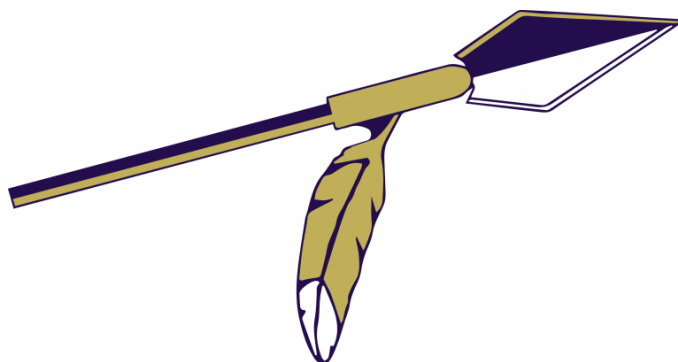


Alvarado ISD



Dyslexia Operational Guidelines



District Dyslexia Operational Guidelines

Alvarado ISD's Dyslexia Instructional Program is designed to offer an educational option for any student exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia and related difficulties in the areas of reading, writing, and spelling.

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ASSURANCE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law Alvarado ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law, in providing educational services, activities, and programs. The following district representatives have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements.

- **Title IX Coordinator**
Dr. Renee Warner, Executive Director of Accountability
102 S. Bill Jackson, Alvarado, Texas 76009
- **504 Coordinator**
Dr. Lori Nunez, Chief Special Programs Officer
102 Bill Jackson, Alvarado, Texas 76009
- **Superintendent**
Dr. Kenneth Estes
102 S. Bill Jackson, Alvarado, Texas 76009

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I. Definition of Dyslexia

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003

- (1) “*Dyslexia*” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.
- (2) “*Related disorders*” includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

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

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

The primary difficulties of a student identified as having dyslexia occur in phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word decoding, reading fluency, and spelling. Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression. These difficulties are **unexpected** for the in relation to the student’s other abilities, sociocultural factors, language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate and effective instruction. Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

II. State and Federal Law Regarding Early Identification and Intervention Prior to Formal Assessment

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

In accordance with TEC §28.006 Reading Diagnosis, Alvarado ISD administers early reading instruments in kindergarten, first, and second grades to determine students’ reading development and comprehension. Additionally, the law requires

a reading instrument from the commissioner’s approved list to be administered at the beginning of grade 7 to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency on the reading assessment administered under TEC§39.023(a). If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, the students’ parents/guardians are notified. In addition, an accelerated (intensive) reading program that appropriately addresses students’ reading difficulties and enables them to “catch up” with their typically performing peers is implemented. The information from reading instruments administered under TEC §28.006 will be one source of information in deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia.

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, Alvarado ISD will implement reading programs using scientifically based reading research as well as evidence proven effective results.

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

III. Referral Process

At any time (from kindergarten through grade 12) a student continues to struggle with one or more components of reading, Alvarado ISD will collect additional information about the student. The data gathering and referral for dyslexia testing will occur through the Student Support Team (SST) meetings for any student the exhibits dyslexia tendencies.

Data Gathering:

Information will be used to evaluate the student’s academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student’s improved academic performance. This information **should** include data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction and data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. Additional information to be considered includes the results from some or all of the following as suggested by the *Texas Dyslexia Handbook, Revised 2018*:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

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

If a student continues to struggle with reading, the identification of reading disabilities, including dyslexia, will follow these procedures regarding a referral.

1. A student currently in the Student Support Team (SST) process will be referred by the committee to the Section 504 committee for an evaluation after data has been gathered and a formal assessment is deemed necessary.
2. A student currently being serviced by §504 will be referred back to the Student Support Team (SST) in order to gather data to determine if a formal assessment is needed. If a formal assessment is needed, the student will be referred by the SST committee to the Section 504 committee for an evaluation.
3. A student that is currently serviced under special education or is suspected of having a disability within the scope of IDEA 2004, all special education procedures must be followed.

IV. Procedures for Assessment of Dyslexia

Students enrolling in Alvarado ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading

difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teachers' input, and parents' or guardians' input. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28), the earlier the better. While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

When formal assessment is recommended, Alvarado ISD completes the evaluation process as outlined in referral section of this document. Once a formal assessment is requested through the SST process or an ARD, Alvarado ISD will complete the evaluation using the following procedures:

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

Assessment under Section 504

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

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

Assessment of Current Special Education Students

If a student is already in special education, but exhibits the characteristics of dyslexia or related disorders and is referred for assessment, assessment procedures for students under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004) will be followed. Assessment data from prior special education assessments may be utilized, and/or additional assessment may be conducted by personnel trained in assessment to evaluate students for dyslexia and related disorders. In this case, the ARD committee will make determinations for those students.

If the student with dyslexia is found eligible for special education in the area of reading, and the ARD committee determines 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 *The Dyslexia Handbook ~ Revised 2018*, Chapter III, and "Instruction for Students with Dyslexia."

Assessment of Students Identified Outside the District

Students identified as having dyslexia or related disorders from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the district's dyslexia program. Alvarado ISD will review outside assessments and may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student to determine appropriate accommodations and/or instruction, and the placement of the student in the dyslexia program(s).

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 or achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
- Be selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory

- Include multiple measures of a student’s reading abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion referenced assessments, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)
- Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
- Be used for the purpose for which the assessment or measures are valid or reliable
- Be provided and administered in the student’s native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information regarding what the child can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer

Domains to Assess

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

Academic Skills

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

Reading processes

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

- Various language processes (Language processes such as morpheme and syntax awareness, memory and retrieval of verbal labels, and the ability to formulate ideas into grammatical sentences, may also be factors affecting reading.)

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

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

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

Much diversity exists among English Language Learners (ELLs). The identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be in step with the student’s linguistic environment and educational background.

Involvement of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) in the decision making process is required. Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Language Learners:

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

Additional assessment when assessing English Language Learners:

- Comprehensive oral language proficiency testing for a dyslexia evaluation should be completed in English and the student’s native language whenever possible due to the importance of the information for consideration in relation to
 - academic challenges,
 - planning the assessment, and
 - interpreting assessment results.
- If the student has received academic instruction in his/her native language, as well as English, then the “Domains to Assess” need to be completed in both languages to the appropriate extent.

Interpretation:

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

V. Identification of Students with Dyslexia

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

Committee members should also have knowledge regarding

- the reading process
- dyslexia and related disorders
- dyslexia instruction
- district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for assessment

The (§504 or ARD) committee will review all accumulated data to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dyslexia. This data will include the following:

- The observations of the teacher, district or charter school staff, and/or parent/guardian
- Data gathered from the classroom (including student work and the results of classroom measures) and information found in the student’s cumulative folder (including the developmental and academic history of the student)
- Data-based documentation of student progress during instruction/intervention
- The results of administered assessments
- Language Assessment Proficiency Committee (LPAC) documentation, when applicable
- All other accumulated data regarding the development of the student’s learning and his/her educational needs

§504 or ARD Committee Decision Points for Dyslexia Identification:

- A. The pattern of evidence for the primary characteristics of dyslexia with unexpectedly low performance for the student’s age and educational level in some or all of the following areas:
- Reading words in isolation
 - Decoding unfamiliar words accurately and automatically
 - Reading fluency for connected text (both rate and/or accuracy)
 - Spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia)
- B. Based on the data, if the committee determines weaknesses are indicated in the listed academic skills, the committee will look next at the underlying cognitive processes for the difficulties seen in the student’s word reading and written spelling. These difficulties will typically be the result of a deficit in phonological or phonemic awareness. Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

The student may also demonstrate difficulties in other areas of cognitive processing, including one or more of the following:

- Rapid naming
- Orthographic processing
- Phonological memory
- Verbal working memory
- Processing speed

If the student exhibits reading and written 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 previous difficulty with phonological/phoneme awareness. **NOTE:** 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/or written spelling.

C. If the committee (§504 or ARD) determines the student exhibits weaknesses in reading and written spelling, the committee will then examine the student's data to determine whether these difficulties are **unexpected** for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities (the ability to learn in the absence of print) and **unexpected** in relation to the provision of effective classroom instruction.

Many students with dyslexia will have difficulty with the secondary characteristics of dyslexia, including reading comprehension and written composition.

The §504 or ARD Committee will also incorporate the following guidelines from TEC §38.003 and 19 TAC §74.28:

- The student has received conventional (appropriate) instruction
- The student has an unexpected lack of appropriate academic progress (in the areas of reading and spelling)
- The student has adequate intelligence (an average ability to learn in the absence of print or in other academic areas)
- The student exhibits characteristics associated with dyslexia
- The student's lack of progress is not due to socio-cultural factors such as language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background

VI. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, the student will be placed in the district dyslexia program based on a §504 or ARD committee decision as required in TEC §38.003:

The board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder.

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

The program Alvarado ISD uses for instruction of students with dyslexia is the *Take Flight* curriculum. *Take Flight* was developed by Texas Scottish Rite Hospital and incorporates all the essential areas necessary for quality dyslexia instruction.

The following procedures must be followed:

- Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia are made by a team that is knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation information, and instructional components and delivery of instruction for students with dyslexia.
- Alvarado ISD has a dyslexia program (*Take Flight*) which was developed for students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program meets the requirements of a dyslexia program listed in the Dyslexia Handbook. The components of instruction and instructional approaches are described in the next section of the Alvarado ISD plan.
- Alvarado ISD provides each identified student access at his/her campus to an instructional program that meets the requirements in 19 TAC §74.28(c) and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. The school district may, with the approval of each student's parents or guardians, offer additional services at a centralized location. Such centralized services shall not preclude each student from receiving services at his or her campus (19 TAC §74.28).
- Parents/guardians of students eligible under §504 must be informed of all services and options available to the student under that federal statute.
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components specified in the next section of this plan. (19 TAC §74.28).
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in the professional development activities specified by Alvarado ISD, and/or campus planning and decision making committee which shall include the instructional strategies indicated above (19 TAC §74.28).

Alvarado ISD provides a parent education program for the parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. The program includes, but is not limited to:

- Characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders

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

Components of 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. The instructional program is offered in a small group arrangement and includes reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate. The major instructional strategies utilize individualized, intensive, and multisensory methods as appropriate.

Components of instruction, as appropriate for the reading needs of the student include the following:

- Phonemic awareness instruction that enables students to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language
- Graphophonemic knowledge (phonics) instruction that takes advantage of the letter-sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds, and sounds are written with letters in the correct order. (Students with this understanding can blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing.)
- Language structure instruction that encompasses morphology (the study of meaningful units of language such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots), semantics (ways that language convey meaning), syntax (sentence structure), and pragmatics (how to use language in a particular context)
- Linguistic instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that words and sentences are the carriers of meaning
- Strategy-oriented instruction in the strategies students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension that students need to become independent readers

Instructional approaches, as appropriate to meet the instructional needs of the student, include the following:

- Explicit, direct instruction that is systematic (structured), sequential, and cumulative. (Instruction is organized and presented in a way that follows a logical, sequential plan, fits the nature of language [alphabetic principle] with no assumption of prior skills or language knowledge, and maximizes

student engagement. This instruction proceeds at a rate commensurate with students' needs, ability levels, and demonstration of progress.)

- Individualized instruction meets the specific learning needs of each individual student in a small group setting
- A reading curriculum that matches each student's individual ability level and contains all of the Components of Instruction mandated in 19 TAC §74.28
- Intensive, highly concentrated instruction that maximizes student engagement, uses specialized methods and materials, produces results, and contains all the Components of Instruction mandated in 19 TAC §74.28
- Meaning-based instruction that is directed toward purposeful reading and writing
- Multisensory instruction that incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile) during teacher presentations and student practice

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

VII. Timeline

When a referral for dyslexia assessment is made, Alvarado ISD will follow the timelines Texas has established for the completion of initial special education evaluations through TEC §29.004(a).

Special education students shall follow the timelines required by federal law, under IDEA 2004.

VIII. Student Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria

Upon successful completion of the Alvarado ISD dyslexia program, students will be exited from the district dyslexia program. However, students will still receive classroom accommodations as needed and determined by the §504 or ARD committee. Additional criteria for exit may include but is not limited to: grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessment data, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, teacher and/or parent observations/checklists, and individual dyslexia program requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

- Completion of the district dyslexia program
- The reevaluation and/or post-testing of student shows student growth to be closer to grade level proficiency standards
(NOTE: Reevaluation does not mean reassessing to establish the identification of dyslexia, but rather viewing data that supports student progress, and achievement.)
- The student demonstrates self-monitoring/self-correction behaviors as evidenced through informal observation by teacher and/or dyslexia teacher
- The student passed the reading portion of the state assessment (NOTE: passing the reading portion of the state assessment is never the sole source for exiting dyslexia services);
- Committee recommendation
- Parent request in writing that the student exit the program

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