

# Child Find

## DYSLEXIA SERVICES

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Model operating procedures created by



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## DYSLEXIA SERVICES

### What is Required

The District's Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that campuses are implementing procedures for identifying and providing appropriate, evidence-based instructional services to all students with dyslexia or related disorders. The District's procedures must be implemented according to the approved strategies for screening, individualized evaluation, and techniques for treating dyslexia and related services as described in *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Services* ("The Dyslexia Handbook"). The District must report through PEIMS the number of students enrolled in the District who are identified as having dyslexia.

### **Parent Notification**

Parents or guardians of a student with dyslexia or related disorder must be informed of all services and options available to the student, including general education interventions under response to intervention and multi-tiered systems of support models as well as the option for an evaluation and services under the IDEA and Section 504.

District Special Education Personnel must provide written notification to the student's parent or guardian at least five days before any evaluation or identification procedure is used with a specific student suspected of having dyslexia or related disorder. This notice must be English or in the parent or guardian's native language and include the following:

- A reasonable description of the evaluation procedure to be used with the student;
- Information regarding instructional interventions or strategies provided to the student prior to the evaluation;
- An estimated time frame for completion of the evaluation; and
- Contact information for the Campus Dyslexia Personnel that the parent can contact regarding dyslexia services, relevant parent training and information projects, and any other appropriate parent resources.

In addition, before an initial FIE is conducted to determine whether a student who is suspected to have dyslexia or a related disorder has a disability under the IDEA, the Campus Special Education Personnel must comply with the special education procedures related to Prior Written Notice and Referral for Possible Special Education Services, and provide the parent with all information indicated above, a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards, an opportunity to give written consent for an initial FIE, and a copy of the required information for non-special student who receives assistance from the District for

learning difficulties. See [PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE] and [REFERRAL FOR POSSIBLE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES] and [CONSENT FOR INITIAL EVALUATION] and [CHILD FIND DUTY].

### **Universal Dyslexia Screening & Identification**

To comply with child find requirements, the District must screen or test all students for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times in accordance with The Dyslexia Handbook and state law. Specifically, the law requires that all kindergarten and first grade students be screened for dyslexia and related services. In addition, the law requires the District to administer to students in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade a reading instrument to diagnose student reading development and comprehension. This law also requires the District to administer a reading instrument at the beginning of seventh grade to students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the sixth-grade state reading STAAR.

Only District or Campus Personnel who are trained in valid, evidence-based assessments and can appropriately evaluate students for dyslexia and related disorders should conduct the screenings. This includes an individual who is certified/licensed in dyslexia or a classroom teacher who holds a valid certification. Anyone that screens and treats students with dyslexia and related disorders must be trained in instructional strategies that use individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods, as well as a variety of writing and spelling components.

The District is required to consider prior screenings and testing before rescreening or retesting a student determined to have dyslexia during a prior screening or testing.

The District may not use early intervention strategies, such as Response to Intervention systems or other multi-tiered systems of support, to delay or deny the special education evaluation of a student suspected to have a specific learning disability, including dyslexia or a related disorder.

### **Dyslexia Services**

The District must provide a reading program for any student with dyslexia or a related disorder that is in accordance with the descriptors and implementation requirements found in The Dyslexia Handbook. All Dyslexia Providers must be trained in the instructional strategies that use individualized, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components as described in The Dyslexia Handbook.

The District must provide each student identified as having dyslexia access to the District's dyslexia services with a provider trained in dyslexia and related disorders at the student's campus. Additional services can be offered at a centralized location if the parent or guardian agrees to the services, but centralized services must not prevent the student from receiving services at the student's campus.

## Parent Education Program

Campus Personnel must provide parents or guardians of students suspected of having dyslexia or a related disorder a copy or a link to the electronic version of The Dyslexia Handbook as soon as the suspicion arises.

The District and/or Campus Personnel must also offer a parent education program for parents or guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program must include:

- Awareness and characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders;
- Information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia and related disorders;
- Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia and related disorders;
- Information on qualifications of those delivering services to students with dyslexia and related disorders;
- Awareness of information on accommodations and modifications, including those for statewide assessments;
- Information on eligibility, evaluation requests, and services available to the student under Section 504 and IDEA, and information regarding intervention processes, such as Response to Intervention; and
- Contact information for the relevant regional and/or District specialists for dyslexia and related disorders.

## Definitions

“Dyslexia” is a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.

“Related disorders” include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

“Universal screening” is defined as a universal measure administered to all students by qualified personnel to determine which students are at risk for dyslexia or reading difficulties and/or a related disorder. Screening is not a formal evaluation.

## **Additional Procedures**

### **Dyslexia Screening & Identification**

Campus Personnel are responsible for ensuring that all students in kindergarten and first grade are screened for dyslexia in an appropriate and timely manner. Before screening may take place, District or Campus Administration will select a screening instrument from the Commissioner's List of Reading Instruments list for Campus Personnel to use that address the following skills:

- Kindergarten – phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, letter knowledge, decoding skills, spelling, and listening comprehension.
- First Grade – phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, letter knowledge, decoding skills, spelling, reading rate, reading accuracy, and listening comprehension.

Screenings for all kindergarten students should take place in the later part of the spring semester. Considerations for scheduling the kindergarten screener may include the following factors: (1) has adequate time for instruction been provided during the school year; (2) has adequate time been provided to compile data prior to the end of the school year; (3) how will the timing of the screener fit in with the timing of other required assessments; (4) has sufficient time been provided to inform parents in writing of the results of the reading instrument and whether the student is at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties; (5) has adequate time been provided for educators to offer appropriate interventions to the student and (6) has sufficient time been provided for decision making regarding next steps in the screening process.

Screenings for all first grade students should take place no later than the middle of the school year and must conclude by January 31 of each year.

All Campus Personnel conducting screenings must understand and be able to identify primary characteristics of dyslexia, including challenges with reading words in isolation, decoding, reading orally, and spelling. In addition, the individuals who administer the screening instrument must also document student behaviors observed during the administration of the instrument, including lack of automaticity, difficulty sounding out words left to right, guessing, self-correcting, inability to focus on reading, and avoidance behavior.

Campus Administration will verify that all Campus Personnel conducting screenings have undergone the required trainings and are properly certified to fill this role. Specifically, individuals who administer and interpret the screening instrument must, at a minimum, be an individual who is certified/licensed in dyslexia or a classroom teacher who holds a valid

certification for kindergarten and Grade 1. Where possible, the student's current classroom teacher will administer the screening instrument for dyslexia and reading difficulties. Then, the teacher (or other Campus Personnel) conducting screenings will report the results of dyslexia and related disorder screenings required for each student in kindergarten and first grade through PEIMS. The report of results must also be provided to the parent of the student with an explanation of the scores.

Campus Personnel will continue to monitor students for common risk factors for dyslexia in second grade and beyond.

Based on the universal screener for reading and dyslexia, if a student is at low risk for reading difficulties, the campus will continue evidence-based core reading instruction and continue to monitor the student for reading difficulties in the future.

If the student is at risk for reading difficulties, Campus Personnel will gather both quantitative and qualitative information about the student. Quantitative information may include current dyslexia screening instruments, previous dyslexia screening instruments, formal and informal classroom reading assessments and/or other skill assessments, vision and hearing screening, state assessment reports, curriculum-based assessments, and attendance records. Qualitative information may include observations of student during screening, other observations of student progress, teacher observations and reports, parent/guardian input (e.g. family history, early language skills), current student work samples, academic progress reports, work samples from earlier grades, and/or accommodations and intervention history and data.

Both quantitative and qualitative information will be reviewed by a Team of Campus Personnel which should include individuals who have knowledge of the student, are appropriately trained in the administration of the screening tool, are trained to interpret the results, and recognize characteristics of dyslexia. The Team may consist of the student's classroom teacher, the counselor, the campus or district dyslexia specialist, the individual who administered the screener, a representative of LPAC, assessment personnel, the parent, and/or an administrator. This Team is not the ARD Committee or a Section 504 Committee, although many of these individuals may be on a future committee if the student is referred for an evaluation and qualifies for services and/or accommodations. The Team shall analyze the data and make a decision as to whether the student's reading difficulties are or are not consistent with characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders.

If the Team determines that the data does not give the members reason to suspect that a student has dyslexia, a related disorder or other disability, the Team may decide to provide the student with additional supports in the classroom or through the Response to Intervention process or other Campus-based intervention system. However, the student is not referred for an evaluation at this time.

If the Team suspects that the student has dyslexia or a related disorder, the Team should



consider the type of instruction that would best meet the student's needs. If the student needs the standard protocol dyslexia instruction, which is a programmatic instruction delivered to a group of students and/or accommodations in the regular education classroom, then the Team should refer the student for a Section 504 evaluation. On the other hand, if the student needs specially-designed instruction that is individualized to address the unique needs of the student, then the Team should refer the student for an initial FIE under the IDEA, as there is a reason to suspect that special education services are necessary for the student. See [REFERRAL FOR POSSIBLE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES].

**It is important to remember that at any point in the process, a referral for a dyslexia evaluation may be made either under Section 504 if a disability is suspected or under IDEA if a disability and a corresponding need for special education services are suspected. Progression through the intervention process is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia.** For example, Campus Personnel should refer a student for a dyslexia evaluation if regular progress monitoring reflects a difficulty with reading, decoding, and/or reading comprehension or when a student is not reaching grade-level benchmarks due to reading difficulty. In addition, parents or guardians have a right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation under the IDEA or Section 504 at any time. While the use of tiered intervention may be part of the identification and data collection process for dyslexia, Campus Personnel must ensure that evaluations of students suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of tiered interventions, especially when parent or teacher observations reveal the common characteristics of dyslexia.

### **Referral for IDEA or Section 504 Evaluation**

If the Campus Personnel Team determines that dyslexia or a similar disability is suspected and there is a suspected corresponding need for special education services, Campus Personnel must refer a student for an initial evaluation under the IDEA. The Team will make decisions regarding referrals on a case-by-case basis, carefully considering all data obtained from screenings and other sources. In addition, parents or guardians may also request a referral for an initial evaluation under the IDEA. District or Campus Personnel must then follow all procedural safeguards under the IDEA. See [CHILD FIND DUTY] and [REFERRAL FOR POSSIBLE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES] and [CONSENT FOR INITIAL EVALUATION]

If dyslexia or a similar disability is suspected but there is no suspected corresponding need for special education services, the Campus Personnel Team should refer a student for a dyslexia evaluation under Section 504. District or Campus Personnel must follow all procedural safeguards under Section 504.



## Provision of Dyslexia Services

If a student is evaluated under Section 504 or IDEA and the results of the evaluation show that the student has dyslexia or a related disorder, the student may be eligible for dyslexia services. If the student is determined to be Section 504 eligible, the student will be eligible for services, standard protocol dyslexia instruction, accommodations and/or related aids as determined by his/her Section 504 committee. If the student is determined to be eligible under the IDEA, the student will receive specially-designed instruction, related services, supplementary aids and services, accommodations or program modifications, as determined by his/her ARD Committee.

Regardless of whether the student is receiving standard protocol dyslexia instruction under Section 504 or specially designed instruction under IDEA, the dyslexia services provided must address the following critical, evidence-based components:

- Phonological awareness
- Sound-symbol association
- Syllabication
- Orthography
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Reading comprehension
- Reading fluency

In addition to the above content, it is also critical that the way the content is delivered is consistent with research-based principles. Campus Administration and the Dyslexia Service Provider will ensure that all of the following principles of effective intervention for students with dyslexia are utilized:

- Simultaneous, multisensory
- Systematic and cumulative
- Explicit instruction
- Diagnostic teaching to automaticity
- Synthetic instruction
- Analytic instruction

The District Administration will ensure that dyslexia instruction is provided by individuals trained to deliver such instruction. Teachers, such as reading specialists, master reading teachers, general education classroom teachers, or special education teachers, who provide dyslexia intervention for students are not required to hold a specific license or certification. However, these educators must at a minimum have additional documented dyslexia training aligned to the requirements of The Dyslexia Handbook and must deliver the instruction with fidelity. In addition, educators who teach students with dyslexia should be trained in new research and practices related to dyslexia as part of their continuing

profession education (CPE) hours.

District Administration will decide whether to purchase a reading program or develop its own evidence-based reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders. If the District decides to develop its own reading program, District Administration must ensure that the program is aligned with the procedures in The Dyslexia Handbook, including the required components and principles above.

## **Evidence of Implementation**

- Cumulative Student Data
- Instructional Strategies Provided and Student Response
- Section 504 Evaluation
- FIE
- Evidence of Trainings for Campus Personnel Administering Screenings
- Certifications of Campus Personnel Administering Screenings
- Evidence of Training for Dyslexia Service Providers
- Certifications of Dyslexia Service Providers
- ARD/IEP
- Section 504 Plan
- Right to Information Provided to Parent
- Receipt From Parent of The Dyslexia Handbook
- Receipt From Parent of Procedural Safeguards Under IDEA and/or Section 504
- Approved Dyslexia Program
- Documentation of Dyslexia Services Provided to Student

## **Resources**

[The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Dyslexia Services - Region 18](#)

[The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders \(last updated Nov. 2018\) - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Dyslexia and Related Disorders - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: Dyslexia and Related Disorders \(March 2019\) - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Provision of Services for Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Dear Colleague Letter: Guidance on Dyslexia \(October 23, 2015\) - U.S. Department of Education](#)

**CITATIONS**

Board Policy EHB; 34 CFR Part 104, Subpart D; Texas Education Code 26.0081(d), 38.003, 48.009(b)(1); 19 TAC 74.28; *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders*, Texas Education Agency (last updated Nov. 2018)