

# Portland's Morrison Bridge will light up red for dyslexia awareness



The Morrison Bridge will light up red for dyslexia awareness - red because parents of children with dyslexia get frustrated seeing all the red ink on their kids' schoolwork.

*(Oregonian/OregonLive file photo)*

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on October 15, 2015 at 1:30 PM, updated October 15, 2015 at 2:44 PM

1

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Portland's Morrison Bridge will light up red at 8 p.m. for three nights starting Thursday, Oct. 15, to raise awareness of [dyslexia](#), a learning disorder that causes children to have difficulty reading.

"The most common reason a child ends up in special education is because of a learning disability and 80 percent of those children have dyslexia," said Diana Sticker, a founding member of [Decoding Dyslexia Oregon](#).

"It's rather invisible," Sticker said of dyslexia. "Sometimes if you don't know the signs and symptoms, kids can silently struggle in school and you don't really realize the underlying problem that they're having."

She added that dyslexia can also be hard to identify because "there's a spectrum and it can vary from child to child."

The event is one of several bridge lightings taking place nationwide on Oct. 15, a date chosen because the prevalence of dyslexia is nearly 1 in 5 people, Sticker said. The color red represents parents' frustration with repeatedly seeing red marks on their children's schoolwork. The idea is to redeem the the color - bridge lighting organizers are using the social media hashtag #RedeemingRed - and give it a positive connotation.

The first such lighting took place at the RSA Tower in Montgomery, Alabama, in 2013.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown recently declared October Dyslexia Awareness Month and the Oregon Legislature this year passed [Senate Bill 612](#), directing the state Department of Education to designate a state dyslexia specialist and requiring that at least one teacher in every K-5 school receive dyslexia-related training.



"My teachers and classmates didn't understand why I was struggling," says Nazle Taylor, a senior at Edison High School in Portland, which is specifically dedicated to addressing the needs of students with learning disabilities and differences. "With greater awareness about dyslexia, I hope fewer kids will experience the embarrassment I felt in elementary school." Andie Petkus Photography

Michelle Crimmins, a spokeswoman for Portland's private [Edison High School](#), which serves students with learning disabilities and is one of the sponsors of the bridge lighting, said the new law speaks to the fact that even educators often don't know as much as they need to about dyslexia.

"Even teachers who have long experience don't necessarily get the training and education to identify the students" who have dyslexia, Crimmins said.

"Kids who are very bright and creative and capable, because they have this condition, sometimes they get left out in school. People assume that they're lazy; people assume that they can't do their work. What they need is education geared toward that."

Other sponsors of the bridge lighting are Beaverton-based [Language Skills Therapy](#), an educational therapists group; the [Oregon Branch of the International Dyslexia Association](#); Lake Oswego-based [Park Academy](#), which specializes in educating children with dyslexia; and the Portland-based [Blosser Center for Dyslexia Resources](#).

For more dyslexia resources, visit [Decoding Dyslexia Oregon's website](#).

-- Amy Wang

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