JACKSBORO ISD

Dyslexia Policies and Procedures
Revised - August 2020

Nondiscrimination Statement:
Jacksboro ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, economic status, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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Preface

In the state of Texas, students who continue to struggle with reading, despite appropriate or intensified instruction, are provided organized systems of reading support. Some students struggle during early reading acquisition while others struggle in later grades, even at the postsecondary level. Here they face more complex language demands (e.g., reading textbooks, academic texts, and other print material). For many struggling readers, the difficulty may be due to dyslexia. Dyslexia is found in all student populations and languages. Some students with dyslexia may be English learners (ELs) who struggle with reading English and their native language. In Texas, assessment for dyslexia is conducted from kindergarten through grade 12.

The purpose of The Dyslexia Handbook is to provide procedures for school districts, charter schools, campuses, teachers, students, and parents/guardians in early identification of, instruction for, and accommodations for students with dyslexia. This handbook will be used by districts and charter schools to develop their written procedures regarding students with dyslexia. It will also serve as a resource for educator preparation programs and other entities seeking guidance in serving dyslexic students.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders, mandates testing students for dyslexia, provides instruction for students with dyslexia and gives the State Board of Education (SBOE) authority to adopt rules and standards for administering testing and instruction. TEC §7.028(b) relegates the responsibility for school compliance with the requirements for state educational programs to the local school board. Chapter 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.28 outlines districts and charter schools' responsibilities in delivering services to students with dyslexia. Finally, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, §504, establishes assessment and evaluation standards and procedures for students (34 C.F.R. Part 104).

This handbook reflects current law and legislative action from the 82nd and 83rd sessions of the Texas Legislature and replaces all previous handbook editions. The new legislation includes the following:

- TEC §21.044(c)(2) outlines the curriculum requirement for institutions of higher education for teacher preparation to include the characteristics of dyslexia, identification of dyslexia, and multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia.
- TEC §21.054(b) and TAC §232.11 mandated continuing education requirements for educators who teach students with dyslexia.
- TEC §28.021(b) establishes guidelines to districts based on best practices when considering factors for promotion, and the student identified with dyslexia.
- TEC §38.003(b-1) (specific to K–12) and TEC §51.9701 (specific to institutions of higher education) both mandates that a student determined to have dyslexia may not be retested for dyslexia for the purpose of reassessing that student's need for accommodations until the district/institution of higher education reevaluates the information obtained from the previous testing of the student.
- TEC §38.0031 establishes the online technology tool for students identified with dyslexia.
- TEC §42.006(a-1) mandates the collection of data for students identified with dyslexia to be reported in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). x TAC §230.23 requires TEA to provide accommodations for persons with dyslexia who take licensing examinations.

Definitions and Characteristics of Dyslexia

The student who struggles with reading and spelling often puzzles teachers and parents. The student displays the ability to learn in the absence of print and receives the same classroom instruction that benefits most children; however, the student continues to struggle with some or all of the many facets of reading and spelling. This student may be a student with dyslexia.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia in the following way:

- "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.

- "Related disorders" include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The International Dyslexia Association defines "dyslexia" in the following way:

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate 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 reading comprehension problems and reduced reading experience that can impede vocabulary and background knowledge growth. (Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board of Directors, November 12, 2002)

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary phonological awareness difficulties, including phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and written expression. These phonological awareness difficulties 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.

The following are the 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 individuals demonstrate differences in the 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)
- Rapidly recalling the names 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

Connecting Research and Practice

New research in understanding dyslexia as a neurodevelopmental disorder is ongoing. Future research will help learn more about the phonological awareness deficit and how this deficit interacts with other risk factors related to dyslexia. Research also is now focusing on the developmental cause of neural abnormalities and how these predict treatment response.

Common Risk Factors Associated with Dyslexia

If the following behaviors are unexpected for an individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities, they may be risk factors associated with dyslexia. A dyslexic student usually exhibits several of these behaviors that persist over time and interfere with his/her learning. A family history of dyslexia may be present; in fact, recent studies reveal that the whole spectrum of reading disabilities is strongly determined by genetic predispositions (inherited aptitudes) (Olson, Keenan, Byrne, & Samuelsson, 2014).

Preschool

- Delay in learning to talk
- Difficulty with rhyming
- Difficulty pronouncing words (e.g., "pusgetti" for "spaghetti," "mawn lower" for "lawn mower")
- Poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
- Difficulty in adding new vocabulary words
- Inability to recall the right word (word retrieval)
- Trouble learning and naming letters and numbers and remembering the letters in his/ her name
- Aversion to print (e.g., doesn't enjoy following along if a book is read aloud)

Kindergarten and First Grade

- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts (syllables) (e.g., "baseball" can be pulled apart into "base" " ball" or "napkin" can be pulled apart into "nap" "kin")
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables
- Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling their corresponding sounds
- Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- Difficulty spelling words the way they sound (phonetically) or remembering letter sequences in very common words seen often in print (e.g., "sed" for "said")

Second Grade and Third Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic, along with the following:

- Difficulty recognizing common sight words (e.g., "to," "said," "been")
- Difficulty decoding single words
- Difficulty recalling the correct sounds for letters and letter patterns in reading
- Difficulty connecting speech sounds with the appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., "after" spelled "eftr")

- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., slow, inaccurate, or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Difficulty with written expression

Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic, along with the following:

- Difficulty reading aloud (e.g., fear of reading aloud in front of classmates)
- Avoidance of reading (e.g., particularly for pleasure)
- Acquisition of less vocabulary due to reduced independent reading
- Use of less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell than more appropriate words (e.g., "big" instead of "enormous")
- Reliance on listening rather than reading for comprehension

Middle School and High School

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic, along with the following:

- Difficulty with the volume of reading and written work
- Frustration with the amount of time required and energy expended for reading
- Difficulty with written assignments
- A tendency to avoid reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

Postsecondary

Some students will not be identified before entering college as having dyslexia. The early years of reading difficulties evolve into slow, labored reading fluency. Many students will experience extreme frustration and fatigue due to the increasing demands of reading as a result of dyslexia. In diagnosing dyslexia, a student's reading history, familial/genetic predisposition, and assessment history are critical. Many of the previously described behaviors may remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty pronouncing the names of people and places or parts of words
- Difficulty remembering names of people and places
- Difficulty with word retrieval
- Difficulty with spoken vocabulary
- Difficulty completing the reading demands for multiple course requirements
- Difficulty with note-taking
- Difficulty with written production
- Difficulty remembering sequences (e.g., mathematical or scientific formulas)

Since dyslexia is a neurological, language-based disability that persists over time and interferes with an individual's learning, identification and intervention must occur as early as possible.

Associated Academic Difficulties and Other Conditions

The behaviors in the previous sections represent common difficulties that students with dyslexia may exhibit. In addition, students with dyslexia may have problems in written expression, reading comprehension, and mathematics, as well as other complicating conditions and/or behaviors.

Besides academic struggles, some students with dyslexia may exhibit other complex conditions and behaviors. The most common co-occurring disorders with dyslexia are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and specific developmental language disorders (Snowling & Stackhouse, 2006, pp. 8–9). Some, though not all, students with dyslexia may also experience anxiety, anger, depression, lack of motivation, or low self-esteem. In such instances, appropriate instructional/referral services need to be provided.

These additional conditions can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of instruction provided to students with dyslexia. Motivation, in particular, is critical to the success or failure of instructional practices. In regard to motivation, Torgesen states (as cited in Sedita, 2011), "Even technically sound instructional techniques are unlikely to succeed unless we can ensure that, most of the time, students are engaged and motivated to understand what they read" (p. 532). Therefore, all the factors that may affect learning must be considered when identifying and providing instruction for students with dyslexia. ADHD or symptoms of anxiety, anger, depression, or low self-esteem may lower a student's motivation and engagement in learning. Educators are responsible for providing an environment of affirmation that motivates and engages the student with dyslexia and complicating conditions.

Identification of Students with Dyslexia

"Research shows that children who read well in the early grades are far more successful in later years, and those who fall behind often stay behind when it comes to academic achievement."

--- Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998

The early identification of students with dyslexia as well as the corresponding early intervention program for these students will have significant implications for their future academic success. In the book Straight Talk about Reading, Hall, and Moats (1999) state the following:

- "Early identification is critical because the earlier the intervention, the easier it is to remediate.
- Inexpensive screening measures identify at-risk children in mid-kindergarten with 85 percent accuracy.
- If intervention is not provided before the age of eight, the probability of reading difficulties continuing into high school is 75 percent" (pp. 279–280).

Research continues to support the need for early identification and assessment (Birsh, 2011; Sousa, 2005; Nevills & Wolfe, 2009). The rapid growth of the brain and its responsiveness to instruction in the primary years make the time from birth to age eight a critical period for literacy development (Nevills & Wolfe, 2009). Characteristics associated with reading difficulties are connected to spoken language. Difficulties in young children can be assessed through screenings for phonemic awareness and other phonological skills (Sousa, 2005).

Keeping the above-referenced information in mind, it is essential that the school district not delay identification and intervention processes until second or third grades for students suspected of dyslexia. This identification process should be an individualized evaluation rather than a screening. Further, the assessment should be conducted through §504 procedures or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004).

The identification and intervention process for dyslexia can be multifaceted. These processes involve both state and federal requirements that must be followed. In this chapter, the differences are discussed as needed for understanding. Generally, in Texas, however, dyslexia identification and intervention most often happen through general education rather than special education. Special education and the assessment through IDEA 2004 may occur when dyslexia is associated with factors complicating dyslexia, thus requiring more support than what is available through the general education dyslexia program. The following link to the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) provides a §504 and IDEA 2004 comparison chart:

https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans

In Texas and throughout the country, there is a focus on a Response to Intervention (RtI) or tiered intervention process as a vehicle for meeting all students' academic and behavioral needs. The components of the Student Success Initiative (SSI) and other state-level programs offer additional support. Current federal legislation under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) calls for the use of benchmark assessments for early identification of struggling students before they fail. In fact, state law requires the use of early reading assessments that are built on substantial evidence of best practices. Carefully chosen, these assessments can give crucial information about a student's learning and provide a basis for the tiered intervention model. Through the tiered intervention process, schools can document students' learning difficulties, provide ongoing assessment, and monitor reading achievement progress for students at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties.

Early intervention is further emphasized as a result of research using neuroimaging. Diehl, Frost, Mencl, and Pugh (2011) discuss the need to determine the role that deficits in phonological awareness and phonemic awareness play in reading acquisition, thus improving our methodology for early intervention. The authors note that future research will be enabled by longitudinal studies of phonology remediation using various treatments. "It will be especially important to take a multilevel analysis approach that incorporates genetics, neuroanatomy, neurochemistry, and neurocircuitry, and also to combine the strengths of the different neuroimaging techniques" (Diehl et al., 2011, p. 230). The evaluation, followed by a structured intervention that incorporates new scientific research, must be embraced.

As referenced in the letter from the "Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to the State Directors of Special Education," states should ensure that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of the RtI process. For more information, visit:

www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/osep11-07rtimemo.pdf

Progression through tiered intervention is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia. The use of a tiered intervention process should not delay or deny an evaluation for dyslexia, especially when parent or teacher observations reveal the typical characteristics of dyslexia. The needs of the students must be the foremost priority. Frequently, a child with dyslexia may be making what appears to progress in the general education classroom based on report card grades or minor gains on progress measures. While various interventions may help understand the curriculum, a child with dyslexia also requires a specialized type of intervention (See Chapter III: Instruction for Students with Dyslexia) to

address his/her specific reading disability. The use of a tiered process should not delay a student's inclusion in dyslexia intervention once dyslexia is identified.

Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia assessment at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia assessment has been made, the school district is obligated to review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is reason to believe the student has a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student must be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in this chapter. If the school does not suspect a disability and determines that evaluation would not be warranted, the parents/guardians must be given a copy of their due process rights. While §504 is silent on prior written notice, the best practice is to provide a parent, the reasons evaluation is denied. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recommends that districts are able to provide documentation that the denial was based on data to support there is no disability. For more information regarding §504 compliance, visit the following:

https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/resources

http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/clearance/exampleofasection504grievanceprocedure.html

When a referral for dyslexia assessment is made, districts should ensure that evaluation procedures are followed in a reasonable amount of time. Section 504 does not require specific timelines; therefore, it is beneficial for districts to consider the timelines Texas has established for the completion of initial special education evaluations through TEC §29.004(a). The OCR looks to state timelines as a guideline when defining the "reasonable amount of time" should a complaint be filed regarding the evaluation procedures.

Procedures for Assessment

The identification of reading disabilities, including dyslexia, will follow one of two procedures. A district will typically evaluate dyslexia through §504. On the other hand, if a student is suspected of having a disability within the scope of IDEA 2004, all special education procedures must be followed. 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.

Students enrolling in public schools in Texas 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, inadequate response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction; teachers' input; and input from the parents/guardians. The appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28). TEC §28.006 Reading Diagnosis requires an assessment of reading development and comprehension for all students in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and as appropriate, seventh grade. While earlier is better, students should be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

While schools must follow federal and state guidelines, they must also develop procedures that address the needs of their student populations. Schools shall recommend assessment for dyslexia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Poor performance in one or more areas of reading and spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade

- Characteristics and risk factors of dyslexia indicated in Chapter I: Definitions and Characteristics of Dyslexia

Districts or charter schools must establish written procedures for assessing students for dyslexia within general education. The first step in the assessment process, data gathering, should be an integral part of the district's or charter school's process for any student exhibiting learning difficulties.

Data Gathering

Schools collect data on all students to ensure that instruction is appropriate and scientifically based. Essential components of reading instruction are defined in section 1208(3) of the ESSA/NCLB as "explicit and systematic instruction in (A) phonemic awareness; (B) phonics; (C) vocabulary development; (D) reading fluency, including oral reading skills; and (E) reading comprehension strategies."

Any time (from kindergarten through grade 12) a student struggles with one or more reading components, schools must collect additional information about the student. Schools should use previously collected as well as current information to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. As indicated in Figure 2.2, the collection of various data will provide information regarding factors contributing to or primary to the student's struggles with reading and spelling.

Each student's academic history will provide the school with the cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dyslexia is not due to a lack of appropriate instruction in reading. This information should include data that demonstrates that the student was provided proper instruction and include data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. This cumulative data also includes information from parents/guardians.

Environmental and Socioeconomic Factors

Information regarding a child's early literacy experiences, environmental factors, and socioeconomic status must be part of the data collected throughout the data gathering process. This data supports the determination that difficulties in learning are not due to cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantage. Studies that have examined language development and the effects of home experiences on young children indicate that home experiences and socioeconomic status dramatically impact cumulative vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 1995). Having data related to these factors may help in determining whether the student's struggles with reading are due to a lack of opportunity or a reading disability, including dyslexia.

Language Proficiency

Much diversity exists among ELs. A student's language proficiency may be impacted by any of the following: native language, English exposure, parent education, socioeconomic status of the family, amount of time in the United States, the experience of formal schooling, immigration status, community demographics, and ethnic heritage (Bailey, Heritage, Butler, & Walqui, 2000). ELs may be students served in bilingual and ESL programs and students designated Limited English Proficient (LEP) whose

parents have denied services. In addition to the information discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) maintains documentation (TEC §89.1220(g)-(i)) that is necessary to consider when identifying ELs with dyslexia. Since the identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be aligned to the student's linguistic environment and educational background, the involvement of LPAC is required.

Formal Assessment

After data gathering, the next step in the evaluation process is formal assessment. This is not a screening; instead, it is an individualized assessment used to gather evaluation data. Formal assessment includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dyslexia. Information collected from the parents/guardians also provides valuable insight into the students' early years of language development. This history may help to explain why students come to the evaluation with many different strengths and weaknesses; therefore, findings from the formal assessment will be different for each child. Professionals conducting assessment for the identification of dyslexia will need to look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom reading performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining reading and spelling abilities and difficulties.

Notification and Permission

When a formal assessment is recommended, the school completes the evaluation process outlined in §504 or IDEA 2004. At times, students will display additional factors/areas (e.g., oral language deficits, written expression difficulties, math difficulties) that complicate the identification of dyslexia through the §504 process and will require a referral for special education and possible identification as a child with a disability within the meaning of IDEA 2004 (20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.).

Through the §504 process, the school completes the evaluation as outlined using the following procedures:

1. Notify parents/guardians of the proposal to assess a student for dyslexia (§504).
2. Inform parents/guardians of their rights under §504.
3. Obtain permission from parents/guardians to assess the student for dyslexia.
4. Assess students, being sure that individuals/professionals who administer assessments have training in the evaluation of students for dyslexia and related disorders (19 TAC §74.28).

Note: The §504 process is used most frequently unless a referral to special education is indicated.

If the student is being assessed as part of a special education evaluation or is already served in special education and a dyslexia evaluation is requested, IDEA 2004 procedures must be followed. Information regarding special education procedures may be found on The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process website at https://framework.esc18.net. The notices and consents must be provided in the native language of parents/guardians or other modes of communication used by parents/guardians unless it is clearly not feasible to do so (§504, §74.28(d)).

Tests and Other Evaluation Materials

In compliance with §504 and IDEA 2004, 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, achievement level, or whatever other factors 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 modes 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 not feasible to provide or administer.

Additional Considerations for English Learners

A professional involved in the assessment, interpretation of assessment results, and identification of ELs with dyslexia need to have the following training/knowledge:

- Knowledge of first and second language acquisition theory
- Knowledge of the written system of the first language—transparent (Spanish, Italian, German), syllabic (Japanese-kana), Semitic (Arabic, Hebrew), and morphosyllabic (Chinese-Kanji)
- Knowledge of student's literacy skills in native and second language
- Knowledge of how to interpret results from a cross-linguistic perspective
- Knowledge of how to interpret the TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System)
- Knowledge of how to interpret the results of the student's oral language proficiency in two or more languages in relation to the results of the tests measuring academic achievement and cognitive processes as well as academic data gathered and economic and socioeconomic factors

Although data from previous formal testing of the student's oral language proficiency may be available, as required by TEC §29.056, additional assessment of oral language proficiency 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.

If there is not a test in the native language of the student, informal measures of evaluation, such as reading a list of words or listening comprehension in the native language, may be used.

Domains to Assess

Academic Skills

The school administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Difficulties in the areas of letter knowledge, word decoding, and fluency (rate and accuracy) may be evident depending upon the student's age and stage of reading development. In addition, many students with dyslexia may have difficulty with reading comprehension and written composition.

Cognitive Processes

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, learn the alphabetic principle, decode words, and spell accurately. Rapid naming skills may or may not be weak, but if deficient, they are often associated with difficulties in automatically naming letters, reading words fluently, and reading connected text at an appropriate rate. Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words (orthographic processing) may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses. Finally, various 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 (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, pp. 134–135).

Possible Additional Areas

Based on the student's academic difficulties and characteristics or language acquisition, additional areas related to vocabulary, listening comprehension, oral language proficiency, written expression, and other cognitive abilities may need to be assessed.

Procedures for Identification

The identification of dyslexia is made by a §504 committee or, in the case of a special education referral, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. In order to make an informed determination, either committee must include members who are knowledgeable about:
- student being assessed,
- assessments used, and
- meaning of the collected data.

Additionally, the committee members must have knowledge regarding
- the reading process;
- dyslexia and related disorders;
- dyslexia instruction; and
- district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for assessment.

Review and Interpretation of Data and Assessments

To appropriately **understand** evaluation data, the committee of knowledgeable persons (§504 or ARD) 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.

The committee (§504 or ARD) must first determine if a student's difficulties in the areas of reading and spelling reflect a <u>pattern of evidence</u> 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 (both rate and accuracy)
- Spelling (An isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia.)

The evaluation data collected also may include information on reading comprehension, mathematics, and written expression. Dyslexia often coexists with learning difficulties in these related areas.

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 as an indicator of dyslexia as reading rate. A transparent written language has a close letter/sound correspondence (Joshi & Aaron, 2006). Students with dyslexia who have or who are being taught to read and write a transparent language may decode real and nonwords adequately but demonstrate serious difficulties in reading rate with concurrent deficiencies in phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming (RAN).

If the student exhibits reading and spelling difficulties and currently has appropriate phonological/phonemic processing, it is important to examine the student's history to determine if there is evidence of the previous difficulty with phonological/phonemic awareness. It is important to note that because previous effective instruction in phonological/phonemic awareness may remediate phonological awareness skills in isolation, average phonological awareness scores alone do not rule out dyslexia. Ongoing phonological processing deficits can be exhibited in word reading and spelling.

Based on the above information and guidelines, should the committee (§504 or ARD) 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.

Dyslexia Identification

If the student's difficulties are unexpected, in relation to other abilities, the committee (§504 or ARD) must then determine if the student has dyslexia. If the student has dyslexia, the committee also determines whether the student has a disability under §504. A student is disabled under §504 if the physical or mental impairment (dyslexia) substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as

the specific activity of reading (34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(1)). Additionally, the §504 committee, in determining whether a student has a disability that substantially limits the student in a major life activity (reading), must not consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using. If the §504 committee does not identify dyslexia, but the student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student, eligibility for §504 services related to the student's other condition or disability should be considered. The §504 committee will also consider whether the student is eligible for accommodations. This is a separate determination from the determination that the student has dyslexia.

A list of questions to be considered when making a determination:

- Does the data show a pattern of low reading and spelling skills that is unexpected for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction?
- Does this pattern indicate the student has dyslexia?
- Does the student have a disability under §504?

Based on the data, if the committee (§504 or ARD) determines that weaknesses are indicated in reading and spelling, the committee, based on the student's pattern of performance over time, test profile, and response to the instruction, will determine the intervention plan. The refinement of that plan will occur as the student's response to instruction is observed.

Review of Data by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee

At any time during the assessment for dyslexia, identification process, or instruction related to dyslexia, students may be referred for evaluation for special education services. At times, students will display additional factors complicating their dyslexia and will require more support than what is available through the general education dyslexia program. At other times, students with severe dyslexia or related disorders will be unable to make a sufficient rate of academic progress within any of the programs described in the procedures related to dyslexia. In such cases, a referral to special education for evaluation and possible identification as a child with a disability within the meaning of IDEA 2004 (20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.) should be made.

If the student with dyslexia is found eligible for special education services in the area of reading, and the ARD committee determines that the student's instructional needs for reading are most appropriately met in a special education placement, the student's individualized education program (IEP) must include appropriate reading instruction. Appropriate reading instruction includes the components and delivery of dyslexia instruction listed in Chapter III: Instruction for Students with Dyslexia. If a student has previously met special education eligibility, the ARD committee should include goals that reflect the need for dyslexia instruction in the IEP and determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia intervention.

In IDEA 2004, §1401(30), 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:

A 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 a visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Although IDEA 2004 indicates that dyslexia is an example of a learning disability, the evaluation requirements for eligibility in 34 C.F.R. §300.309(a)(1) specifically designates the following areas for a learning disability in reading: basic reading skills, reading fluency skills, and/or reading comprehension.

Reevaluation for Dyslexia Identification and Accommodations

"Dyslexia is a lifelong condition. However, with proper help, many people with dyslexia can learn to read and write well. Early identification and treatment is the key to helping individuals with dyslexia achieve in school and in life."

—The International Dyslexia Association
http://www.interdys.org/ewebeditpro5/upload/DyslexiaBasicsREVMay2012.pdf

TEC §38.003(a) was passed in 1985 to ensure that students enrolling in public schools in this state are tested for dyslexia and related disorders. In 2011, Senate Bill 866 added into law Subsection (b-1) to ensure that districts consider previously collected data before reevaluating students already identified as having dyslexia.

TEC §38.003(b-1) reads as follows:
> Unless otherwise provided by law, a student determined to have dyslexia during testing under Subsection (a) or accommodated because of dyslexia may not be retested for dyslexia for the purpose of reassessing the student's need for accommodations until the district reevaluates the information obtained from the previous testing of the student.
> http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003

There are many initiatives, programs, assessments, and data available for use in identification, placement, and program planning for students, including ELs, who struggle with dyslexia. Assessment and ongoing progress monitoring are key components that must be considered by trained personnel.

Instruction for Students with Dyslexia

"Although dyslexia affects individuals over the life span . . . , reading skills can be increased with the right early intervention and prevention programs."

—Birsh, 2011

TEC §38.003(b) states,

> "In accordance with the program approved by the State Board of Education, the board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder."
> www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003

Effective literacy instruction is essential for all students and is especially critical for students identified with dyslexia. High-quality core classroom reading instruction can give students identified with dyslexia a foundation upon which intervention instruction can have a more significant impact. Specialized instruction for students with dyslexia is discussed in this chapter.

Each school must provide an 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. While the components of instruction for students with dyslexia include good teaching principles for all teachers, the explicitness and intensity of the instruction, fidelity to program descriptors, grouping formats, and training and skill of the teachers are wholly different from core classroom instruction.

Specialized Dyslexia Intervention

For the student who has not benefited from the research-based core reading instruction, the components of instruction will include additional specialized instruction as appropriate for the reading needs of the student with dyslexia. It is important to remember that while intervention is most preventative when provided in kindergarten and first grade, older children with reading disabilities will also benefit from focused and intensive remedial instruction.

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 the components of instruction and instructional approaches in the following sections.

Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction

- **Phonological awareness:** "Phonological awareness is the understanding of the internal sound structure of words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds. An important aspect of phonological awareness is the ability to segment spoken words into their component phonemes" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Sound-symbol association:** Sound-symbol association is the knowledge of the various speech sounds in any language to the corresponding letter or letter combinations that represent those speech sounds. The mastery of sound-symbol association (alphabetic principle) is the foundation for the ability to read (decode) and spell (encode) (Birsh, 2011, p. 19). "Explicit

phonics refers to an organized program in which these sound-symbol correspondences are taught systematically" (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 53).

- **Syllabication:** "A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. The six basic types of syllables in the English language include the following: closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, r-controlled, vowel pair (or vowel team), and consonant-le (or final stable syllable). Rules for dividing syllables must be directly taught in relation to the word structure" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Orthography:** 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.
- **Morphology:** "Morphology is the study of how a base word, prefix, root, suffix (morphemes) combine to form words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a given language" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Syntax:** "Syntax is the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar and sentence variation and affects choices regarding mechanics of a given language" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Reading comprehension:** Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader with the text to be comprehended and the specific purpose for reading. The reader's skill in reading comprehension depends upon the development of accurate and fluent word recognition, oral language development (especially vocabulary and listening comprehension), background knowledge, use of appropriate strategies to enhance comprehension and repair it if it breaks down, and the reader's interest in what he or she is reading and motivation to comprehend its meaning (Birsh, 2011, pp. 9 and 368; Snow, 2002).
- **Reading fluency:** "Reading fluency is the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension"(Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 52). Teachers can help promote fluency with several interventions that have proven successful in helping students with fluency (e.g., repeated readings, word lists, and choral reading of passages) (Henry, 2010, p. 104).

In addition, other areas of language processing skills, such as written expression, which require integration of skills, are often a struggle for students with dyslexia. Moats and Dakin (2008) posit the following:

- The ability to compose and transcribe conventional English with accuracy, fluency, and clarity of expression is known as basic writing skills. Writing is dependent on many language skills and processes and is often even more problematic for children than reading. Writing is a language discipline with many component skills that must be directly taught. Because writing demands using different skills at the same time, such as generating language, spelling, handwriting, and using capitalization and punctuation, it puts a significant demand on working memory and attention. Thus, a student may demonstrate mastery of these individual skills, but when asked to integrate them all at once, mastery of individual skills, such as handwriting, often deteriorates. To write on demand, a student has to have mastered, to the point of being automatic, each skill involved (p. 55).

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.

Delivery of Dyslexia Instruction

While it is necessary that students are provided instruction in the above content, it is also critical that the way in which the content is delivered be consistent with research-based practices. Principles of effective intervention for students with dyslexia include all of the following:

- **Simultaneous, multisensory (VAKT):** "Multisensory instruction utilizes all learning pathways in the brain (visual, auditory, kinesthetic-tactile) simultaneously in order to enhance memory and learning" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19). "Children are actively engaged in learning language concepts and other information, often by using their hands, arms, mouths, eyes, and whole bodies while learning" (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58).
- **Systematic and cumulative:** "Systematic and cumulative instruction requires the organization of material follows the order of the language. The sequence must begin with the easiest concepts and progress methodically to more difficult concepts. Each step must also be based on elements previously learned. Concepts taught must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Explicit instruction:** "Explicit instruction is explained and demonstrated by the teacher one language and print concept at a time, rather than left to discovery through incidental encounters with information. Poor readers do not learn that print represents speech simply from exposure to books or print" (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58). Explicit Instruction is "an approach that involves direct instruction: The teacher demonstrates the task and provides guided practice with immediate corrective feedback before the student attempts the task independently" (Mather & Wendling, 2012, p. 326).
- **Diagnostic teaching to automaticity:** "Diagnostic teaching is knowledge of prescriptive instruction that will meet individual student needs of language and print concepts. The teaching plan is based on continual assessment of the student's retention and application of skills" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19.). "This teacher knowledge is essential for guiding the content and emphasis of instruction for the individual student" (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58). "When a reading skill becomes automatic (direct access without conscious awareness), it is performed quickly in an efficient manner" (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 70).
- **Synthetic instruction:** "Synthetic instruction presents the parts of any alphabetic language (morphemes) to teach how the word parts work together to form a whole (e.g., base word, derivative)" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Analytic instruction:** "Analytic instruction presents the whole (e.g., base word, derivative) and teaches how the whole word can be broken into its component parts (e.g., base word, prefix, root, and suffix)" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).

As the appropriate intervention is provided, students with dyslexia make significant gains in reading. Effective instruction is highly-structured, systematic, and explicit, and it lasts for sufficient duration. With regard to explicit instruction, Torgesen (2004) states, "Explicit instruction is instruction that does not leave anything to chance and does not make assumptions about skills and knowledge that children will acquire on their own" (p. 353).

In addition, because effective intervention requires highly structured and systematic delivery, it is critical that those who provide intervention for students with dyslexia be trained in the program used and that the program is implemented with fidelity.

Consideration for English Learners (ELs) with Dyslexia

Learning to read, write, and spell in two languages can be facilitated by building on a student's native language knowledge and helping to transfer that knowledge to a second language. While direct, systematic instruction is still required for all aspects of reading, additional explicit instruction will be needed to address the similarities and differences in sounds, syllable structure, morphology, orthography, and syntax between the first and second languages.

For example, instructional considerations may include capitalizing on familiar sound-symbol correspondences. Direct and systematic instruction of the cross-linguistic correlations is beneficial for ELs. Instruction can subsequently include those sound-symbol correlations that partially overlap or present a slight variation from the native language to the second language. Unfamiliar phonemes and graphemes then can be presented to ELs. A systematic approach will enhance instruction and assist the bilingual student in transferring native language and literacy knowledge to second language and literacy acquisition.

For ELs learning to read in English and not in their native language, progress in reading may be hindered due to limited vocabulary in English. Therefore, in addition to all the components of effective instruction previously discussed, intervention for ELs also must emphasize oral language development (Cardenas-Hagan, 2011). Because the English language is derived from Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Greek, French, and other languages, ELs can expand their oral language and vocabulary knowledge by understanding the cognates (baseball/béisbol or leader/lider) that exist in their native language and English. The similarities of words in the native language and English must be explicitly taught.

It is also necessary to incorporate ESL strategies during the intervention process and in all content areas. In Texas, school districts are required to implement the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) as an integral part of each subject area in the required curriculum (TAC §74.4). Dyslexia instruction for ELs must incorporate the ELPS. A few strategies to consider include the following:
- Establish routines so that ELs understand what is expected of them.
- Provide native language support when giving directions or when students do not understand the task.
- Provide opportunities for repetition and rehearsal so that the new information can be learned to mastery.
- Adjust the rate of speech and the complexity of the language used according to the second language proficiency level of each student.
- Provide extra time for the EL to process the English language. This is especially necessary during the early stages of second language development.
- Provide extra time for the EL to formulate oral and written responses.
- Emphasize text that includes familiar content, and explain the structure of the text.

Research-Based Best Practices

It is important to note that in Texas, the approach to teaching students with dyslexia is founded on research-based best practices. The ideas upon which the state's approach is based are summarized here:

- Gains in reading can be significant if students with reading problems are provided systematic, explicit, and intensive reading instruction of sufficient duration in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary (e.g., the relationships among words and the relationships among word structure, origin, and meaning), reading comprehension strategies, and writing.
- A failure to learn to read impacts a person's life significantly. The key to preventing this failure for students with dyslexia is early identification and early intervention.
- Instruction by a highly skilled and knowledgeable educator who has specific preparation in the remediation of dyslexia is necessary

Research reflects the essential components of specialized dyslexia instruction discussed in the previous bullets and may serve as additional sources of information for those working with students identified with dyslexia. The similarities between the state's approach and the research are noted in a complete list that can be found beginning on page 30 in the Dyslexia Handbook at the following website: https://www.region10.org/r10website/assets/File/DHBwithouttabs10214.pdf

Instructional Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

By receiving specialized instruction that contains the components described in this chapter, the student with dyslexia is better equipped to meet the demands of grade-level or course instruction. In addition to specialized instruction, accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom. Accommodations are not a one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the accommodation. Listed below are examples of reasonable classroom accommodations:

- Copies of notes (e.g., teacher- or peer-provided)
- Note-taking assistance
- Additional time on class assignments and tests
- Reduced/shortened assignments (e.g., chunking assignments into manageable units, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)
- Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions
- Priority seating assignment
- Oral reading of directions or written material
- Word banks
- Formula charts

When making decisions about accommodations, instruction is always the foremost priority. Not all accommodations used in the classroom are allowed during a state assessment. However, an educator's ability to meet the individual needs of a student with dyslexia should not be limited by whether an accommodation is allowable on a state assessment.

Accommodations are changes to materials, actions, or techniques, including the use of technology, that enables students with disabilities to participate meaningfully in grade-level or course instruction. The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet the needs of each student. A student may need accommodation only temporarily while learning a new skill, or a student might require the accommodation throughout the school year or over several years.

In order to make accommodation decisions for students, educators should have knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and how a student performs in relation to them. Educators should also collect and analyze data pertaining to the use and effectiveness of accommodations (e.g., assignment/test scores with and without the accommodation, observational reports) so that informed educational decisions can be made for each student. By analyzing data, an educator can determine if the accommodation becomes inappropriate or unnecessary over time due to the student's changing needs. Likewise, data can confirm for the educator that the student still struggles in certain areas and should continue to use the accommodation.

For more information, see Critical Information about Accommodations for Students with Disabilities available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/accommodations/staar-telpas/

For more information about technology integration, see
  https://www.region10.org/programs/dyslexia-statewide/techplan/

Access to Instructional Materials for Students with Disabilities

Accessible instructional materials (AIM) are textbooks and related core instructional materials that have been converted into specialized formats (e.g., Braille, audio, digital text, or large print) for students who are blind or have low vision, have a physical disability, or have a reading disability such as dyslexia. Digital books or text-to-speech functions on computers and mobile devices provide access to the general education curriculum for students with dyslexia. Bookshare and Learning Ally provide electronic access to digitally recorded materials for students with print disabilities. TEA provides links to these resources as well as other accessible instructional materials for students with disabilities at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147487109

Texas State Student Assessment Program Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Educators, parents, and students must understand that accommodations provided during classroom instruction and testing might differ from accommodations allowed for use on state assessments. The state assessment is a standardized tool for measuring every student's learning in a reliable, valid, and secure manner. An accommodation used in the classroom for learning may invalidate or compromise the security and integrity of the state assessment; therefore, not all accommodations suitable for instruction are allowed during the state assessments. It is important to keep in mind that the policies for accommodation use on state assessments should not limit an educator's ability to develop individualized materials and techniques to facilitate student learning. Instruction comes first and can be customized to meet the needs of each student.

For the purposes of the statewide assessments, students needing accommodations due to disability include the following:

- Students with an identified disability who receive special education services and meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations.
- Students with an identified disability who receive §504 services and meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations.
- Students with a disabling condition who do not receive special education or §504 services but meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations.

For students who receive special education or §504 services, the decision for student use of accommodations during the statewide assessments is made by the ARD committee or §504 placement committee. In those rare instances where a student does not receive services but meets the eligibility criteria due to a disabling condition, the decision about using accommodations on the state-wide assessments is made by the appropriate team of people at the campus level, such as the RtI team or student assistance team. For more information about accommodations on statewide assessments, visit www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/accommodations/staar-telpas/

Enrollment in Gifted/Talented and Advanced Academic Programs

A student who has been identified with dyslexia can also be a gifted learner or a twice-exceptional learner. A twice-exceptional learner is a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high-performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or excels in a specific academic field (TEC §29.121) and who also gives evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility (IDEA 2004) (300.8) (§504) criteria such as learning disabilities, speech and language disorders, emotional/behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, sensory disabilities (hearing impaired, visually impaired, blind-deaf), traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorder, or other health impairments such as ADHD.

Assessment and identification of twice-exceptional learners can be challenging and requires those vested in the education of these learners to be knowledgeable of the unique characteristics and behaviors demonstrated by these learners. Often the disability masks the giftedness, which places emphasis on barriers to learning instead of the potential that the learner has as a result of the gifted attributes. Conversely, the giftedness may mask the disability, which may result in the learner's experiencing gaps in learning compounded by the disability, thus affecting how the learner perceives his or her abilities.

Twice-exceptional students must be provided access to all service and course options available to other students. The US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights offers information for addressing students with disabilities seeking enrollment in advanced academic programs (e.g., Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate). For more information, see www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20071226.pdf

Additional support, information, and resources are available through the Equity in Gifted/Talented (G/T) Education website at www.gtequity.org/index.php.

The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (available at www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6420) mandates that once any student is identified as gifted, he/she must be provided gifted/talented services that are commensurate with his/her abilities (1.4C, 1.6C, 2.1C, and 3.3C).

Additionally, due to the disability, twice-exceptional learners should have an IEP through special education services or a §504 plan through general education. Additional support for districts serving twice-exceptional students is available at www.gtequity.org/twice.php.

Legislative Action to Assist Teachers

Even though students with dyslexia are to receive extensive and intensive intervention according to the district-selected program, two pieces of Texas legislation require additional attention by districts.

Technology Integration for Students with Dyslexia (TEC §38.0031)

The research is definitive regarding technology and instruction for students with dyslexia. When students have access to effective technology, their overall educational performance improves. One of the best ways to use technology is in combination with instruction in reading strategies and processes (Pisha & O'Neill, 2003). Technology is not intended to take the place of quality reading instruction. It should be used in combination with teacher-directed instruction and intervention. Technology should never be used as a substitute for quality instruction; it is intended to supplement, not supplant. In fact, technology shows mixed results in improving phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary, with computer-mediated approaches having no clear advantage over teacher-directed instruction (Hecker & Engstrom, 2011).

The Technology Integration for Students with Dyslexia online tool (TEC §38.0031) is a resource developed to support instructional decisions regarding technology that benefits students with dyslexia. To view this source, visit https://www.region10.org/programs/dyslexia-statewide/techplan/

Professional Development Relative to Dyslexia for All Teachers

Research consistently confirms the impact that a knowledgeable teacher can have on the success or failure of even the best reading programs (Shaywitz, 2003). To ensure that teachers are knowledgeable about dyslexia, TEC §21.054(b) and TAC §232.11(e) require educators who teach students with dyslexia to be trained in new research and practices related to dyslexia as a part of their continuing professional education (CPE) hours.

The effort to train professionals who work with students with dyslexia is also supported by The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Position Statement: Dyslexia Treatment Programs (March 2009), which states the following:

> Professional practitioners, including teachers or therapists, should have had specific preparation in the prevention and remediation of language-based reading and writing difficulties. Teachers and therapists should be able to state and provide documentation of their credentials in the prevention and remediation of language-based reading and writing difficulties, including program-specific training, recommended for the use of specific programs (pp. 1–2).

Teachers of students with dyslexia must be prepared to use the techniques, tools, and strategies outlined in the previous sections of this chapter. They may also serve as trainers and consultants in the area of dyslexia and related disorders for regular, remedial, and special education teachers.

Both pieces of legislation just presented provide opportunities to present ancillary ways for students to acquire information and produce written lessons. These allow for more ease in staying on level in content-laden courses. Both technology and the additional professional development offered to all teachers enhance these opportunities, and the administration and the board of a school district are responsible for ensuring that procedures providing appropriate instructional services to the student are implemented in the district.

Summary

School boards MUST ensure the following:
- Procedures for identifying a student with dyslexia or a related disorder are implemented in the district (TAC §74.28).
- Procedures for providing appropriate instructional services to the student are implemented in the district (TAC §74.28).
- The district or school complies with all applicable requirements of state educational programs (TEC §7.028).

School districts MUST do the following:
- Administer K–2 assessments (TEC §28.006).
- Provide early identification, intervention, and support (TEC §28.006).
- Apply results of early assessment instruments to instruction and report to the Commissioner of Education (TEC §28.006).
- Implement SBOE-approved procedures for students with dyslexia and related disorders (The Dyslexia Handbook and TAC §74.28).
- Provide training about dyslexia to educators (TAC §74.28(c))(TAC §232.11).
- Ensure that the procedures for identification and instruction are in place (TAC §74.28).
- Notify parents in writing before an assessment or identification procedure is used with an individual student (TAC §74.28).
- Test for dyslexia at appropriate times (TEC §38.003).
- Ensure that assessment for the purposes of accommodations does not occur until after current testing has been reviewed (TEC 38.003(b-1)).
- Meet the requirements of §504 when assessment for dyslexia is recommended (The Dyslexia Handbook).
- Provide treatment (instruction) for students with dyslexia (TEC §38.003).
- Purchase or develop programs that include descriptors listed in The Dyslexia Handbook (TAC §74.28).
- Inform parents of all services and options available to students eligible under §504 (TAC §74.28).
- Provide students with the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia (TAC §74.28).
- Provide a parent education program (TAC §74.28).
- Report through PEIMS information regarding the number of students enrolled in the district or school who are identified as having dyslexia (TEC §42.006(a-1)).

The following is a checklist of procedures for ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and rules:
- Notify parents/guardians of the proposal to assess the student for dyslexia (§504).
- Inform parents/guardians of their rights under §504.
- Obtain parent/guardian permission to assess the student for dyslexia.
- Administer measures using only individuals/professionals who are trained in assessment to evaluate students for dyslexia and related disorders (TAC §74.28).
- Ensure that identification of dyslexia is made by the §504 committee of persons knowledgeable about the reading process, dyslexia, and dyslexia instruction, the assessments used, and the meaning of the collected data.
- Provide dyslexia instruction as per TEC §38.003 (instruction is provided regardless of student eligibility for §504). x Provide ongoing training opportunities for teachers (TEC §21.054(b)).

The following is a checklist of written documentation that is recommended to ensure compliance with §504:

- Documentation that the notice of evaluation has been given to parents/guardians
- Documentation that parents/guardians were given their rights under §504
- Documentation of parent/guardian consent for the evaluation (Letter to Durheim. 27 IDELR 380 [OCR 1997])
- Documentation of the evaluation data
- Documentation of the decisions made by the committee of knowledgeable persons concerning the disability (whether a disability exists) and, if a disability exists, whether the disability substantially limits a major life activity
- Documentation of the placement options and placement decisions

If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the Dyslexia coordinator at the campus your child is attending or the campus principal.

District Plan of Action

The following is a description of the process and procedures that are followed by each of the campuses.

Process and Procedures

To begin the process of "who do I contact if I have questions about assessing my student/child for dyslexia", Dyslexia actually falls under the Federal Section 504 unless the student is already placed in Special Education. If the student is in Special Education, please refer to the Special Ed ARD committee. If the student is not receiving any services, please contact the campus 504 coordinator:

- Elementary - Julie Seibold
- Middle School - Terri Stretcher
- High School - Dori Taylor

The parent or teacher may refer a student for testing. A teacher should complete the Teacher Referral form. A parent may request testing by contacting the 504 Campus Coordinator. Upon contacting the campus 504 coordinator, the parent will complete the form to request their child to be tested for Dyslexia. A Notice of Parental Rights will be given at this time and the parent signs that the Parental Rights were received. The campus 504 coordinator will schedule a meeting to discuss concerns, possible solutions, and if the need for testing exists. If the committee believes there is enough evidence or a need for assessing, the parent must complete the required Consent for Testing form. The parent/guardian(s) has 15 school days to consent or decline the Dyslexia Identification Process. Once the consent form is returned to the campus, the school has 45 school days to gather data, both quantitative and qualitative. This includes but is not limited to the following: teacher input, parental input, teacher observations, examples of student work, historical data from records, and scheduling and conducting approved state assessments for Dyslexia. Time to administer the tests will vary with age, ability, and attention span. After all of the above information has been compiled, the campus dyslexia coordinator will complete the Dyslexia Written Report which will be presented before the 504 committee. Once the Written Report is returned to the 504 Campus Coordinator, the campus will have 30 calendar days to hold a committee meeting of knowledgeable persons to review all data including testing results to make a decision concerning eligibility into 504. The parent will receive notice of the meeting five days in advance. The parent may waive the five days before conducting the 504 eligibility meeting.

Assessments

The assessment process involves compiling all information, both formal and informal, from a variety of sources. This includes but is not limited to the following: teacher input, parent input, teacher observations, examples of student work, historical data from records, and approved state assessments for Dyslexia.

The following approved state assessments for dyslexia will be administered:
- Test of Written Spelling -5 (TWS-5)
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing-(CTOPP-2)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-III (WRMT-III)
- Gray Oral Reading Test-5 (GORT-5)

Informal assessments will also be conducted that may include alphabet knowledge, written expression, oral expression, and handwriting.

Identification/Determining Eligibility

During the committee meeting of knowledgeable persons (at a minimum, the campus administrator/504 coordinator, the dyslexia coordinator, and student's teacher), a consensus must be established to qualify for eligibility of 504 services. There are five questions that must be addressed at a 504 meeting to determine eligibility. The student:
1. Has received conventional, appropriate reading instruction
2. Has experienced an unexpected lack of appropriate progress in the areas of reading and written spelling
3. Has adequate intelligence (an average ability to learn in the absence of print or other academic areas)
4. Exhibits characteristics associated with dyslexia
5. Lack of progress was not due to sociocultural factors such as language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background

If eligibility is determined, the committee will discuss the need for a service plan to include accommodations. Members' signatures must be included in the meeting. If eligibility is not determined, the committee may offer other solutions, such as referral to special education, response to intervention (RTI), or alternative 504 placements.

Instruction

Jacksboro Elementary and Jacksboro Middle School utilize the Multisensory Teaching Approach (MTA). The MTA program consists of seven kits that advance each student according to their own ability and progress. In each kit, there is a reading, spelling, and handwriting component. At the end of each kit, an assessment to check program mastery in both reading and spelling is administered. A student must perform satisfactorily on the program mastery check before moving to the next kit.

The Elementary supports the students by providing intervention in a supplemental reading class that individualizes instruction. Other programs that may be utilized based on student needs include Lexia computer program, high-frequency word practice, multi-sensory spelling.

The Middle School has an elective class that students may take in order to receive instruction as the student progresses through the MTA program kits. Students who are unable to take the elective class

will continue to receive accommodations in the classroom and on STAAR according to each 504 service plan.

When a student reaches Jacksboro High School, they may have progressed through all of the MTA kits. Students can be placed in academic support classes to receive additional instruction using the Neuhaus Program or complete MTA kits as needed. This upper-level instruction teaches skills to deal with the rigors of high school instruction. All dyslexic students are monitored to be sure they are successful in high school classes. As in middle school, students unable to take the academic support classes will continue to receive accommodations in the classroom and on End-of-Course (EOC) tests according to each student's 504 plan. The 504 coordinator works with graduating students to transition to college or trade schools.

At all campuses, the Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction: Phonological awareness, Sound-symbol association, Syllabication, Orthography, Morphology, Syntax, Reading comprehension, and Reading fluency found in the policy are addressed. The reading program "Learning Ally" gives qualified students access to audiobooks used in the classroom and audiobooks read for pleasure.

Supporting Dyslexic Students in the Classroom

Instructional accommodations are based on student needs. Examples of accommodations that may be utilized are:
- Extended time
- Oral tests
- Use of a computer/Chromebook/IPad
- Reduced assignments when appropriate
- No deductions for spelling errors
- Dictate responses
- Audiobooks: Learning Ally and Play Aways
- Organizers
- Opportunity to ask again for clarification of directions
- Allow two or more step directions to be written
- Check often for understanding
- Study guides
- Read material aloud
- Note exchange with the teacher
- Outlines
- Alternate assignments
- Assigning work in smaller units
- Provide lots of encouragement
- Use of dictionary

Exit Procedures or Denial of Services:

Dismissal from the 504 services will be a decision or consensus of a committee of knowledgeable persons. A parent may deny services or part of services by contacting the Campus 504 Coordinator. The 504 committees may be assembled to discuss possible ramifications of denial of services and to decide about the continuation of accommodations.