



**2022-2023 Rockdale ISD
Dyslexia Handbook**



Mission Statement

The mission of the Rockdale ISD Dyslexia Department is to embrace all learners and empower them to reach their potential.

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Definitions and Characteristics of Dyslexia

The International Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia in the following way:

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

Adopted by the IDA Board of Directors, November 12, 2002

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders 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.

TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)

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

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

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 without prosody)
- Difficulty spelling

It is important to note that individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all the characteristics listed above.

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

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, pages 1-2

It is important for the campus specialist to be knowledgeable regarding the definitions and characteristics of dyslexia. The specialist should be prepared to provide information and resources to families for educational support. Additionally, the specialist must provide dyslexia training to certified staff members on their campus at least once per school year. The specialist should educate staff to look for student behaviors that could indicate dyslexia. The state handbook provides a list of characteristics by grade level as shown below.

Kindergarten and First Grade

- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts, or 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 (e.g., “man” sounded out as /m/ /ă/ /n/)
- 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 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 appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., “after” spelled “eftr”)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/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 (particularly for pleasure)

- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- 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 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 reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Difficulty with written assignments
- Tendency to avoid reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, pages 3-4

Screening

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

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, page 8

A related state law adds an additional layer to screening requirements for public school students. Texas Education Code §28.006, requires each school district to administer to students in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade a reading instrument to diagnose student reading development. This law also requires school districts to administer a reading instrument at the beginning of seventh grade to students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the sixth-grade state reading assessment.

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, page 8

Campus Dyslexia Specialists will ensure that all staff members administering screeners have been properly trained in the screener they are administering. Students will be progress monitored at least 3 times per year following the campus assessment calendar. Campus ECC/RtI teams will use this progress monitoring data to make individualized instructional decisions for all students and provide ongoing intervention as needed. All students will receive progress reports and report cards each six weeks. Students receiving dyslexia services will receive individualized progress reports each six weeks specific to their progress within the Reading by Design program.

Grade	What	When	Who
Kindergarten	Universal Screening Utilizing Amplify	April 24, 2023 through May 5, 2023	Classroom Teacher or designee
First Grade	Universal Screening Utilizing Amplify	January 9, 2023 through January 23, 2023	Classroom Teacher or designee
Second Grade	Universal Screening Utilizing Amplify	August 29, 2022 through September 19, 2022	Classroom Teacher or designee
Seventh Grade	Universal Screen Utilizing iStation	September 12, 2022 through September 16, 2022	Classroom Teacher or designee

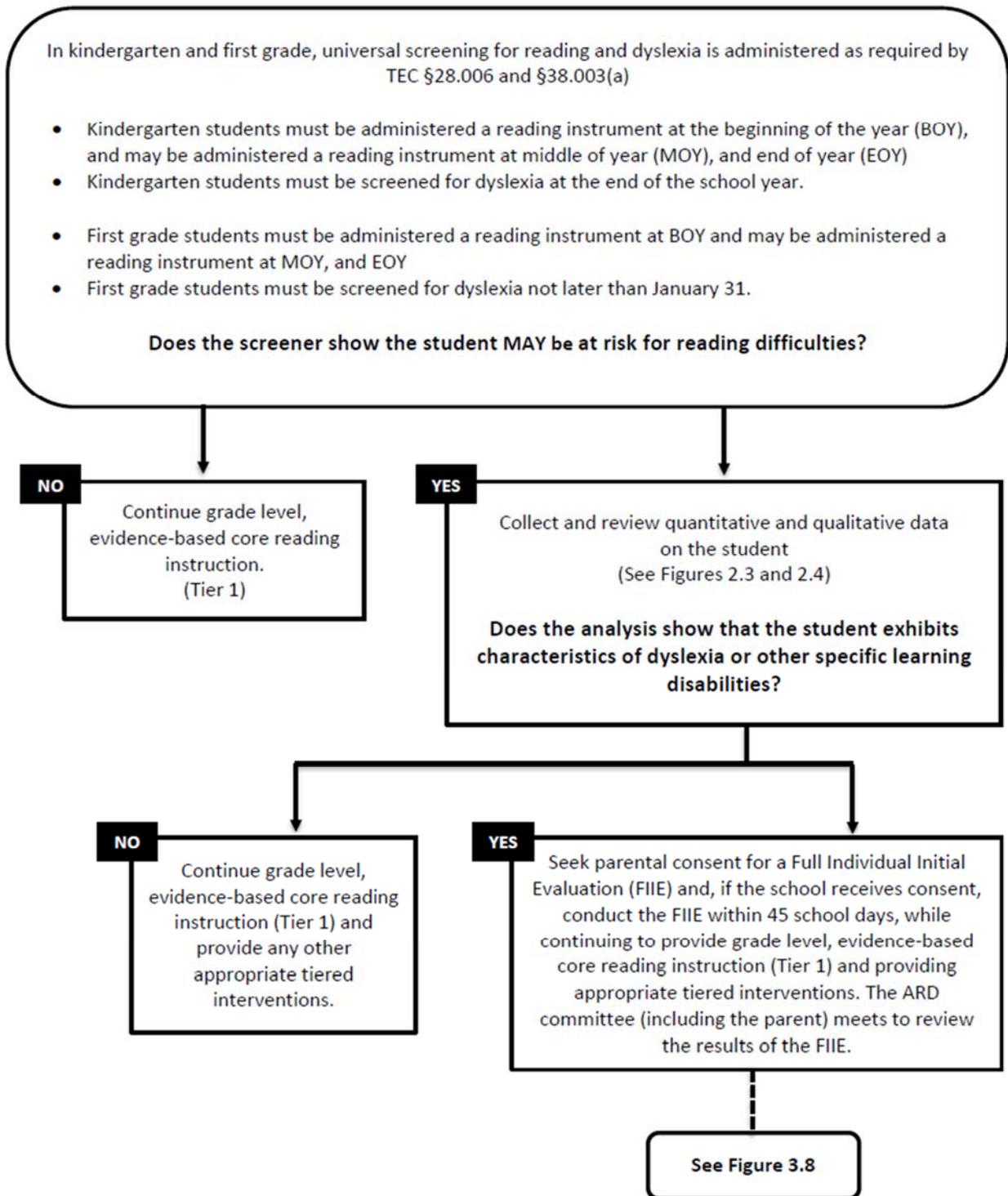
Campus Dyslexia Specialists will notify parents of students who are screened at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties based on the screeners listed above. This notification will indicate areas of weakness and the ability to borrow audiobooks, free of charge, through the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. These students will continue to be monitored through the campus ECC/RtI process.

The following is a list of behaviors that may be observed during the screening and should be documented.

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

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, page 13

**Figure 2.5
Universal Screening and Data Review for
Reading Risk**



Evaluation and Identification

The pathway for identification of dyslexia is through a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE). Rockdale ISD's process is outlined below. The student should continue to receive core instruction and appropriate tiered interventions while the process is being completed.

Step 1: FIIE Referral and Data Gathering

When a campus student intervention team determines a student's data gives them reason to suspect the student has dyslexia, the team will initiate a referral for a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE). The diagnostician and assistant principal will communicate with parents. The diagnostician will gather parent permission to assess, parent and teacher input, and hearing and vision screening. The results of the hearing and vision screening provide useful information; however, the results are not to delay the start of testing. The diagnostician will send an Evaluation Request to the campus dyslexia specialist. The specialist will then need to start a purple file folder for the student. The specialist should gather the following:

- Authentic writing samples
- Universal screening data
- Running records (if applicable)
- Informal observation data and other relevant information

Step 2: Formal Evaluation Under IDEA

The evaluation must be completed within 45 school days from the time a district receives parental consent. Burlison Milam Special Services Assessment Personnel will administer a formal evaluation to determine eligibility.

Step 3: Collaboration with Diagnostician

The campus dyslexia specialist will work with the diagnostician and share scores to complete a Dyslexia Profile. The diagnostician will create the profile for the student and share it with the campus dyslexia specialist and district dyslexia coordinator.

Step 4: Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluations

After receiving recommendations from the Response to Intervention/Educational Concerns Committee, the campus dyslexia specialist will collaborate with the diagnostician to determine if the data reflects a pattern of evidence for the primary characteristics of dyslexia that is unexpected in relation to sociocultural factors, attendance history, the provision of effective instruction, language differences, and the student's other abilities. The following questions must be considered:

- Do the data show the following characteristics of dyslexia:
 - Difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading
 - Poor spelling skills
 - Poor decoding ability

- Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in the phonological component of language? (Please be mindful that average phonological scores alone do not rule out dyslexia.)
- Are these difficulties **unexpected** for the student's age in relation to the student's other abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction?

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, page 31

The campus dyslexia specialist will not need to write a separate report; however, the specialist will need to collaborate with the BMSS Assessment Personnel to ensure the correct information regarding the decision is in their evaluation report.

Step 6: Documentation

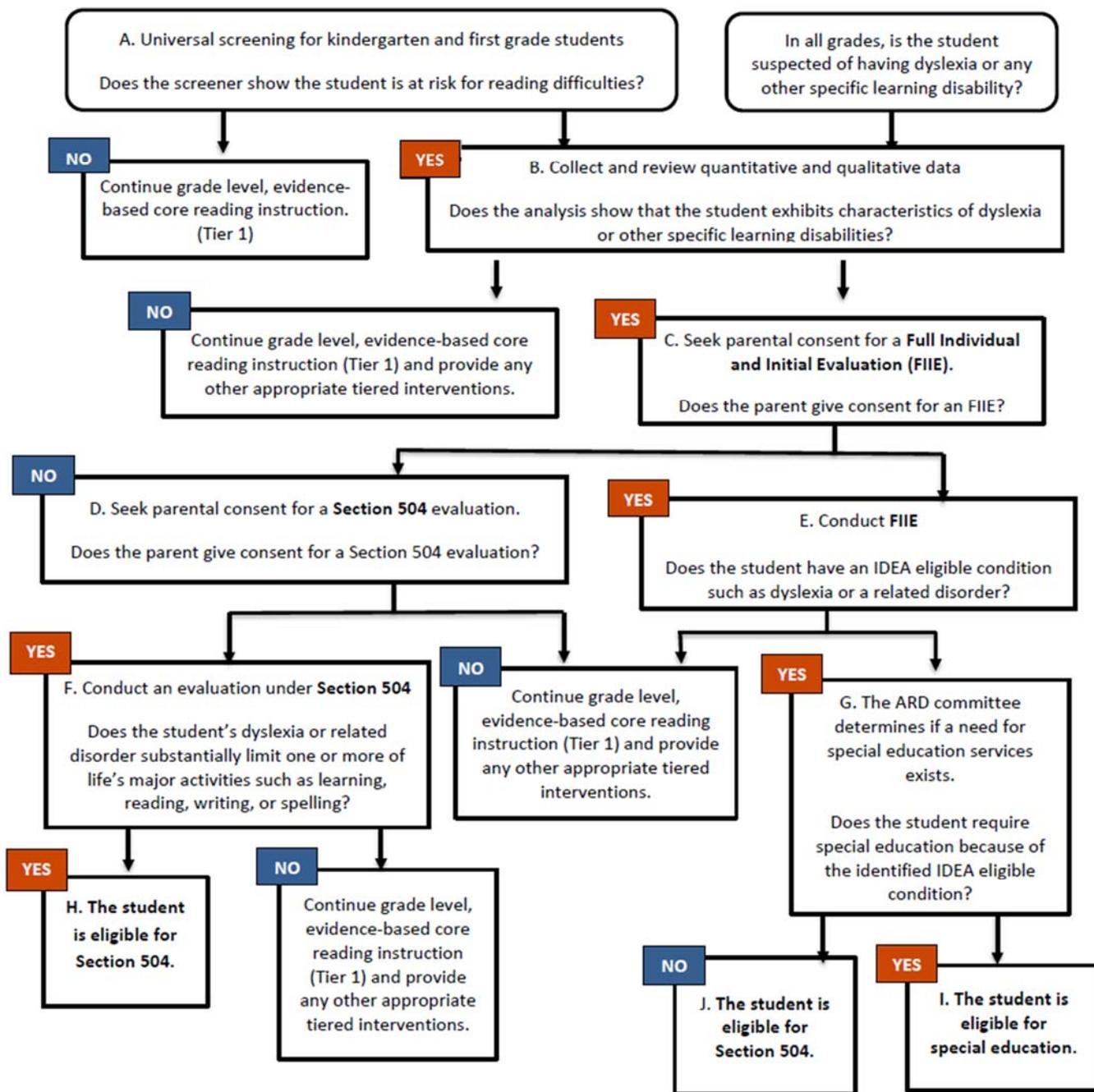
The BMSS Assessment Personnel will update special education folders with all evaluation information.

Step 7: ARD Meeting

The campus dyslexia specialist will prepare for and attend the ARD meeting. The specialist should collaborate with campus special education teachers regarding writing of a PLAAFP and goals when needed. At the ARD meeting, a decision will be made on the second prong of IDEA identification: if specifically designed instruction is needed. If the student is determined to be eligible for special education, a decision will be made on services including dyslexia instruction. The Consent to Serve signed under FIE will cover dyslexia as well. An additional Consent to Serve form is not needed. If the student has been identified as a student with dyslexia, but does not qualify for special education, the student will not be eligible for dyslexia service under Section 504. The student may receive reading intervention through the RtI process.

Figure 3.8

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



Dyslexia Instruction and Specialist Responsibilities

Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia must be made by the ARD or Section 504 committee. Students currently identified as dyslexic served through Section 504 who are not being successful should be referred for a FIE through special education.

Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction

Standard protocol dyslexia instruction provides evidence-based, multisensory structured literacy instruction for students with dyslexia. A standard protocol dyslexia instructional program must be explicit, systematic and intentional in its approach. This instruction is designed for all students with dyslexia and will often take place in a small group setting. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction must be:

- evidence-based and effective for students with dyslexia;
- taught by an appropriately trained instructor; and
- implemented with fidelity

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, page 39

Specially Designed Instruction

Specially designed instruction differs from standard protocol dyslexia instruction in that it offers a more individualized program specifically designed to meet a student's unique needs. Note that participation in standard protocol dyslexia instruction must be considered for all students, including those receiving dyslexia instruction under the IDEA. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction could be part of the specially designed instruction and services provided to meet the student's needs.

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update, page 40

Multisensory Teaching Approach

Dyslexia instruction should incorporate explicit, systematic teaching in phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, and syntax. Campus dyslexia specialists fulfill these requirements by implementing the Reading by Design Program. Campus dyslexia specialists are extensively trained to implement the program with fidelity. Students receive specialized individualized instruction as determined by the Section 504 and ARD committees. The specialist must adhere to the following guidelines:

- It is recommended that all students complete a pre assessment to to determine appropriate placement in the intervention program.
- Provide consistent Reading by Design curriculum as indicated in the Section 504 and IEP plans.
- Reading By Design Mastery Checks should be administered upon completion of each unit

Dysgraphia

Texas state law requires districts and charter schools to identify students who have dyslexia and related disorders. Texas Education Code §38.003 identifies the following examples of related disorders: developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

Definition and Characteristics of Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is 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 a 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 others aspects of written expression

Dysgraphia is not:

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

Procedures for Evaluation

The pathway for identification of dysgraphia is through a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE). This will be handled by BMSS Assessment Personnel.

Effective Handwriting Instruction

The following are research-based elements of effective handwriting instruction that may be used to support instruction for students whose handwriting is illegible or dysfluent.

- Show students how to hold a pencil
- Model letter formation
- Provide multiple opportunities for practice, including fluency practice and writing letters from memory
- Use scaffolds, such as arrows to show direction of strokes
- Practice in short sessions

Delivery of Instruction

Content should be delivered in a way that is consistent with the principles of effective intervention including:

- Simultaneous, multisensory (VAKT-visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile)
- Systematic and cumulative
- Explicit instruction
- Diagnostic teaching to automaticity

Instructional Accommodations for Students with Dysgraphia

The following list provides examples of possible classroom accommodations that may benefit students with dysgraphia:

- Allow more time for written tasks including note taking, copying, and tests
- Reduce the length requirements of written assignments
- Provide copies of notes or assign a note taking buddy to assist with filling in missing information
- Allow the student to audio record important assignments and/or take oral tests
- Assist student with developing logical steps to complete a writing assignment instead of all at once
- Allow use of technology (e.g., speech to text software, etc.)
- Allow the student to use cursive or manuscript, whichever is most legible and efficient
- Allow the student to use graph paper for math, or to turn lined paper sideways, to help with lining up columns of numbers
- Offer an alternative to a written project such as an oral report, dramatic presentation, or visual media project

Assurance Of Nondiscrimination

Rockdale ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, and also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups, in accordance with Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, as amended; Title IX of the *Educational Amendments of 1972*; Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended; *Age Discrimination Act of 1975*; Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*; and the *Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act*.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex:

Pam Kaufmann
Assistant Superintendent
Box 632
Rockdale, TX 76567
pkaufmann@rockdaleisd.net
(512)430-6000

Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability:

Pam Kaufmann
Assistant Superintendent
Box 632
Rockdale, TX 76567
pkaufmann@rockdaleisd.net
(512)430-6000

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability:

Pam Kaufmann
Assistant Superintendent
Box 632
Rockdale, TX 76567
pkaufmann@rockdaleisd.net
(512)430-6000

All other concerns regarding discrimination: Dr. Denise Monzingo

Superintendent
Box 632
Rockdale, TX 76567
dmonzingo@rockdaleisd.net
(512)430-6000

All complaints shall be handled through established channels and procedures beginning with the building principal, followed by appeal to the appropriate central administration contact, and finally the board of trustees, in accordance with Policy FNG.

If you need the assistance of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the Department of Education, the address of the OCR Regional Office that covers Texas is:

Office for Civil Rights,

Dallas Office

U.S. Department of Education

1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620

Dallas, TX 75201-6810

Telephone: (214) 661-9600

Facsimile: (214) 661-9587

[Email: OCR.Dallas@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Dallas@ed.gov)