

# Longview Independent School District

## District Dyslexia Plan



*Longview Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or genetic information in employment or provision of services, programs or activities.*

Source –Texas Dyslexia Handbook Revised 2021

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## **I. Definition of Dyslexia**

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003

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

(2) “*Related disorders*” includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The current definition from the International Dyslexia Association states the following:

*Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.* (Adopted by the International Dyslexia Board of Directors, November 12, 2002).

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in phonological awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Consequences may include difficulties in phonological awareness are unexpected for the student’s age and educational level, and are not primarily the result of language difference factors. Additionally, there is often a **family history** of similar difficulties.

### **State and Federal Law Regarding Early Identification and Intervention Prior to Formal Assessment**

Both state and federal legislation emphasize early identification and intervention for students who may be at risk for reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.

#### *TEC §28.006, Reading Diagnosis*

This state statute requires schools to administer early reading instruments to all students in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 to assess their reading development and comprehension. Additionally, the law requires a reading instrument from the commissioner’s approved list be administered at the beginning of grade 7 to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency on the sixth-grade reading assessment administered under TEC §39.023(a). If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties, the school must notify the students’ parents/guardians. According to TEC §28.006(g), the school must also implement an accelerated (intensive) reading program that appropriately addresses the students’ reading difficulties and enables them to catch up with their typically performing peers.

*TEC §38.003, Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia*

Texas state law requires that public school students be screened and tested, as appropriate, for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times in accordance with a program approved by the SBOE. The program approved by the SBOE must include screening for each student at the end of the kindergarten year and then again during first grade.

*Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)* The services offered to students who are reported to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties should align to the requirements of ESSA, which requires schools to implement comprehensive literacy instruction featuring “age- appropriate, explicit, systematic, and intentional instruction in phonological awareness, phonic decoding, vocabulary, language structure, reading fluency, and reading comprehension” (ESSA, 2015).

*Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA)*

This civil rights law ensures that all students are given equal access to educational services regardless of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. Therefore, research-based interventions are to be provided to all students experiencing difficulties in reading, including ELs, regardless of their proficiency in English.

*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*

The most recent reauthorization of this federal act is consistent with ESSA in emphasizing quality of instruction and documentation of student progress. A process based on the student’s response to scientific, research-based intervention is one of the criteria included in IDEA that individual states may use in determining whether a student has a specific learning disability, including dyslexia.

In addition to state and local requirements to screen and identify students who may be at risk for dyslexia, there are also overarching federal laws and regulations to identify students with disabilities, commonly referred to as Child Find. Child Find is a provision in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that requires the state to have policies and procedures in place to ensure that every student in the state who needs special education and related services is located, identified, and evaluated. The purpose of the IDEA is to ensure that students with disabilities are offered a free and appropriate public education (20 U.S.C. §1400(d); 34 C.F.R. §300.1). Because a student suspected of having dyslexia may be a student with a disability under the IDEA, the Child Find mandate includes these students. Therefore, when referring and evaluating students suspected of having dyslexia, LEAs must follow procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA.

Another federal law that applies to students with disabilities in public school is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as Section 504. Under Section 504, public schools must annually attempt to identify and locate every qualified student with a disability residing in its jurisdiction and notify them and/or their parents of the requirements of Section 504.

The provisions offered to students who are reported to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties should align to the requirements of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation, Longview ISD will implement reading programs using scientifically based reading research as well as evidence proven effective results.

Under the Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA), Longview ISD ensures that all students are given equal access to educational services regardless of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. Therefore, research-based interventions are to be provided to all students experiencing difficulties in reading, including English language learners (ELL), regardless of their proficiency in English.

## **II. Identification and Intervention Prior to Formal Assessment**

In 2017, the 85th Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1886, amending Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003, Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia to require that all kindergarten and first-grade public school students be screened for dyslexia and related disorders. Additionally, the law requires that all students beyond first grade be screened or tested as appropriate.

In response to the screening requirements of HB 1886, the SBOE amended its rule in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.28, Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders. While this rule speaks primarily to evaluation and identification of a student with dyslexia or related disorders, it also requires that evaluations only be conducted by appropriately trained and qualified individuals. Guidelines regarding the required screening for kindergarten and first-grade students are discussed in Part B of this chapter.

In accordance with TEC §28.006 Reading Diagnosis, Longview ISD administers early reading instruments in kindergarten, first, and second grades to determine students' reading development and comprehension. Additionally, the law requires a reading instrument from the commissioner's approved list to be administered at the beginning of grade 7 to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency on the reading assessment administered under TEC§39.023(a). If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, the students' parents/guardians are notified. In addition, an accelerated (intensive) reading program that appropriately addresses students' reading difficulties and enables them to "catch up" with their typically performing peers is implemented. The information from reading instruments administered under TEC §28.006 will be one source of information in deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia.

LISD ensures that appropriately trained and qualified individuals administer and interpret the results of the selected screening instrument. Please note that an educational aide is not eligible to administer or interpret the dyslexia screening instrument. Individuals who administer and interpret the screening instrument, at minimum, meet the following qualifications:

- An individual who is certified/licensed in dyslexia; or
- A classroom teacher who holds a valid certification for kindergarten and grade 1.

### **III. The Referral Process for Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

#### **Data-Driven Meeting of Knowledgeable Persons**

A team of persons with knowledge of the student, instructional practices, and instructional options meets to discuss data collected, including data obtained during kindergarten and/or first grade screening, and the implications of that data. These individuals include, but are not limited to, the classroom teacher, administrator, dyslexia specialist, and/or interventionist. This team may also include the parents and/or a diagnostician familiar with testing and interpreting evaluation results. Unless the student is already served under IDEA or Section 504, this team of knowledgeable persons is not an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (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.

#### *When the Data Does Not Lead to Suspicion of a Disability, Including Dyslexia or a Related Disorder*

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 support in the classroom or through the RTI/MTSS process. The student will continue to receive grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction. (Tier 1) and any other appropriate tiered interventions. However, the student is not referred for an evaluation at this time.

#### *When the Data Lead to a Suspicion of a Disability, Including Dyslexia or a Related Disorder*

If the team suspects that the student has dyslexia, a related disorder, or another disability included within the IDEA, the team will refer the student for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE). In most cases, an FIIE under the IDEA must be completed within 45-school days from the time a district receives parental consent. The student will continue to receive grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and any other appropriate tiered interventions while the school conducts the FIIE.

#### **Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.**

Once a parent request for dyslexia evaluation has been made, LISD is obligated to review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is reason to suspect the student has a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student will be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in this chapter. Under the IDEA, Longview ISD refuses the request to evaluate, it will give parents prior written notice of refusal to evaluate, including an explanation of why the school refuses to conduct an FIIE, the information that was used as the basis for the decision, and a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. Should the parent disagree with the school's refusal to conduct an evaluation, the parent has the right to initiate dispute resolution options including; mediation, state complaints, and due process hearings. Additionally, the parent may request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense. Should the parent believe that their child is eligible for Section 504 aids, accommodations, and services, the parent may request an evaluation under Section 504.

## **IV. Procedures for Evaluation**

At any time (from kindergarten through grade 12) a student continues to struggle with one or more components of reading, Longview ISD will collect additional information about the student.

### **Data Gathering:**

Information will be used to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. This information **should** include data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction and data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. Additional information to be considered includes the results from some or all of the following:

- Vision screening
- Hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations or interventions provided
- Academic progress reports (report cards)
- Gifted/Talented assessments
- Samples of schoolwork
- Parent conference notes
- Testing for limited English proficiency (all years available)
- Speech and language screening through a referral process (English and native language, if possible)
- The K-2 reading instrument as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)
- 7<sup>th</sup>-grade reading instrument results as required in TEC§28.006
- State student assessment program as described in TEC §39.002
- Observations of instruction provided to the student
- Full Individual Evaluation (FIE)
- Outside evaluations
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction
- Universal screening

Data that support the student received conventional (appropriate) instruction and that the difficulties are not primarily the result of sociocultural factors which include language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background.

Among the actions that Longview ISD has available for the student is a recommendation that the student be assessed for dyslexia. Longview ISD recommends assessment for dyslexia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Poor performance in one or more areas of reading and/or the related area of spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade
- Characteristics and risk factors of dyslexia

### **Primary Reading/Spelling Characteristics of Dyslexia:**

- Difficulty reading words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored)
- Difficulty spelling

It is important to note that students demonstrate differences in degree of impairment.

The reading/spelling characteristics are most often associated with the following:

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
- Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory)
- Rapid recalling the name of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming)

Consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written language
- Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences

If a student continues to struggle with reading, the identification of reading disabilities, including dyslexia, will follow one of two procedures. Longview ISD will complete the evaluation process as outlined in the IDEA. Procedural safeguards under IDEA must be followed.

## **Formal Evaluation of Dyslexia**

Students enrolling in Longview ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teachers' input, and parents' or guardians' input. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28), the earlier the better. While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

When formal evaluation is recommended, LISD will complete the evaluation process as outlined in the IDEA. Procedural safeguards under IDEA must be followed. For more information on procedural safeguards, see TEA's Parent Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process (Parent's Guide) and the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.



Test instruments, and other evaluation materials, must meet the following criteria:

- Be validated for the specific purpose for which the tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials are used
- Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely materials that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient
- Be selected and administered so as to ensure that, when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
- Be selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory
- Include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion referenced assessments, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)
- Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
- Be used for the purpose for which the assessment or measures are valid or reliable
- Be provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information regarding what the child can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer

### **Domains to Assess**

Longview ISD administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Depending upon the student's age and stage of reading development, the following are the areas related to reading that should be assessed:

### **Academic Skills**

- Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
- Reading words in isolation - Decoding unfamiliar words accurately
- Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy are measured)
- Reading comprehension
- Spelling/Written composition

### **Cognitive processes that underlie the reading difficulties**

- **Phonological/phonemic awareness** (Difficulties in phonological and phonemic awareness are typically seen in students with dyslexia and impact a student's ability to learn letters and the sounds associated with letters and letter combinations, learn the alphabetic principle, use the sounds of the letters and letter combinations to decode words and to accurately spell.)
- **Rapid naming** (Difficulties in rapid naming may or may not be weak, but if deficient, will impact a student's ability to automatically name letters and read words and to read connected text at an appropriate rate.)

- **Orthographic processing** (Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses.)
- **Various language processes** (Language processes such as morpheme and syntax awareness, memory and retrieval of verbal labels, and the ability to formulate ideas into grammatical sentences, may also be factors affecting reading.)

Based on the student’s academic difficulties and characteristics, additional areas that may be assessed include the following:

- Vocabulary
- Listening comprehension
- Verbal expression
- Written expression
- Handwriting
- Memory for letter or symbol sequences (Orthographic processing)
- Mathematical/calculation reasoning
- Phonological memory
- Verbal working memory
- Processing speed

**English Language Learners: This refers to students served in Bilingual and ESL programs as well as students designated Limited English Proficient (LEP) whose parents have denied services.**

Much diversity exists among English Language Learners (ELLs). The identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be in step with the student’s linguistic environment and educational background. Involvement of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) in the decision making process is required.

Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Language Learners:

- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) documentation which includes the following:
  - Home language survey
  - Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency (oral language proficiency tests and norm-referenced tests)
  - State student assessment data results when available
  - Texas English Language Proficiency system (TELPAS) information (Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE))
  - Type of language programming provided and language of instruction
  - Linguistic environment and second-language acquisition development
  - Previous schooling in and outside of the United States

Additional assessment when assessing English Language Learners:

- Comprehensive oral language proficiency testing should be completed for a dyslexia evaluation due to the importance of the information for
  - consideration in relation to academic challenges,
  - planning the assessment, and
  - interpreting assessment results.

### **Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluations**

To appropriately **understand** evaluation data, the ARD committee must **interpret** test results in light of the student's educational history, linguistic background, environmental or socioeconomic factors, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning. When considering the condition of dyslexia, in addition to required ARD committee members, the committee should also include members who have specific knowledge regarding—

- the reading process,
- dyslexia and related disorders, and
- dyslexia instruction.

A determination must first be made regarding whether a student's difficulties in the areas of reading and spelling reflect a pattern of evidence for the primary characteristics of dyslexia with unexpectedly low performance for the student's age and educational level in **some or all** of the following areas:

- Reading words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar words accurately and automatically
- Reading fluency for connected text (rate and/or accuracy and/or prosody)
- Spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia)

Another factor to consider when interpreting test results is the student's linguistic background. The nature of the writing system of a language impacts the reading process. Thus, the identification guideposts of dyslexia in languages other than English may differ. For example, decoding in a language with a transparent written language (e.g., Spanish, German) may not be as decisive an indicator of dyslexia as reading rate. Students with dyslexia who have or who are being taught to read and write a transparent language may be able to decode real and nonwords adequately but demonstrate serious difficulties in reading rate with concurrent deficiencies in phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming (RAN).

Based on the above information and guidelines, should the ARD committee determine that the student exhibits weaknesses in reading and spelling, the committee will then examine the student's data to determine whether these difficulties are **unexpected** in relation to the student's other abilities, sociocultural factors, language difference, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate and effective instruction. For example, the student may exhibit strengths in areas such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, math reasoning, or verbal ability yet still have difficulty with reading and spelling. **Therefore, it is not one single**

**indicator but a preponderance of data (both informal and formal) that provide the committee with evidence for whether these difficulties are unexpected.**

Test results of English Language Learners (ELL) will be interpreted in light of the student's: language development (in both English and the student's native language, educational history, linguistic background, socioeconomic issues, nature of the writing system and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

## **V. Identification of Students with Dyslexia**

### **Assessment under IDEA**

If the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, the ARD committee must then determine if the student has dyslexia. For ELs, an LPAC representative must be included on the ARD committee.

If, through the evaluation process, it is established that the student has the condition of dyslexia, the student meets the first prong of eligibility under the IDEA (identification of condition). In other words, the identification of dyslexia meets the criterion for the condition of a specific learning disability in basic reading and/or reading fluency. However, the presence of a disability condition alone, is not sufficient to determine if the student is a student with a disability under the IDEA. Eligibility under the IDEA consists of both identification of the condition and a corresponding need for specially designed instruction as a result of the disability.

In IDEA, dyslexia is considered one of a variety of etiological foundations for specific learning disability (SLD). Section 34 C.F.R. §300.8(c)(10) states the following:

*Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.*

The term *SLD* does not apply to children who have learning difficulties that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

The IDEA evaluation requirements for SLD eligibility in 34 C.F.R. §300.309(a)(1) specifically designate the following areas for a learning disability in reading: basic reading skills (dyslexia), reading fluency skills, and/or reading comprehension.

The October 23, 2015 letter from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) (Dear Colleague: Dyslexia Guidance) states that dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia are conditions

that could qualify a child as a child with a specific learning disability under the IDEA. The letter further states that there is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms *dyslexia*, *dyscalculia*, and *dysgraphia* in the IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents. For more information, please visit <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>.

Once the condition of dyslexia has been identified, a determination must be made regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student. If a student with dyslexia is found eligible for special education (i.e., student requires specially designed instruction), the student's IEP must include appropriate reading instruction. If a student has previously met special education eligibility and is later identified with dyslexia, the ARD committee should include in the IEP goals that reflect the need for dyslexia instruction and determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia instruction.

### **Assessment under Section 504**

If—based on the data—the student is identified with dyslexia, but is not eligible for special education, the student may receive dyslexia instruction and accommodations under Section 504.

A student who is found not eligible under the IDEA, but who is identified with the condition of dyslexia through the FIIE process should not be referred for a second evaluation under Section 504. Instead, the Section 504 committee will use the FIIE and develop an appropriate plan for the student without delay. For students eligible for Section 504, a Section 504 committee will develop the student's Section 504 Plan, which must include appropriate reading instruction to meet the individual needs of the student. Revision of the Section 504 Plan will occur as the student's response to instruction and to the use of accommodations, if any, is observed. Changes in instruction and/or accommodations must be supported by current data (e.g., classroom performance and dyslexia program monitoring).

Based on the above information and guidelines, the committee first determines whether the student has dyslexia. If the student has dyslexia, the committee also determines whether the student has a disability under §504. Whether a student is eligible for §504 accommodations is a separate determination from the determination that the student has dyslexia. A student is disabled under §504 if the physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as the specific activity of reading. Additionally, the §504 committee, in determining whether a student has a disability that substantially limits the student in a major life activity, must **not** consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using. If the committee does not identify dyslexia, but the student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student's learning, eligibility for §504 services related to the student's other condition or disability should be considered.

Students with additional factors that complicate their dyslexia may require additional support or referral to special education. If a student is already qualified as a student with a disability under special education, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee should determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia intervention.

### **Assessment of Students Identified Outside the District**

Students identified as having dyslexia or related disorders from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the district's program. Longview ISD may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student. In either situation, the committee (§504 or ARD) will determine the identification status of a student enrolled in Longview ISD, and the placement of the student in the dyslexia program(s).

## **VI. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia**

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, Longview ISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in TEC §38.003:

The following procedures must be followed:

- Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia are made by a committee (Section 504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia. It is important to remember that while dyslexia instruction is most successful when provided as early as possible, older children with reading disabilities will also benefit from focused and intensive remedial instruction.

- Longview ISD shall purchase or develop a reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that is aligned with the descriptors found in this handbook. The descriptors include the components of phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. Instructional approaches include simultaneous, multisensory, systematic and cumulative, explicit, diagnostic teaching to automaticity, synthetic and analytic instruction (19 TAC §74.28). The components of instruction and instructional approaches are described in the next section of the Longview ISD plan.

- Longview ISD will provide each identified student access at his/her campus to an instructional program that meets the requirements in 19 TAC §74.28(c) and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. The school district may, with the approval of each student's parents or guardians, offer additional services at a centralized location. Such centralized services shall not preclude each student from receiving services at his or her campus (19 TAC §74.28).

- Parents/guardians of students eligible under §504 or IDEA must be informed of all services and options available to the student under that federal statute.

- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components specified in the next section of this plan. (19 TAC §74.28).

- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in the professional development activities specified by Longview ISD, and/or campus planning and decision making committee which shall include the instructional strategies indicated above (19 TAC §74.28).

### **Specially Designed Instruction**

For students with dyslexia who have been determined eligible for and who are receiving special education services, specially designed instruction must also address the critical, evidence-based components described in this chapter. Specially designed instruction differs from standard protocol dyslexia instruction in that it offers a more individualized program specifically designed to meet a student's unique needs. Note that participation in standard protocol dyslexia instruction must be considered for all students, including those receiving dyslexia instruction under the IDEA. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction could be part of the specially designed instruction and services provided to meet the student's needs.

Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia must be made by a committee (§504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia. In accordance with 19 TAC §74.28(c), districts shall purchase or develop a reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that incorporates **all** of the following components of instruction and instructional approaches.

### **Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction**

- Phonological Awareness
- Sound-symbol Association
- Syllabication
- Orthography
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Reading Comprehension

### **Delivery of Dyslexia Instruction**

- Simultaneous, Multisensory (Reading by Design and Take Flight)
- Systematic and Cumulative Instruction
- Explicit Instruction
- Diagnostic Teaching to Automaticity
- Synthetic Instruction
- Analytic Instruction

Both the teacher of dyslexia and the regular classroom teacher should provide multiple opportunities to support intervention and to strengthen these skills; therefore, responsibility for teaching reading and writing must be shared by classroom teachers, reading specialists, interventionists, and teachers of dyslexia programs.

## **VII. Definition and Characteristics of Dysgraphia**

Dysgraphia is related to dyslexia as both are language-based disorders. In dyslexia, the impairment is with word-level skills (decoding, word identification, spelling). Dysgraphia is a written language disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter. This involves not only motor skills but also language skills—finding, retrieving and producing letters, which is a subword-level language skill. The impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling and/or composing, but individuals with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading.

Dysgraphia is best defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder manifested by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. This difficulty is the result of deficits in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms). Secondary consequences may include problems with spelling and written expression. The difficulty is not solely due to lack of instruction and is not associated with other developmental or neurological conditions that involve motor impairment.

The characteristics of dysgraphia include the following:

- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Excessive erasures and cross-outs
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting

Additional consequences of dysgraphia may also include:

- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

Dysgraphia is not:

- Evidence of a damaged motor nervous system
- Part of a developmental disability that has fine motor deficits (e.g., intellectual disability, autism, cerebral palsy)
- Secondary to a medical condition (e.g., meningitis, significant head trauma, brain trauma)
- Association with generalized developmental motor or coordination difficulties (Developmental Coordination Disorder)
- Impaired spelling or written expression with typical handwriting (legibility and rate)

Dysgraphia can be due to:

- Impaired feedback the brain is receiving from the fingers
- Weaknesses using visual processing to coordinate hand movement and organize the use of space
- Problems with motor planning and sequencing



- Difficulty with storage and retrieval of letter forms

### **Procedures for Identification**

The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow Child Find procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. These procedural processes require coordination among the teacher, campus administrators, diagnosticians, and other professionals as appropriate when factors such as a student’s English language acquisition, previously identified disability, or other special needs are present.

Documentation of the following characteristics of dysgraphia could be collected during the data gathering phase:

- Slow or labored written work
- Poor formation of letters
- Improper letter slant
- Poor pencil grip
- Inadequate pressure during handwriting (too hard or too soft)
- Excessive erasures
- Poor spacing between words
- Poor spacing inside words
- Inability to recall accurate orthographic patterns for words
- “b” and “d” reversals beyond developmentally appropriate time
- Inability to copy words accurately
- Inability of student to read what was previously written
- Overuse of short familiar words such as “big”
- Avoidance of written tasks
- Difficulty with visual-motor integrated sports or activities

LISD follows federal and state guidelines and has developed procedures that address the needs of the student population. LISD recommends evaluation for dysgraphia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Impaired or illegible handwriting that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade
- Impaired handwriting that interferes with spelling, written expression, or both that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade

### **Domains to Assess**

#### *Academic Skills*

LISD administers measures that are related to the student’s educational needs. Difficulties in the areas of letter formation, orthographic awareness, and general handwriting skills may be evident dependent on the student’s age and writing development. Additionally, many students with dysgraphia may have difficulty with spelling and written expression.

#### *Cognitive Processes*

The process of handwriting requires the student to rely on memory for letters or symbol sequences, also known as orthographic processing. Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses. When spelling, a student must not only process both phonological and orthographic information, but also apply their knowledge of morphology and syntax

### **Dysgraphia Identification**

If the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, the ARD committee must then determine if the student has dysgraphia.

Do the data show the following characteristics and consequences of dysgraphia?

- Illegible and/or inefficient handwriting with variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression
- Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms)?
- Are these difficulties unexpected for the student's age in relation to the student's other abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction?

The ARD committee will determine whether the student who has dysgraphia is eligible under IDEA as a student with a specific learning disability. The student is eligible for services under IDEA if he/she has dysgraphia and, because of the dysgraphia needs special education services. The October 23, 2015 letter from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) (Dear Colleague: Dyslexia Guidance) states that dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia are conditions that could qualify a child as a child with a specific learning disability under IDEA. The letter further states that there is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents. For more information, please visit <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>.

If the student with dysgraphia is found eligible for special education, the student's IEP must include appropriate writing instruction, which might include instruction from a related services provider. If the student is identified with dysgraphia but is not considered a student with a disability under the IDEA (because the student does not need specially designed instruction), then the student may receive appropriate accommodations and services under Section 504. Students are protected under Section 504 if the physical or mental impairment (dysgraphia) substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as the specific activity of writing. Additionally, the Section 504 committee, in determining whether a student has a disability that substantially limits the student in a major life activity (writing), must not consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using.

Revision of the Section 504 Plan will occur as the student's response to instruction and to the use of accommodations, if any, is observed. Changes in instruction and/or accommodations must be supported by current data (e.g., classroom performance and dyslexia program monitoring).

## **Instruction for Students with Dysgraphia**

The following are research-based elements of effective handwriting instruction. These elements, which apply to both manuscript and cursive handwriting, may not necessarily apply to an entire class but instead may be used to support instructional methods delivered in small groups with students whose penmanship is illegible or dysfluent.

1. Show students how to hold a pencil.
2. Model efficient and legible letter formation.
3. Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice effective letter formation.
4. Use scaffolds, such as letters with numbered arrows showing the order and direction of strokes.
5. Have students practice writing letters from memory.
6. Provide handwriting fluency practice to build students' automaticity.
7. Practice handwriting in short sessions.

While it is important for students with dysgraphia to receive the research-based elements of handwriting, spelling, and written language instruction as part of the core curriculum, for those students who require additional supports and services for dysgraphia, instructional decisions must be made by a committee (either Section 504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional elements and delivery of instruction that is consistent with research-based practice.

### *Handwriting*

The research-based elements for effective instruction of handwriting as stated above for all students are the same for students with dysgraphia. However, the intensity, frequency, and delivery of instruction may need to be adjusted to meet specific student need as determined by the Section 504 or ARD committee.

### *Spelling*

Handwriting supports spelling, a complex process of translating a phoneme (spoken sound) to the corresponding grapheme (orthographic representation) in order to generate written text to express an idea. Orthography is the written spelling patterns and rules in a given language. Students must be taught the regularity and irregularity of the orthographic patterns of a language in an explicit and systematic manner. The instruction should be integrated with phonology and sound-symbol knowledge. Because spelling is meaning driven and draws upon the phonological, orthographic, and morphological aspects of words, students will benefit from systematic, explicit instruction based on the following guiding principles:

- Phoneme-grapheme correspondence
- Letter order and sequence patterns, or orthographic conventions:
  - syllable types
  - orthographic rules
  - irregular words
- Position of a phoneme or grapheme in a word
- Meaning (morphology) and part of speech
- Language of origin

### *Writing*

A potential secondary consequence of dysgraphia is difficulty with students expressing themselves in written text. This difficulty may be attributed to deficits in handwriting, spelling, language processing, or the integration of each of those skills. Students with written expression difficulties because of dysgraphia would benefit from being taught explicit strategies for composing including planning, generating, reviewing/evaluating, and revising different genre including narrative, informational, compare and contrast, and persuasive compositions.

## **VIII. Student Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria (Optional)**

Upon successful completion of Longview ISD program(s), as measured by program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals, students will be exited from the district dyslexia program(s). Additional criteria for exit may include but is not limited to: grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessment data, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, teacher and/or parent observations/checklists, and individual dyslexia program requirements.

Students that have completed the Longview ISD dyslexia program will receive regular monitoring during the first year.

Monitoring may include, but is not limited to the collection/evaluation of:

- Progress reports
- Report cards
- State assessment data
- Teacher reports/checklists
- Parent reports/checklists
- Counselor reports
- Other program reports
- Additional assessment data

Students qualifying for dyslexia services that are identified as §504 or special education will follow monitoring/re-evaluation requirements outlined in federal law.

No one factor is sufficient to warrant exiting a student from direct dyslexia services. Dismissal is determined by the §504 or ARD committee. The committee considers the following factors when recommending exiting or reduction of dyslexic services:

- Completion of the district dyslexia program
- The reevaluation and/or post-testing of student shows student growth to be closer to grade level proficiency standards

(NOTE: Reevaluation does not mean reassessing to establish the identification of dyslexia, but rather viewing data that supports student progress, and achievement.)

- The student demonstrates self-monitoring/self-correction behaviors as evidenced through informal observation by teacher and/or dyslexia teacher
- The student passed the reading portion of the state assessment (NOTE: passing the reading portion of the state assessment is never the sole source for exiting dyslexia services);
- Committee recommendation
- Parent request in writing that the student exit the program

If a student has shown substantial progress and the §504 committee, or ARD committee determines the student is ready to be dismissed completely from the program, the committee may recommend monitoring services instead of direct services. When a child is exited from the dyslexia program, a dismissal form will be completed and placed in the child's cumulative folder.

Longview ISD shall provide a parent education program for the parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. The program should include the following:

- Characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders
- Information on assessment and diagnosis of dyslexia
- Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia
- Awareness of information on classroom modifications and especially of modifications allowed on standardized testing (19 TAC §74.28)

#### **IV. Additional Resources**

The Dyslexia Handbook:

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/texas-dyslexia-handbook-2021.pdf>

Dyslexia and Related Disorders:

<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/dyslexia-and-related-disorders>

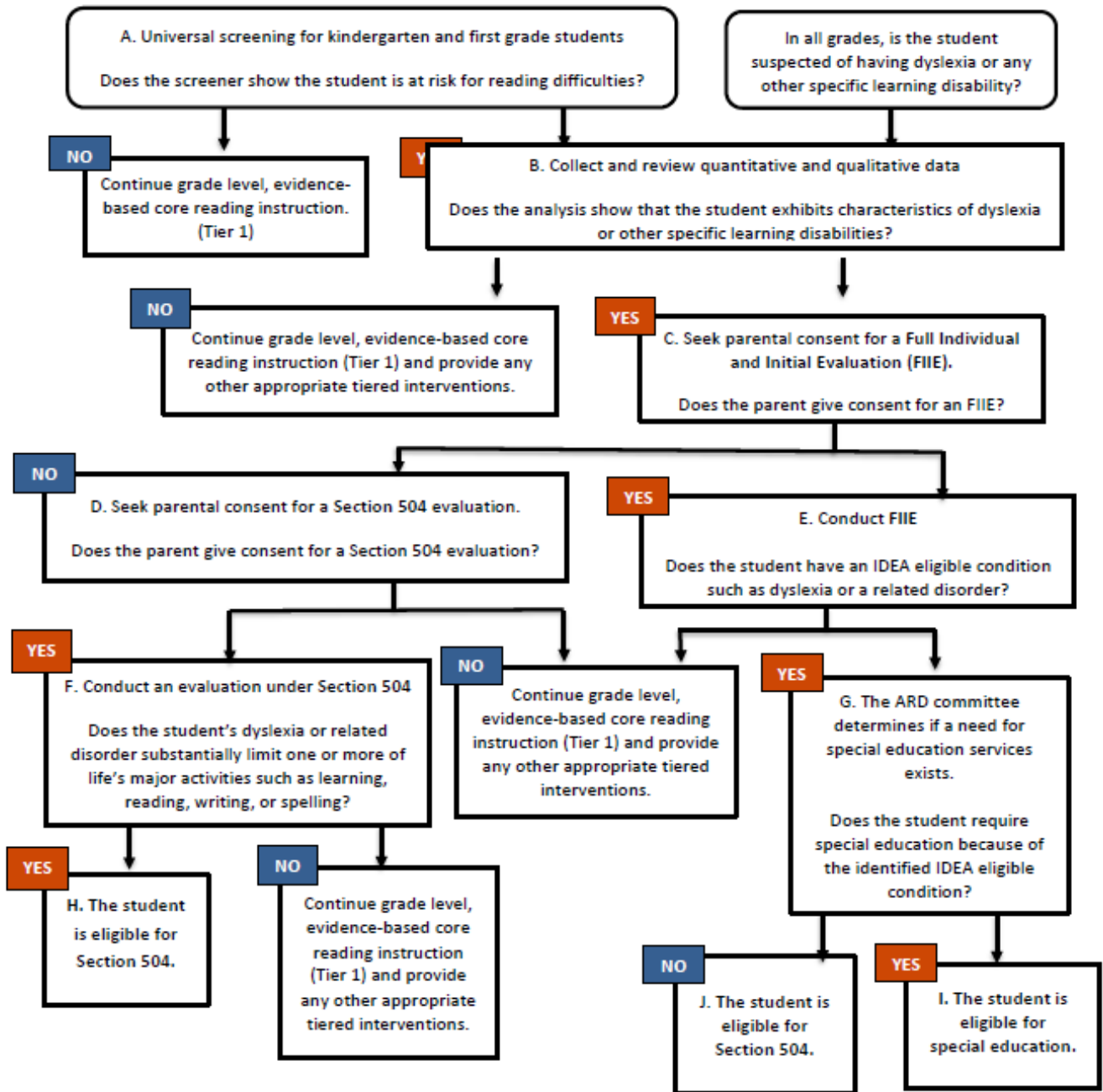
Frequently Asked Questions: Dyslexia and Related Disorders:

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/dyslexia-faq-jan-2021-march.pdf>

iPad Apps for Learners with Dyslexia/ Reading and Writing Difficulties:

<https://4.files.edl.io/b6cb/08/16/21/121946-5a15af04-3793-4b1d-8498-18598058f5f3.pdf>

Pathways for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia



\*See next page for additional detail.

## Pathway to the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia

<p>A. Universal Screening for reading and dyslexia is administered to all students in kindergarten and first grade as required by TEC §28.006 and §38.003(a).</p>	
<p>B. If a student is at risk for reading difficulties or the student is suspected of having dyslexia or any other specific learning disability, collect and review quantitative and qualitative data on the student. See Figures 2.3 and 2.4 in Dyslexia Handbook for more information.</p>	
<p>C. If the analysis shows that the student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or other specific learning disabilities, seek parental consent for a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE), while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.</p>	
<p>D. For students suspected of having dyslexia, if the parent does not give consent for an FIIE, seek parental consent for a Section 504 evaluation, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.</p>	<p>E. If the parent gives consent for an FIIE, conduct the FIIE within 45 school days (subject to limited exceptions) of the date of receipt of parent consent, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions. The ARD committee (including the parent) must meet to review the results of the FIIE.</p>
<p>F. If the parent gives consent for a Section 504 evaluation, conduct an evaluation under Section 504 while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.</p>	<p>G. If a student has an IDEA eligible condition such as dyslexia or a related disorder, the ARD committee determines if a need for special education services exists.</p>
<p>H. If the student's dyslexia or related disorder substantially limits one or more of life's major activities such as learning, reading, writing, or spelling, the student is eligible for Section 504, the 504 committee (parent participation is recommended) develops a Section 504 plan for the student to provide services including standard protocol dyslexia instruction, accommodations, and/or related aids specific to the student's disability.</p>	<p>I. If the student requires special education because of the identified IDEA eligible condition, the student is eligible for special education. The ARD committee develops the IEP for the student to receive specially designed instruction which can include any appropriate special education and related services, and general education programs and services, including standard protocol dyslexia instruction. While an IEP is individualized to the student, the IEP should address critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction such as phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. The determination of eligibility and the development of an IEP, if the student is eligible, must be done within 30 days (subject to limited exceptions) from the date that the written FIIE evaluation report is completed. Obtain parental consent for special education services.</p>
	<p>J. If the parent declines, the LEA must still provide all general education services including any protections available under Section 504.</p>

