

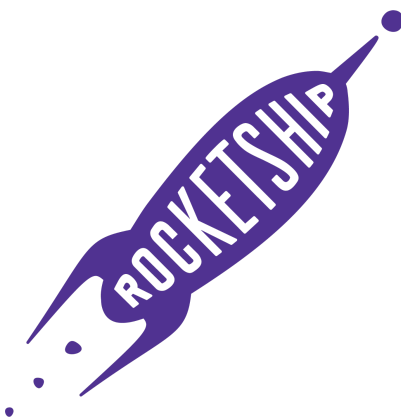
ROCKETSHIP

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

T E X A S

Dyslexia Procedures

24-25



THE MISSION

THE MISSION OF ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEXAS IS FOR ALL STUDENTS TO ATTAIN THEIR HIGHEST LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT IN LEARNING AND LIFE.

THE VISION

THE VISION OF ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEXAS IS TO BE THE LEADER OF INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND POSITIVELY IMPACT COMMUNITIES ONE ROCKETEER AT A TIME.

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

I. Definition of Dyslexia and Characteristics:

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

- "Dyslexia" is a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.
- "Related disorders" include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003>

According to the International Dyslexia Association, dyslexia 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 implications may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board of Directors,
November 12, 2002

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

Primary Characteristics of Dyslexia

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in the following although there are differences in impairment and some may not exhibit all of the characteristics:

- Reading words in isolation,
- Accurately decoding unfamiliar words

- Oral Reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored without prosody)
- Spelling (Individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all of these characteristics.)

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

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Learning the name 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)

Associated Academic Difficulties

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 complicated conditions and/or behaviors.

Besides academic struggles, some students with dyslexia may exhibit other complex conditions and/or behaviors. The most common co-occurring disorders with dyslexia are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and specific developmental language disorders. Some, though not all, students with dyslexia may also experience symptoms such as anxiety, anger, depression, lack of motivation, or low self-esteem. In such instances, appropriate instructional/intervention services need to be provided to ensure each student's needs are met.

These additional conditions can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of instruction provided to students with dyslexia. Motivation, in particular, has been shown to be critical to the success or failure of instructional practices. Regarding 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). Acknowledging that students with dyslexia must exert extra effort to meet grade-level expectations, 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 engagement in learning. Educators and parents should provide students with affirmation and an environment that fosters engagement and success.

Sedita, J. (2011). Adolescent literacy: Addressing the needs of students in grades 4–12. In J. R. Birsh (Ed.), *Multisensory teaching of basic language skills* (3rd ed., p. 532). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

II. State and Federal Law Regarding Early Identification and Intervention

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.

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 used 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, Rocketship Public Schools Texas (RPS-TX) will implement reading programs using scientifically based reading research as well as evidence of proven effective results.

Under the Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA), RPS-TX 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.

III. Identification and Intervention Prior to Formal Assessment

Evidence-Based Core Reading Instruction (Tier 1)

TEC §28.0062 requires each local education agency (LEA) to provide for the use of a phonics curriculum that uses systematic direct instruction, without the incorporation of three-cueing, in kindergarten through third grade to ensure all students obtain necessary early literacy skills. LEAs must ensure that all kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers attend a teacher of literacy achievement academy to increase teacher knowledge and implementation of the science of teaching reading. Additionally, LEAs must certify to the agency that they prioritize placement of highly effective teachers in kindergarten through second grade and have integrated reading instruments used to diagnose reading development and comprehension to support each student in prekindergarten through third grade. **Schools must ensure that all students receive explicit systematic Tier 1 reading instruction.**

Note: See [The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Services \(Spanish Version\)](#) for common risk factors associated with dyslexia.

Dyslexia Screening:

It is essential to screen students for dyslexia and related disorders early in their academic careers. Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 TEC mandates that **kindergarten students be screened at the end of the school year**; whereas the State Board of Education has determined that students in **first grade** must be screened as close to the middle of the school year as possible, but must conclude **no later than January 31 of each year**. Conducting the

grade 1 screening close to the middle of the school year will allow RPS-TX charter schools to complete the evaluation process with enough time for interventions to be provided to the student prior to the end of first grade. A Student Support Team should be assembled to monitor student progress for the remainder of the year.

The Student Support Team will continue to monitor students for common risk factors for dyslexia in second grade and beyond. If regular progress monitoring reflects a difficulty with reading, decoding, and/or reading comprehension, it is appropriate to evaluate for dyslexia. When a student is not reaching grade-level benchmarks because of reading difficulty, a dyslexia screening or evaluation is appropriate and considered best practice. It is important to remember that a referral for a dyslexia evaluation can be considered at any time kindergarten-high school.

The Campus Principal will verify all campus personnel conducting and interpreting screenings have undergone the required training and are properly certified to fill this role. RPS-TX 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 must, at minimum, be certified/licensed in dyslexia or be a classroom teacher who holds a valid certification for kindergarten and first grade. Anyone that screens and treats students with dyslexia and related disorders must be trained in instructional strategies that use individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods, as well as a variety of writing and spelling components.

MClass/DIBELS currently serves as our Dyslexia Screener to determine if a student is at-risk of dyslexia characteristics.

Dyslexia Screener Overview
<p>The dyslexia screener includes 3 components on the DIBELS assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocabulary• Spelling• RAN <p>The vocabulary and spelling components are online assessments that are accessed through the student's Amplify log-in on Clever. These can be done as a whole group or during small group instruction. These components should not take more than 3-5 minutes for students to complete.</p> <p>The RAN assessment is completed on the student's computer as well, however, the administering teacher will need to be present with the student to select "yes" and "no" for the questions to score. Therefore, this component of the screener needs to be completed 1:1.</p>

While the selected screening instrument is expected to measure each of the skills identified above, it is important that **individuals who administer the screening instrument document student behaviors observed during the administration** of the instrument. A list of behaviors

that may be observed during the administration of the screening and **which should be documented**. They are as follows:

- Lack of automaticity
- Difficulty sounding out words left to right
- Guessing
- Self-correcting
- Inability to focus on reading
- Avoidance behavior

Screening data should be shared with the parents in writing ([Parent Letter](#)). It should also be used by teachers and school administrators to guide instructions at the classroom level.

Students Identified as At-Risk of Dyslexia

Students scoring below the publisher-determined cut-off point are considered “at risk” for dyslexia, while those who score above the cut point are considered “not at risk” for dyslexia. However, it is important to realize that risk falls on a continuum and there will always be false positives (students who screen at risk when they are not) and false negatives (students who screen not at risk when they are). Consequently, continual progress monitoring and an ongoing review of data is important. **Any student may be referred for a full individual and initial evaluation under IDEA, at any time, regardless of the results of the screening instrument.**

Interpretation of data

A qualified team is required to review all data to make informed decisions regarding whether a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia. The team must include individuals who:

- have knowledge of the students
- have been trained on the screener
- trained to interpret qualitative and quantitative results
- recognize characteristics of dyslexia
- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) member if necessary

Both quantitative and qualitative information are critical components of the screening process.

Qualitative Information to be Collected	Quantitative Information to be Collected
Observation of students during screening Student progress Teacher observation Family input Current student work samples Work samples from previous grade levels Intervention History	Current screening instruments Previous screening instruments Formal and informal classroom reading assessments Additional brief and targeted skill assessments

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 Leads to a Suspicion of a Disability, Including Dyslexia or a Related Disorder The school should provide targeted intervention provided by the appropriate staff. The school should also continue the data collection and evaluation process. The collection of various data will provide information regarding factors that may be contributing to or primarily to the student's struggles with reading and spelling. The academic history of each student will provide the school with the cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dyslexia and/or dysgraphia is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading. This information should include data that demonstrates that the student was provided appropriate 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.

- Sources and examples of cumulative data include, but are not limited to:
- Vision and hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations or interventions provided
- Academic progress reports and/or report cards
- Parent conference notes
- Samples of classwork
- State assessments results (if applicable)
- Observations of instruction provided to the student
- Full Individual and Initial Evaluations (if applicable)
- Outside evaluations (if applicable)
- Speech and language assessments (if applicable)
- Attendance records
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction
- Screening
- Parent survey

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

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).

Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk

In kindergarten and first grade, universal screening for reading and dyslexia is administered as required by TEC §28.006 and §38.003(a)

- ☐ Kindergarten students must be administered a reading instrument at the beginning of the year (BOY), and may be administered a reading instrument at middle of year (MOY), and end of year (EOY)
- ☐ Kindergarten students must be screened for dyslexia at the end of the school year.
- ☐ First grade students must be administered a reading instrument at BOY and may be administered a reading instrument at MOY, and EOY
- ☐ First grade students must be screened for dyslexia not later than January 31.

Does the screener show the student MAY be at risk for reading difficulties?

NO

Continue grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction. (Tier 1)

YES

Collect and review quantitative and qualitative data on the student
(See Figures 2.3 and 2.4)

Does the analysis show that the student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia?

NO

Continue grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and provide any other appropriate tiered interventions.

YES

Seek parental consent for a Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIIE) and follow all required procedures, including giving parents the required Overview of Special Education for Parents form, and, if the school receives consent, conduct the FIIIE within 45 school days, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions. The ARD committee (including the parent) meets to review the results of the FIIIE.

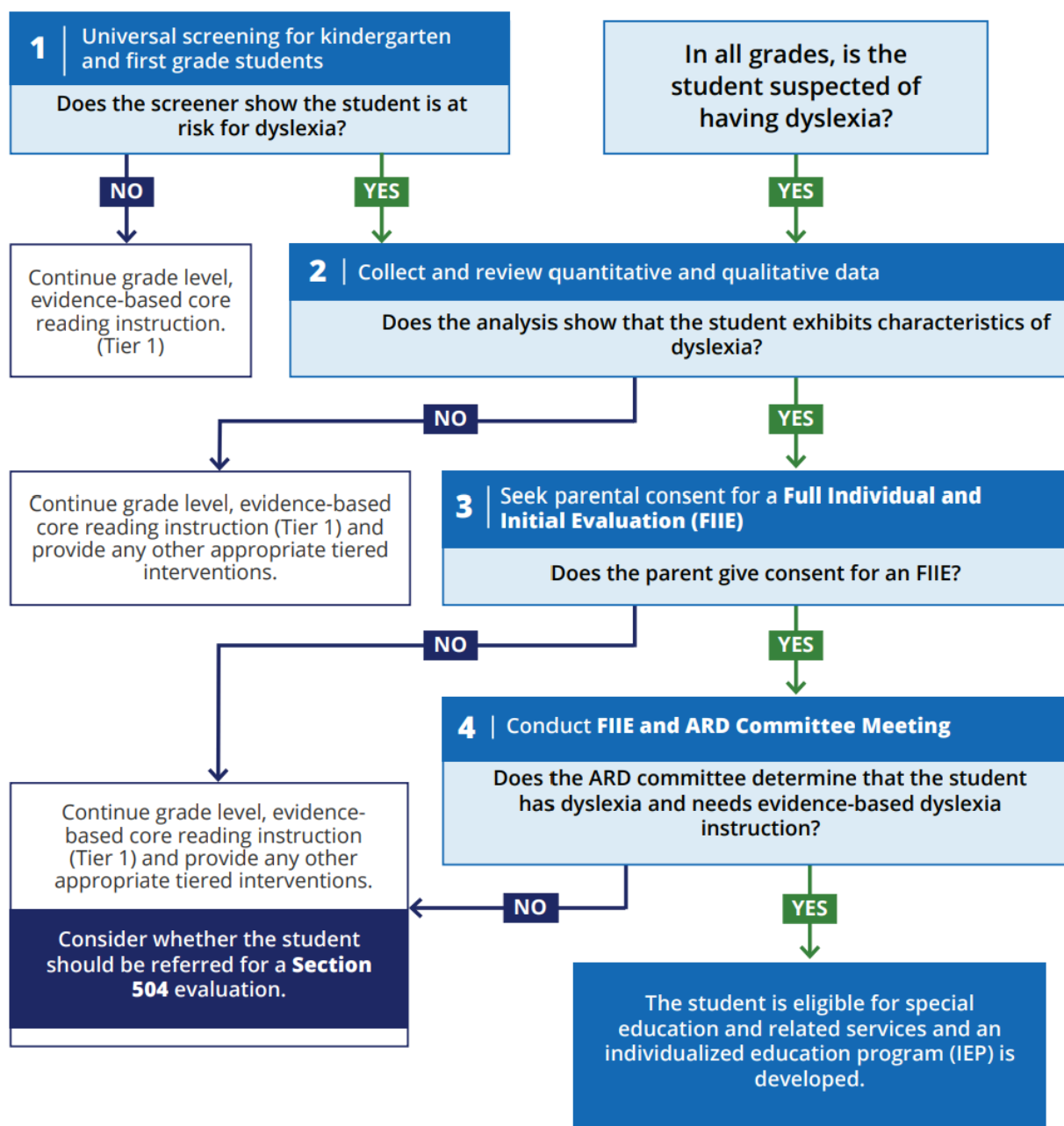
Procedures for the Evaluation and Identification of Students with Dyslexia.

In Texas and throughout the country, there is a focus on a Response to Intervention (RTI) or a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process as a vehicle for meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students. Current federal legislation under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), 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 can provide a basis for the tiered intervention model. Through the tiered intervention process, schools can document students' learning difficulties, provide ongoing evaluation, and monitor reading achievement progress for students at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties. However, **the use of a tiered intervention process, such as Response to Intervention or RTI, must not be used to delay or deny an evaluation for dyslexia, especially when parent or teacher observations reveal the common characteristics of dyslexia.**

A formal evaluation is not a screening; rather, it is an individualized evaluation used to gather specific data about the student. Formal evaluation includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence that indicates dyslexia. Information collected from the parents/guardians also provides valuable insight into the student's early years of language development. This history may help explain why students come to the evaluation with many different strengths and weaknesses; therefore, findings from the formal evaluation will be different for each child. Professionals conducting evaluations 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, early language experiences, and, when warranted, academic potential to assist with determining reading, spelling, and writing abilities and difficulties.

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, RPS-TX 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, RPS-TX 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 (Full and Individual Initial Evaluation), 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.

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



Evidenced-Based Dyslexia Instruction:

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 and must be considered when making individual placement decisions.

For the student who has not benefited from the research-based core reading instruction, the components of instruction will include additional focused intervention as appropriate for the reading needs of the student with dyslexia. Evidence-based dyslexia instruction provides evidence-based, multisensory structured literacy instruction for students with dyslexia. This instruction must be explicit, systematic, and intentional in its approach. This instruction is designed to likely take place in a small group setting.

Evidence-based dyslexia programs and instruction are considered specially designed instruction (SDI) and therefore special education services, so the provision of those services must follow the IDEA requirements. This means that evidence-based dyslexia instruction is only available to students who are served under IDEA, which prescribes the legal requirements for special education and related services. The program that RPS-TX uses, [Really Great Reading](#), aligns with the requirements.

Instructional Accommodations:

Students with dyslexia who receive dyslexia instruction that contains the components described in this chapter will be better equipped to meet the demands of grade-level or course instruction. In addition to dyslexia 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 one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodation. The following are examples of instructional accommodations for students who have dyslexia.

- 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
- Audiobooks
- Text to speech and/or Speech to text
- Electronic spellers
- Electronic dictionaries
- Formula charts
- Adaptive learning tools and features in software programs

IV. Definitions and Characteristics of Dysgraphia

Difficulty with handwriting frequently occurs in children with dyslexia. When Texas passed dyslexia legislation, the coexistence of poor handwriting with dyslexia was one reason why dysgraphia was called a related disorder. Subsequently, dyslexia and dysgraphia have been found to have diverse co-morbidities, including phonological awareness. However, dyslexia and dysgraphia are now recognized to be distinct disorders that can exist concurrently or separately. They have different brain mechanisms and identifiable characteristics.

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.

A review of recent evidence indicates that 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

Procedures for Identification of Dysgraphia

The referral process for dysgraphia is the same as dyslexia. The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow Child Find procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. 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
- Excessive erasures
- Poor spacing between/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 Schools should recommend evaluation for dysgraphia if the student demonstrates impaired or illegible handwriting that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade or impaired handwriting that interferes with spelling, written expression, or both that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade.

Domains to Assess Areas for evaluation of dysgraphia include academic skills - letter formation, handwriting, word/sentence dictation (timed and untimed), copying of text, written expression, spelling, writing fluency (both accuracy and fluency), and cognitive processes - memory for letter or symbols sequences (orthographic processing). Possible additional areas may include phonological awareness, phonological memory, working memory, letter retrieval, and letter matching. To make an informed determination the ARD committee must include members who are knowledgeable about the student being assessed, evaluation instruments being used, and interpretation of the data being collected. The committee members must also have knowledge regarding the handwriting process, dysgraphia and related disorders, dysgraphia instruction, and district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for evaluation. 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.

The following questions must be considered to determine the identification of dysgraphia:

- Does 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?

Once dysgraphia has been identified a determination must be made regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student. The ARD committee will determine whether the student is eligible under IDEA as a student with a specific learning disability. The student is eligible under IDEA if he/she has dysgraphia and, because of the dysgraphia needs special education services. If the student is found eligible, the student’s IEP must include appropriate writing

instruction, which might include instruction from a related services provider. If a student is identified and not considered a student with a disability under the IDEA, then the student may receive appropriate accommodations and services under Section 504.

Privately Obtained Evaluation

A parent/guardian may choose to have his/her child evaluated by a private diagnostician or other source. To be valid, this assessment must comply with the requirements set forth in the guidelines of the Dyslexia Handbook. Students identified as having dyslexia or a related disorder from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the district's program. RPS-TX may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student. If the committee does not refer for evaluation, the parents/guardians must be given a copy of their due process rights. The parent should be provided the reasons an evaluation is denied. If evaluation is recommended, the District will seek parental consent for an FIIE and all data reviewed by the DAC team Parent Request for Evaluation and Identification of Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia. Parents or guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia evaluation 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 needs to be evaluated following the guidelines as indicated in the Dyslexia Handbook. If the school does not suspect a disability and determines that evaluation would not be warranted, the parent/guardians must be given a copy of their due process rights. Parents should be provided the reasons an evaluation is denied.

Supporting Students:

Between 10% and 30% of students struggle with handwriting. Early difficulties in this area are significantly correlated with poorer performance on composition tasks. The following are research-based elements of effective handwriting instruction.

- Show students how to hold a pencil.
- Model efficient and legible letter formation.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice effective letter formation.
- Use scaffolds, such as letters with numbered arrows showing the order and direction of strokes.
- Have students practice writing letters from memory.
- Provide handwriting fluency practice to build students' automaticity.
- 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 o 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 genres including narrative, informational, compare and contrast, and persuasive compositions.

V. Parent Education Program

The district must provide parents or guardians of students suspected of having dyslexia or related disorder a copy or link to the electronic version of the Dyslexia Handbook as soon as the suspicion arises. The district must also offer a parent education program for parents or guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program must include:

- Awareness and characteristics of dyslexia and related disorder
- Information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia and related disorders
- Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia and related disorders
- Information on qualifications of those delivering services to students with dyslexia and related disorders
- Awareness of information on accommodations and modifications, including those for statewide assessments

- Information on eligibility, evaluation requests, and services available to the student under Section 504 and IDEA, and information regarding intervention processes, such as Response to Intervention
- Contact information for the relevant regional and/or District specialists for dyslexia and related disorders

Tips for Families

If you suspect your child has dyslexia or any other learning disability, send a written request for a special education evaluation to the principal or special education director. Clearly state that you want a full individual evaluation under the IDEA and explain your specific concerns such as a lack of reading progress, and suspicion of dyslexia. If your child is already receiving dyslexia instruction, the school should send you regular updates on your child's reading progress. Talk with your child's teacher(s) about your child's progress and ask questions. Keep a record of what you notice with your child's reading and improvement you notice. If your child is not making progress something needs to be adjusted or changed.

Parent Guides

[Parents Guide to Dyslexia](#)

[The Dyslexia Handbook](#) outlines the guidelines that TEA recommends districts follow to comply with the dyslexia law. Links TEA Dyslexia Website ([Spanish Version](#))

[Dyslexia Fact Sheet](#) ([Spanish Version](#))

[Section 504 Fact Sheet](#) ([Spanish Version](#))

[Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#) ([Spanish Version](#))

Parent Resources

[Learning Ally](#) offers more than 75,000 digitally recorded audiobooks in English and Spanish to eligible students.

[Talking Book Program](#) :The Texas State Library and Archives Commission offers The **Talking Book Program**, which provides free library services to qualifying Texans with visual, physical, or reading disabilities.

[Bookshare](#) is a site that allows a more customizable reading experience for students with learning differences

[The International Dyslexia Association](#) has information and resources for those who are supporting dyslexia students