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READ Act: Improving Outcomes of Students With Dyslexia and Others That Struggle With Reading

WASHINGTON, DC –The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc. (COPAA) in support of the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia (READ) Act released the following statement:

“Teaching students to read is, without a doubt, the single most important thing schools can do to for students and reading enables lifelong learning and participation,” stated Denise Marshall, COPAA’s executive director. “Yet school districts often fail, and even refuse, to teach many students decoding, comprehension, or both. The READ Act is intended to address these problems by focusing research and dissemination efforts on best practice to support students with dyslexia, which will help all students who struggle to read.”

- Currently, there are 2.4 million students who have specific learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia) and receive special education services provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). These students represent over 40% of the students eligible for special education nationally.ⁱ
- The vast majority of students with specific learning disabilities spend more than 80% of their school day in the general education classroom.ⁱⁱ
- In 2010, only 52% of Black students with disabilities graduated with a diploma as compared to 71% of White students with disabilitiesⁱⁱⁱ and 81% of the nation’s general student population.^{iv}

Marshall concluded, “We know that too many teachers do not receive adequate preparation or professional development in how to identify reading issues and provide effective intervention and there are very few programs available that can provide this type of instruction to scale. If this legislation actually serves its intended purpose, it will benefit and serve all struggling readers - including students identified with disabilities other than dyslexia, any struggling reader. The research is very clear that the direct, explicit, systematic reading instruction that dyslexic children require is the same type of instruction used to improve reading for any struggling reader. Most importantly, we thank Chairman Smith for his leadership on the issue. This bill makes an important step toward providing programs that would benefit the literacy of *all* students who struggle to read.”

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To learn more about COPAA visit www.coppa.org

ⁱ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count data, ages 6-21 available at: <http://1.usa.gov/1Ga2WME>

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, at: <https://inventory.data.gov/dataset/8715a3e8-bf48-4eef-9deb-fd9bb76a196e/resource/a68a23f3-3981-47db-ac75-98a167b65259>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 204.30.

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database at: www.ideadata.org. See Exiting by Race/Ethnicity, 2010.

^{iv} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Non-fiscal Survey of Public Elementary/ Secondary Education," 1990–91 through 2009–10; "State Dropout and Completion Data File," 2005–06 through 2011–12; *Public School Graduates and Dropouts From the Common Core of Data*, 2007–08 and 2008–09. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 219.10.