Dyslexia: Legislative Updates and Implementation Planning

Dr. Jennifer Lindstrom
Statewide Dyslexia Coordinator

Agenda

- Legislative Updates

- Dyslexia Pilot Program

- Planning for 2024-2025 Implementation

Dyslexia Updates

S.B. 48 Key Ideas

- Policies for the identification and assistance of students with characteristics of dyslexia
- Dyslexia informational handbook
- Professional development
- Teaching endorsement in dyslexia
- Pilot program
- K-3 screening for characteristics of dyslexia

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Recently Released

- Dyslexia Pilot Panel Webinar Series ✓
- Dyslexia Task Force ✓
- 3-Year Dyslexia Pilot Program ✓
- List of Qualified Dyslexia Screeners ✓
- Funding for Dyslexia Screeners ✓

Coming Soon

- Dyslexia Technical Assistance Chats
- Dyslexia Screening Guidelines
- Dyslexia Informational Handbook Update
- Dyslexia Resource Guide for Families
- Considerations for English Learners

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PSC-Approved Dyslexia Endorsement Programs

2023-2024:
565 Scholarships awarded for
Dyslexia Endorsement Programs

INSTITUTIONS WITH AN APPROVED PROGRAM IN DYSLEXIA ENDORSEMENT Click on an Institution below for more information.	GAPSC-Approved Endorsement Programs
Central Savannah River Area RESA	Yes
Columbus State University	Yes
Georgia College and State University	Yes
Georgia State University	Yes
Griffin RESA	Yes
Mercer University	Yes
Metro RESA	Yes
Middle Georgia RESA	Yes
North Georgia RESA	Yes
Northeast Georgia RESA	Yes
Northwest Georgia RESA	Yes
Okefenokee RESA	Yes
Reinhardt University	Yes
Shorter University	Yes
Thomas University	Yes
Truett-McConnell University	Yes
University of Georgia	Yes
University of North Georgia	Yes
University of West Georgia	Yes
West Georgia RESA	Yes

Session 1: 3:00 – 4:30 pm • January 26, 2023

District representatives shared how the pilot affected
- core reading instruction
- screening for dyslexia and other reading difficulties
- intervention
- progress monitoring
- use of student data for instruction and intervention

Attendees were given a planning and discussion guide at the end of Session 1 to use in discussions with colleagues.

Session 2: 3:00 – 4:30 pm • March 9, 2023

Attendees asked questions that arose in using the planning guide to increase readiness for S.B. 48 implementation.

GADOE DYSLEXIA PILOT DISTRICT PANEL

2-PART VIRTUAL WEBINAR SERIES

Session 1: 3:00 – 4:30 pm • January 26, 2023
Session 2: 3:00 – 4:30 pm • March 9, 2023

This two-part webinar series will provide an opportunity for teachers and administrators to learn from representatives from the Dyslexia Pilot Districts. In Session 1, attendees will hear directly from district representatives about how the pilot affected their core reading instruction, screening for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, intervention, progress monitoring, and the use of student data for instruction and intervention. Representatives will also share their districts' successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the pilot so far. Attendees will be given a planning and discussion guide at the end of Session 1 to use in discussions with colleagues.

Session 2 will provide the opportunity for attendees to ask questions that arise in using the planning guide to increase readiness for S.B. 48 implementation.

- Screening for dyslexia and other reading difficulties
- Intervention and progress monitoring
- Successes and challenges
- Key pilot takeaways
- Discussion and planning guide

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Dyslexia Planning and Discussion Guide

Dyslexia Pilot Panel #1: Follow-Up Discussion and Planning Guide for Attendees

The Georgia Dyslexia Pilot districts found that S.B. 48 requirements can and should fit into existing MTSS processes. The following table provides some questions for school and district leaders to consider as they look toward statewide implementation of S.B. 48 in 2024-25.

Key Element of S.B. 48 Implementation	Discussion and Planning Questions
Core Instruction	1. What K-3 literacy curricula and instructional materials does your school/district currently use, and to what extent are these curricula and materials aligned with evidence-based reading instruction[1,2]? What resources did you use to make that determination?
	2. If fewer than 80% of students are meeting grade-level standards for reading and writing, how has your district or school examined student data and existing curricula and instructional materials to identify any gaps that need to be addressed on a school-wide or district-wide basis?
	3. If fewer than 80% of students are meeting grade-level standards for reading and writing, what plans are in place to strengthen core literacy instruction?
	4. How are early signs of potential reading difficulties informally identified and addressed by teachers in Tier I instruction?
	5. How and when do general education teachers receive training on your early literacy curricula and instructional materials?
Screening	1. What literacy screening tools does your school/district use for grades K-3? To what extent do you rely on these tools to predict areas of risk?
	2. Which of the following skills required by S.B. 48 does each screening tool assess?
	a. Phonological awareness
	b. Phonemic awareness
	c. Alphabet knowledge
	d. Decoding skills
	e. Encoding skills
	f. Rapid naming

[1] Resource 1: https://www.edreports.org/reports
[2] Resource 2: https://www.thereadingleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/The-Reading-League-Curriculum-Evaluation-Guidelines-2022.pdf

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Dyslexia Task Force

- The GaDOE Dyslexia Task Force is comprised of subject-matter experts and education stakeholders.

- Representatives of Georgia P-12 schools, colleges and universities, RESAs, professional associations, and other state agencies serve on the GaDOE Dyslexia Task Force.

- The Dyslexia Task Force met four times between November 30, 2022 and April 28, 2023 to address critical issues related to SB 48 in Georgia.
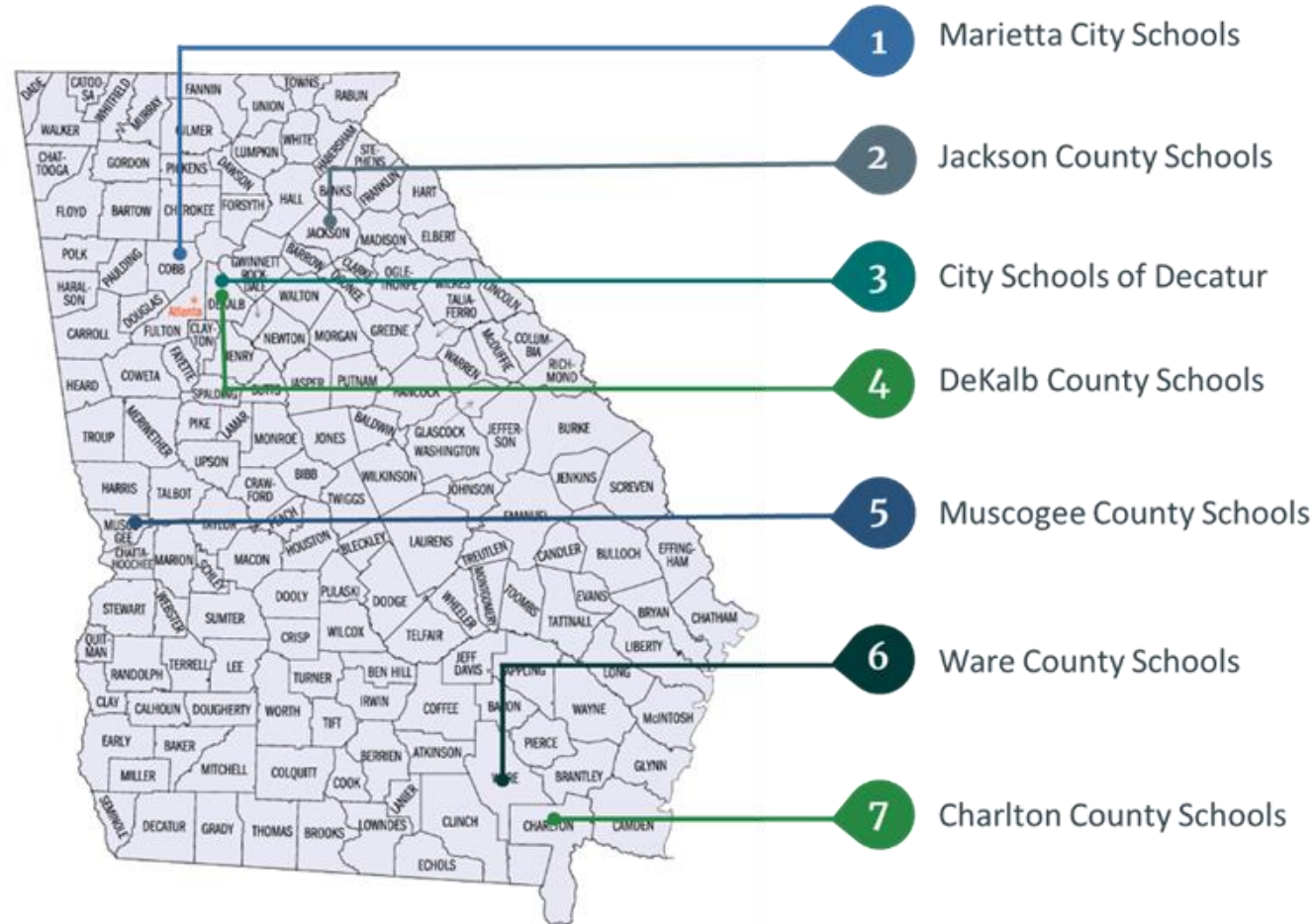
Dyslexia Task Force

- The following four working groups were formed based on the collective knowledge and expertise of each individual:
  - Screening for Characteristics of Dyslexia
  - Dyslexia Parent Handbook
  - Statewide Dyslexia Professional Learning
  - Dyslexia Informational Handbook
- The Dyslexia Task Force will continue to meet twice per year (minimum) to address critical issues related to Dyslexia.

Timeline of the Georgia Dyslexia Pilot

Participating Pilot Districts

1. Marietta City Schools
2. Jackson County Schools
3. City Schools of Decatur
4. DeKalb County Schools
5. Muscogee County Schools
6. Ware County Schools
7. Charlton County Schools

Pilot Structure

- SB 48 gave pilot districts flexibility to establish an implementation design that best fits their local contexts.

- Districts could start small and scale up over time, start district-wide from the beginning, or choose another design in between.

District	Initial Implementation	Implementation in Year 3
1. **Marietta City Schools**	Three schools	Four schools
2. **Jackson County Schools**	Three schools	Three schools formally*
3. **City Schools of Decatur**	Districtwide	Districtwide
4. **DeKalb County Schools**	Subset of schools	Districtwide
5. **Muscogee County Schools**	Three schools	Districtwide
6. **Ware County Schools**	One school	One school
7. **Charlton County Schools**	Districtwide	Districtwide

Key School Staff

- Classroom teachers (6 districts)
  - Involved in conducting screening, reviewing student data, and providing intervention and often served on MTSS teams at their schools
- School staff with MTSS in their titles (6 districts)
  - Supported teachers and other staff with the MTSS process as a whole
  - Facilitated communication between the school and the district
  - Supported teachers with intervention and data analysis
  - Communicated with families
  - Sometimes served as interventionists

Key School Staff

- School administrators (mostly principals; 5 districts)
  - Reviewed and approved screening procedures
  - Oversaw screening, communicating with the district, and gathering staff teams together
- School psychologists (5 districts)
  - Assisted school MTSS teams in making data-based instructional decisions
  - Provided intervention recommendations
  - Assisted with meetings and assessments for students under the purview of Student Support Teams

Key School Staff

- Instructional or academic coaches and interventionists
  - **Coaches** created the screening schedule; provided teachers with training and instructional coaching; and, assisted with analyzing and interpreting student data.
  - **Interventionists** largely provided intervention to students and administered screening and progress monitoring.

> I would say this... when this goes into effect in 2024, you're going to have to have whoever's running this be dyslexia endorsed... I would not want to put anybody over RTI that has not had the Dyslexia Endorsement.

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Successes Identified Over 3-Year Pilot Implementation

MTSS Implementation	Building Human Capacity
• Improving core reading instruction and intervention during the pilot, citing better alignment between the two and stronger core reading instruction for all students. • Increasing ability to look closely at student reading assessment data and dig more deeply into students' specific needs. • Pushing their schools to implement a dedicated intervention block in their master schedules.	• Shifting to a positive mindset in school and district staff, including more interest in the science of reading (even from non-instructional staff), a commitment to building staff's self-efficacy in teaching reading, and a stronger focus on providing individualized reading supports to students. • Increasing number of staff were invested, collaborative, and used consistent messaging; they had the right people in the right positions, and both school and district staff were building their knowledge base for reading instruction such that the district's focus can continue in the long run. • Improving professional learning and coaching plans

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Challenges Identified Over 3-Year Pilot Implementation

MTSS Implementation	Building Human Capacity

• Using student data well was difficult. Examples:
  o Aligning the timing of screening windows and compiling and analyzing student data from multiple tools
  o Finding time for staff to analyze and communicate about student data
  o Helping teachers learn how to use screening data to inform their daily instructional practices
  o Ensuring that the progress monitoring data collected by schools was used appropriately to make decisions about students' needs
• Finding the time and staff to provide reading intervention to all students who needed it
• Struggling to appropriately identify Els who might have characteristics of dyslexia
	• Managing staff turnover and staff shortages
	• Building teachers' and school leaders' knowledge of effective reading instruction and intervention and using student data to inform instruction and intervention
	• Having difficulty finding the time to train teachers; one of these also noted that it was important to make sure teachers did not see training as a punishment
	• Needing more funding for staff who could provide reading intervention

GaDOE Resources Used to Support the Pilot

GaDOE Resources

- *Pilot supports:* Pilot's support structures were key to their implementation efforts. They specifically mentioned the value **of pilot implementation chats**, the two **state panel webinars** offered in 2023, and opportunities to **collaborate with their counterparts** in other pilot districts in general.

- *Dyslexia endorsement:* The **state's dyslexia endorsement** as an important source of knowledge and training not just for those who earned it, but also for the colleagues who then relied on their expertise.

- *On-demand tools and professional learning offerings:* GaDOE-created resources were key to supporting their implementation efforts. They named the **Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook**, **professional development offered by the GaDOE**, support from the **Statewide Dyslexia Coordinator**, and the **GO-MTSS/SST data management tool**.

Identified Needs for 2023-2024 and Beyond

Technical Assistance and Guidance

- Need for additional state guidance, including:
  - A list of state-approved screening tools
  - A list of state-recommended sources for professional learning
  - Guidance on and direct support for Tier I reading instruction
  - Assistance with identifying English learners who may have characteristics of dyslexia
  - Recommended intervention strategies and resources
- The state should work to align different aspects of screening and reading instruction—such as the GKIDS assessment and the new English Language Arts standards—with best practices in reading instruction and help districts align the work of different district divisions, such as MTSS and core reading instruction.

Dyslexia Screening Tools and Guidance

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Dyslexia Board Rule

(2) REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Universal Screening

1. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, LEAs shall, at a minimum, annually conduct a Universal Screening of all students in kindergarten through grade 3 for characteristics of Dyslexia and may screen students for Other Disorders.

(i) The following students should be exempted from the Universal Screening of all students in kindergarten through grade 3 for characteristics of Dyslexia and Other Disorders:

(I) A student who transfers from another school or system in Georgia who had a Universal Screening in the current school year; or

(II) A student from another state who enrolls for the first time in Georgia in kindergarten through grade 3 and presents documentation that he or she had the Universal Screening or a similar screening in the current school year.

(III) A student whose intellectual disability precludes the presence of dyslexia.

2. This Universal Screening must be conducted utilizing a Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool. The Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool(s) must include, at a minimum, the following components:

(i) Phonological and phonemic awareness;

(ii) Sound symbol recognition;

(iii) Alphabet knowledge;

(iv) Decoding skills;

(v) Rapid naming or reading fluency for students with some reading ability; and

(vi) Encoding skills.

Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tools

- The State Board of Education approved State School Superintendent Richard Woods' recommendation to adopt the proposed list of Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tools at the [May 2023 SBOE meeting](#).

- The [Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tools](#) are to be used by school districts for the identification and referral of students with characteristics of dyslexia.

Dyslexia Screener Funding

July 12, 2023 Resources and Updates

Contact: Jennifer Lindstrom

DYSLEXIA FUNDING GUIDANCE

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.6 (SB 48, 2019 Legislative Session) requires that, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, local school systems shall screen all students in kindergarten and in grades one through three for characteristics of dyslexia, and may screen students for other disorders. The Georgia General Assembly provided funds in the FY24 budget to assist with the costs of this screening requirement. Grant funds are allocated to each LEA based on the number of students in kindergarten and grades one through three in the system.

These funds were approved at the June 2023 SBOE Meeting and must be used to support the purchase and implementation of screeners on the State Board's approved list of Qualified Dyslexia Screeners. The annual window to submit additional screeners for consideration will open in January 2024.

The funds will be paid via ACH utilizing the Grants Drawdown (GAORS) system on July 27, 2023. The grant period is July 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024. Funding codes for the grant are provided below, and the grant completion report must be submitted by September 30, 2024. Grant accounting information will also be provided to your district finance teams. Board approved allocations can be found here.

- Fund – 100
- Program Code – 1613
- Revenue Source Code - 3800

If you have any questions about the Dyslexia Grant, please contact Statewide Dyslexia Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Lindstrom.

Dyslexia Screening Guidance

GaDOE Reading and Dyslexia Screening Process
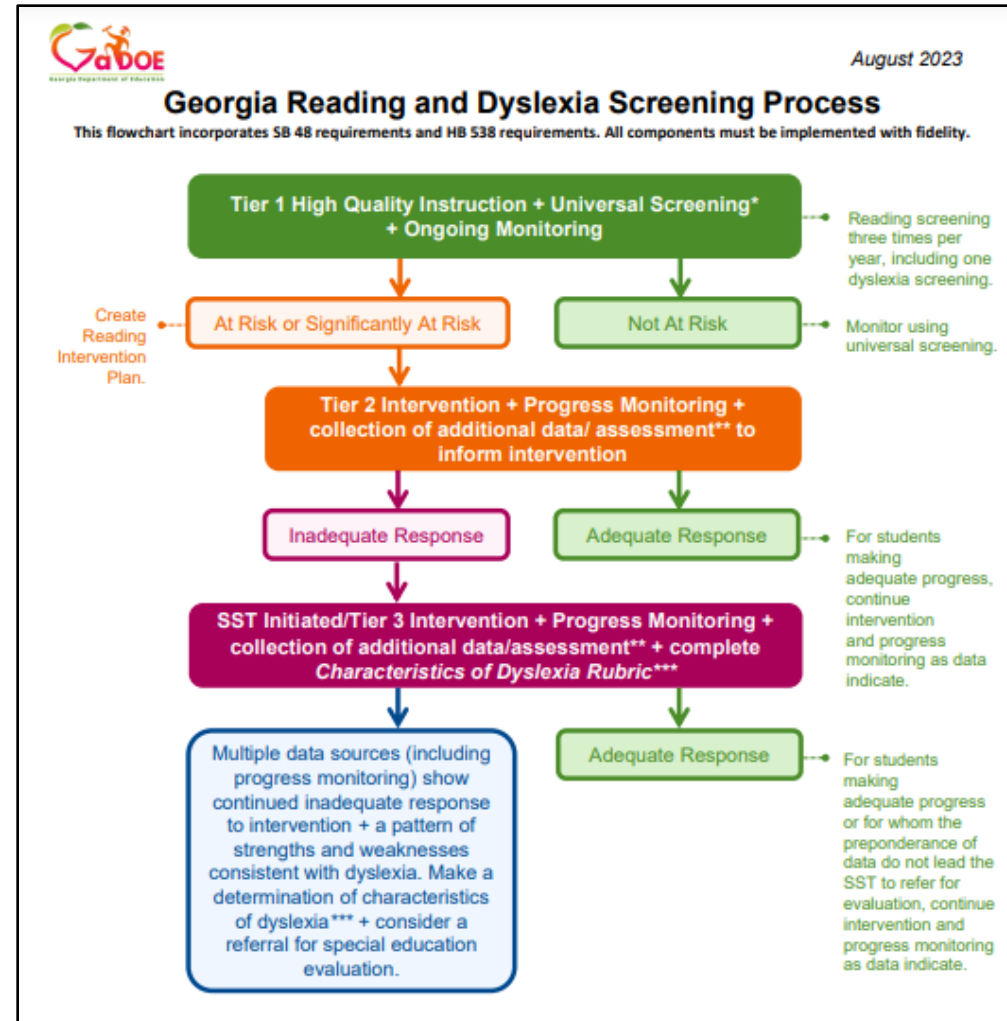
Dyslexia Screening Guidance

Characteristics of Dyslexia Rubric

Dyslexia Technical Assistance Chats

- In Fall 2023, GaDOE will be hosting monthly drop-in **Dyslexia Technical Assistance Chats.**

- Representatives from Dyslexia, MTSS, English Learners, Special Education, and ELA, as well as the Dyslexia Pilot Districts.

- Q & A pertaining to the alignment of state literacy policies and practices, including **core instruction**, **screening**, **intensive intervention**, **progress monitoring,** and **data-based decision making.**

- The sessions will not be recorded; registration is required.

Dyslexia Technical Assistance Chats

Additional Resources – Coming Soon!

- **Dyslexia Resource Guide for Georgia Families:**
  - This resource is in the final stages of development and review. Many thanks to the Dyslexia Parent Handbook Working Group for the resources and content they provided to allow this work to come to fruition. I am also working with Parent to Parent of Georgia to add dyslexia resources to their website.

- **Dyslexia and English Learners: Considerations and Best Practices Resource Guide**:
  - The completion of this resource will follow the publication of the *Dyslexia Resource Guide for Georgia Families*. We will be working closely with the Dyslexia English Learners Working Group members for feedback and recommendations on the final draft.

GaDOE Dyslexia Website

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent | **Georgia Department of Education** | *Educating Georgia's Future*

FAQs

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent | **Georgia Department of Education** | *Educating Georgia's Future*

Can schools use the term dyslexia?

- **YES.** Schools can use the term dyslexia when they identify that a student has characteristics of dyslexia.

- *NOTE*: Schools should not tell a family that a student "has dyslexia" as this implies a diagnosis. However, schools can say that they have identified *characteristics of dyslexia*.

Is SLD identified through a special education evaluation the same as a diagnosis of dyslexia?

- Although dyslexia is often referred to as a 'medical diagnosis,' the diagnosis of dyslexia is given by a licensed psychologist or other qualified professional.

- A primary care doctor or pediatrician does not diagnose dyslexia, but they can make a referral to a licensed psychologist or other qualified professional.

Is SLD identified through a special education evaluation the same as a diagnosis of dyslexia?

- A diagnosis of dyslexia is made based on the current diagnostic guidelines in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition (DSM-5). This diagnosis may be called a Specific Learning Disorder (SLD) - with impairment in reading.

Is SLD identified through a special education evaluation the same as a diagnosis of dyslexia?

- The label SLD is used both in schools and clinically; however, they don't mean the same thing.

- The *diagnostic* term is Specific Learning Disorder and the special education *category* is Specific Learning Disability.

Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia

- ***It is important to note that a child may not qualify for special education, but may still have characteristics of dyslexia.*** These students may qualify for additional supports and intervention through the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) process at school (Tier 2/3).

- Eligibility determination is based on severity of impairment and need for specially designed instruction.
    - In other words, the school must determine that the reading disability is affecting the student's performance to a significant degree and the student's needs cannot be met without special education (in accordance with IDEA, 2004).

- Most importantly, the instruction/intervention should be matched to student need, regardless of label.

Are the screeners included on the list of Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tools intended to be used for Universal Screening of all K-3 students, or are these tools the ones we will use as a "level two" screener and only for specific students after the Universal Screener is administered?

Per the Dyslexia Board Rule, LEAs shall, at a minimum, annually conduct a Universal Screening of all students in kindergarten through grade 3 for characteristics of Dyslexia and may screen students for Other Disorders. This Universal Screening must be conducted utilizing a Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool. The Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool(s) must include, at a minimum, the following components:

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Questions?

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