I want to commend Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks for spearheading this universal assessment for all students and recognizing the need for specific instruction for those who may struggle with literacy.”

“Teaching kids to read is job one for our schools,” said **New York City Councilmember Shaun Abreu**. “We know how to teach reading, and we know how to support struggling readers — we just haven’t committed to doing it before. Now, we have a schools chancellor who is committed to the science of reading and a mayor willing to put his money where his mouth is. The impact of this investment cannot be overstated: A generation of New Yorkers will learn more, earn more, avoid entanglement in the criminal justice system, and be set on a path toward lifelong success.”

“I commend Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks for investing resources to screen for and support students with dyslexia. Dyslexia makes it difficult for many students to learn to read and write, but there are proven methods that work, and students with dyslexia need specialized attention to ensure their future success,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale Brewer**. “It is critical, particularly following the height of the pandemic, that we do everything we can to uplift all of New York’s students.”

“Staten Island's Bridge Preparatory Charter School, which was championed by former Borough President James Oddo, has provided a model for how we can successfully serve students with dyslexia. Like Bridge Prep, these new screenings and local

programs will be a game-changer for many students who, up to this point, have not been provided the specialized assistance they need because their dyslexia have gone undiagnosed,” said **New York City Councilmember David Carr**. “I applaud the mayor, who has been very open about his own struggles with dyslexia as a child, for being such a strong advocate on this issue and ensuring students receive the learning support he may not have received.”

“I am thrilled by the ambitious scale of this screening program to ensure that students with dyslexia get their needs met by our school system,” said **New York City Councilmember Eric Dinowitz**. “Access to free screening and training for teachers will make a huge difference in our classrooms and put students on the right path. Every child learns differently, and we must make sure we understand their learning style and provide them with a world-class education.”

“This is an incredible investment in our city’s students, which will hopefully provide them with the necessary resources that they would not have had otherwise,” said **New York City Councilmember Kamillah Hanks**. “Studies have shown that early detection of learning disabilities in children can prevent negative future outcomes and deter entrance into the criminal justice system, and those goals should be a priority for us all.”

“I welcome this announcement from the mayor and the chancellor, especially because dyslexic students were disproportionately affected during the pandemic and need to catch up,” said **New York City Councilmember Robert Holden**. “As a retired educator, I know that it’s critical to determine and fulfill students’ needs as early as possible to give them the opportunities they deserve.”

“For too long, our students who suffer from dyslexia have gone unsupported and ignored by an education system that historically struggles to accommodate students who are different. Ensuring that none of our children fall behind in their education is critical, and screening and specialized support services for students struggling with dyslexia are necessary to ensure that they receive the quality education they deserve,” said **New York City Councilmember Ari Kagan**. “Without these services, the damage done by educational neglect will be carried deep into adolescence and adulthood, where they are more impactful, detrimental, and difficult to address. This new pilot program is a crucial step in advancing educational equity for all students. I would like to thank Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks for taking this important step.”

“All children deserve the tools to thrive in school, which is why I am thrilled that Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks have rightly identified dyslexia as a silent barrier for so many children,” said **New York City Councilmember Linda Lee, chair, Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addictions**. “Early detection is critical in order to identify students who are at risk of learning disorders and other language-based learning disabilities to prevent them from falling through the cracks of our education system and being mislabeled down the road. This is an important step towards supporting students with dyslexia across the city, as we allocate the resources and specialized programming for literacy support in New York City schools.”

“By implementing this first-of-its-kind program, we’re fostering fairness in the classroom, removing barriers, and providing much needed investments for early intervention. Dyslexia should not be stigmatized, nor should it be a hurdle in our efforts to create an equitable education system,” said **New York City Councilmember Farah Louis**. “I look forward to working with Mayor Adams and my colleagues in the Council to support this program and prepare our scholars for long-term success.”

“So many parents in my district have been organizing for better learning conditions for dyslexic students. Identifying dyslexia early will help so many students feel more confident in the classroom and get the assistance they need to thrive,” said **New York City Councilmember Christopher Marte**. “Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks show these students and families that they have a voice in City Hall, and I’m excited to see this plan in action.”

“This comprehensive approach to support all students by providing dyslexia screenings and targeted interventions is an important initiative that has the potential to help so many students who may not be aware that they are struggling with language-based learning disabilities,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin**. “I thank Mayor Eric Adams and Chancellor David C. Banks for providing the proper tools, specialized instruction, and assistance that our children need to be successful.”

“Universal dyslexia screenings will ensure our schools provide early interventions, specialized literacy instruction, and ultimately place all of your students on a path to success,” said **New York City Councilmember Lincoln Restler**. “Thank you to the mayor, chancellor, and especially Assemblymember Bobby Carroll for their leadership in implementing evidence-based solutions on this critical issue.”

“No child should ever feel left out or left behind. On Dyslexia Awareness Day, I am proud join in celebrating the announcement of the nation’s largest dyslexia screening and support system coming to New York City public schools,” said **New York City Councilmember Carlina Rivera**. “For years, parents and teachers in my district and throughout New York City have come together through the Literacy Academy Collective to advocate for evidence-based literacy instruction for all New York City students, and I am grateful to the mayor and Chancellor Banks for this investment in the expansion of efforts to support students with dyslexia.”

“Students learn through a variety of ways, and every student deserves programming catered to their development and growth needs,” said **New York City Councilmember Pierina Sanchez**. “Screening, coupled with increased programming for students, is a welcomed initiative. Supporting our students with effective and evidence-informed tools and resources to support their learning should be key in our commitment to New York City’s public-school youth.”

“I’m pleased about Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks’ announcement to effectively invest in students with dyslexia,” said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens**. “It is important that we are establishing universal resources, especially in underserved communities. Early detection is vital, as it provides the necessary tools to allow students equitable access to a successful education.”

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