



# THE VOLUNTEER VOICE

Tennessee Branch  
The International Dyslexia Association

APRIL 2003

## READING FIRST in TENNESSEE

*By Jim Herman  
Director, Reading Excellence Act  
TN Department of Education*

The purpose of the Reading First Initiative is to ensure that all children in America learn to read well by the end of the third grade. The Reading First Program will help states and school districts apply scientifically-based reading research – and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with the research – to teach all children to read. Scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) is research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. By teaching all children to read well by the end of third grade, we will ensure that all students advance to later years well prepared to achieve their full academic potential.

The Reading First Program will establish research-based comprehensive reading programs for students in kindergarten through grade three. A research-based reading program must include instructional content based on the five (5) essential components of reading integrated into a coherent instructional design. The five (5) essential components of reading instruction are the following: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension. A coherent design includes specific instructional strategies that address students' specific strengths and weaknesses, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities, and aligned student materials. The program may include the use of targeted, scientifically-based instructional strategies, as appropriate. The design should also include a protected, uninterrupted block of time for reading instruction of more than ninety (90) minutes per day.

A high quality, SBRR reading program also includes assessment strategies for diagnosing student needs and measuring progress. A professional development

plan that ensures teachers have the skills and support necessary to implement the program effectively and to meet the reading needs of individual students is also a necessary component.

Standards and accountability are the foundation of the Reading First classroom. Expectations are clear as well as strategies for monitoring progress toward meeting those expectations. A comprehensive reading program provides the basis for instruction and connects meaningfully to supplemental materials. In-class grouping strategies are in use, including small group instruction as appropriate to meet student needs. Student placement in groups is flexible, with placement and movement based on ongoing progress monitoring.

Funding for Reading First subgrants will continue for a six-year period, with annual grant accountability measures to ensure student improvement in reading and a rigorous grant evaluation at the end of the third year to determine future funding.

Appropriations for Reading First in Tennessee are \$14,372,449 for the first funding year and \$15,968,265 for the second funding year.

Reading First in Tennessee's goals are the following:

GOAL 1 – Every child will be taught to read at grade level or beyond by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

GOAL 2 – K-3 teachers and special education teachers will receive the results-based professional development necessary to enable them to teach reading effectively and to make sound decisions regarding the reading instruction.

GOAL 3 – K-3 building-level principals and Literacy Leaders will receive results-based professional development necessary for them to plan, organize, imple

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## Message from the President

by Susan M. Smartt, PhD; President,  
TN Branch of the IDA

Yes, Virginia, There Really Will Be  
a Springtime This Year!

As I sit down to write this article, I just overheard the weather man say we have had only 2 hours of sunshine in the entire month of February. Now for those of you who are counting, that is way too much rain and frozen precipitation for most of us! But even though it looks as though these gloomy, cloudy days will never end, we know a few things for sure. Yes, spring will come. And with spring we will see the tiny, tender shoots of greens peeping through the muddy ground to herald the advent of narcissus and daffodils. And not far behind, will be, yes, you guessed it, the annual TN IDA conference. The theme for this year's conference is **RISE: Reading Instruction Successfully Enhanced**.

Inside this spring newsletter, you will find the program for the Tennessee International Dyslexia Association Annual Conference. The conference planning committee and their team have put together another impressive group of presentations, workshops and sessions for all who are interested in learning more about dyslexia and related learning difficulties. As in past years, this year we expect to draw over 150 people from across the state, many of whom are teachers, speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, principals, parents, and individuals with dyslexia.

Currey Ingram Academy has generously offered to host our conference this year. Conference participants will have a chance to see one of Tennessee's newest independent schools for children with learning differences.

SO be sure to mark your calendars, share the conference program with your friends, register early, and join us for a spring day filled with lots of fun and learning for all.

See you there!

## TN Resource Directory Now Available (Limited copies)

The printed version of the Tennessee International Dyslexia Association Resource Directory will be available, on a limited basis, at the annual conference on April 26, 2003. In conjunction with the development of the TN IDA website, which is designed to contain the

same information but also to remain current, we are now able to offer whichever type of format is most helpful to the community.

The printed version is fantastic! It will help us reach those who do not have access or are not comfortable with the website. One of our board members, Tammy Mullins, Pres. of Learning Disability Advocacy Center in Germantown, has compiled the directory and it will be going to the publisher in the next few days. The educational information and directory of service providers that are included will be extremely helpful to parents, teachers, pediatricians, and agencies. The end result is very exciting to us, because it fits our mission of helping to educate all who wish or need to know how to maneuver in the world of educating one with a unique learning style.

Producing the printed version of the TNIDA Resource Directory has been much like the birthing of a child. We have been working toward this goal for more than 4 years. From clarifying its purpose to obtaining the funding, defining the formats, finding capable and willing people to do the footwork (or learning how to and then doing it ourselves), the time frame has often been discouraging and frustrating. But with all labors of love, it has finally arrived!

We are thrilled to be able to present the TNIDA Resource Directory. We see this, in the initial line of distribution priorities, as a valuable resource to elementary education, special education, counseling, and psychology departments, pediatric offices, educational testing, and advocacy businesses. Since the first printing will be modest in number and at no cost to those who receive it, an order form will be available to order more copies. Pick your copy up at the conference. (For more information on the conference, see the conference program inserted inside this newsletter).

### THE INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION

*Founded in Memory of Samuel T. Orton*

**Formerly The Orton Dyslexia Society**

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The International Dyslexia Association supports efforts to provide individuals with dyslexia with appropriate instruction and to identify these individuals at an early age. The Association, however, does not endorse any specific program, speaker, product, or instructional material, noting that there are a number of such which present the critical components of instruction as defined by IDA.



## REGIONAL NEWS

### DELTA REGION

by Rosemary Williams, Vice-President

The Delta Region is looking forward to hosting the fourteenth year of teacher training through the Simultaneous-Multisensory Institute for Language Arts (SMILA) which is accredited by IMSLEC. The four-week session includes classroom instruction and individualized tutoring for area students. The dates are June 5 through July 3, 2003. For information, contact Rosemary Williams at (901) 754-1441.

The Bodine School is offering a summer reading program for area students in need of multisensory reading instruction in grades K-9. All teachers have been trained in Orton-Gillingham methods, many through SMILA. The dates are June 16 through July 11, 2003, and the hours are 9-12 daily. For information contact: The Bodine School at (901) 754-1800.

The Bodine School recently hosted a spelling workshop presented by Caresa Young, from the Middle Tennessee State University Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia. Forty teachers from a number of public and independent schools benefited from the workshop. The Bodine School is also providing workshops to area schools on the results of the National Reading Panel. These workshops can be arranged by contacting the school.

### SMOKY MOUNTAIN REGION

by Martie Wood, Vice-President

This region is actively working toward producing the TN IDA conference. The schools engaged in the REA grant process across the state as well as in our corner are closing in on their first year and redefining the plans for the second year. As Reading First grants follow on the heels of the REA grants, schools and systems are dealing with multitudes of assessment issues, intervention choices, functional professional development, and documentation of the validity of every step. Yet, the simple goal of it all has not and will never change: Teach more effectively.

The IDA mission involves training educators to meet that goal. For the past eight years, teachers in our region have had the opportunity to be trained in the Slingerland Approach under grants and personal endowments which provided this training, with no financial burden to the teachers or to their systems. However, a full month of their most precious com-

modity – time – was required at each level of training. Having completed three levels of Slingerland, I am well aware of the intensity of the work and of the time requirements, yet I have never experienced language arts professional development of such caliber. The quality of educators who chose to devote 20 full-time days of their summer to this goal was inspiring. That dedication, combined with the knowledge gained, has raised the bar. Whether these teachers use the approach exactly as it was presented or have become able to more effectively absorb, use, and adapt their own curriculums and professional development opportunities to the benefit of their students, the overall goal of more effective teaching is addressed. Also, students in our region were involved and benefited from working with these teachers one on one during each of these summers. Sadly, at this time circumstances have converged in such a way that there is not a Slingerland Summer School available this summer for our area.

There are some excellent training opportunities for instruction in multisensory structured language education going on in other areas of the state. Many of them are listed in the regional reports in this newsletter, but will also be made available on our website: [www.tn-interdys.org](http://www.tn-interdys.org).

Also on our website, we have a listing of service providers for those with learning differences. Services include psycho-educational testing, academic therapy, tutoring, speech/language pathology, and schools. Please spread this news to the parents, physicians, and others who could benefit from this free access.

### SOUTHEAST REGION

by Eileen Card, Vice-President

A parent's perspective —

I am especially proud to be a member of TNIDA during this exciting time, when even the federal government realizes the importance of teaching ALL children to read on or above grade level by the third grade. All of us involved in education, especially special education, are busy learning and planning for the implementation of programs and training that are research-based and WILL make a positive impact on the lives of children with dyslexia.

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