



Advantage Academy

**Dyslexia and Related Disorders
Policies and Procedures**

2022-2023

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Introduction

What is 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 imperception, 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).

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in phonological awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Identifying real words (word recognition) and pronouncing nonsense words (decoding) are common characteristics. Furthermore, these difficulties are unexpected given the child’s age and educational level, other cognitive abilities, intellectual functioning, or math skills, and they are not primarily the result of language differences. Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

Characteristics of Dyslexia:

- Difficulty reading words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Slow, inaccurate, or labored oral reading (lack of reading fluency)
- Difficulty with spelling
- Difficulty learning phonological awareness, including segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words
- Difficulty learning names of letters and their associated sounds
- Decreased phonological memory (holding information about sounds and words in memory)
- Difficulty naming familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet
- Difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension and written composition
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written composition

Secondary consequences may include difficulties in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. Students with

reading difficulties typically do not read the same amount as non-disabled readers; therefore, their vocabulary development, as well as their exposure to information learned by reading, may be impacted.

What is Dysgraphia?

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 sub word-level language skill. The impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling and/or composing, but individuals with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading (*Berninger, Richards, & Abbott, 2015*).

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 grapho-motor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms). Students with dysgraphia demonstrate difficulty with forming letters, spacing between letters and words, inconsistent pencil grip, slow writing or copying, difficulty with unedited written spelling, and low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression (*Berninger, 2015*). Multiple language processes are involved in handwriting. Handwriting draws on language by hand (letter production), language by ear (listening to letter names when writing dictated letters), language by mouth (saying letter names), and language by eye (viewing the letters to be copied or reviewing for accuracy the letters that are produced from memory) (*Berninger & Wolf, 2016*).

Characteristics of Dysgraphia

- 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
- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

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.

What is Dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a term used to describe a learning disability in math. Students identified with dyscalculia may be eligible to receive special education services for a specific learning disability in math calculation and/or math problem-solving skills. Dyscalculia is not one of the dyslexia related conditions identified in TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995). However, dyscalculia can co-occur with dyslexia or other learning disabilities.

Math difficulties include challenges with:

- Counting money
- Place value
- Telling time/elapsed time
- Basic computation (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- Multi-step problem solving
- Skip counting
- Rounding and Estimation
- Timed tests
- Mental math
- Fractions, decimals, and ratios
- Geometry

Overview

Advantage Academy serves students identified with dyslexia and related disorders in kindergarten through grade 12. In grades K-12 standard protocol dyslexia instruction, as determined by the ARD or Section 504 committee, is provided in a small group setting according to the Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2021.

Instruction is provided by dyslexia therapists who are trained in the characteristics and instruction of students with dyslexia and related disorders. Advantage Academy uses evidence-based standard protocol dyslexia instruction to accelerate learning of identified students who are served in the program. Students who are identified but no longer receive standard protocol dyslexia instruction are monitored for success, and appropriate intervention is provided, if the need arises.

Please refer to the 2021 Dyslexia Handbook for further information.

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/texas-dyslexia-handbook-2021.pdf>

Other helpful resources regarding the new requirements around dyslexia:

[Fact Sheet for Families – English](#)

[Fact Sheet for Families – Spanish](#)

[Dyslexia Handbook: Important Changes – English](#)

[Dyslexia Handbook: Important Changes - Spanish](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: Dyslexia and Related Disorders:](#)

Parent Education Program

Advantage Academy provides a parent education program for the parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. The program includes the following:

- 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)

Laws Regulating Dyslexia Instruction

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.

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. Additionally, the law requires a reading instrument from the commissioner's approved list be administered at the beginning of grade 7 to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency on the sixth-grade 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 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 based in reading, including ELs, regardless of their proficiency in English.

Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA):

The most recent reauthorization of this federal act is consistent with ESSA in emphasizing quality of instruction and 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 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, Advantage Academy implements reading programs using scientifically based reading research as well as evidence proven effective results.

Under the **Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA)**, Advantage Academy 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.

Texas Administrative Code §74.28. Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders.

The board of trustees of a school district must ensure that there are procedures for identifying a student with dyslexia or a related disorder and appropriate instructional student services are implemented in the district. These procedures will be monitored by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) with on-site visits conducted as appropriate.

- A. A school district's procedures must be implemented according to the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved strategies for screening, and techniques for treating dyslexia and related disorders. The strategies and techniques are described in "Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders," a set of flexible guidelines for local districts that may be modified by SBOE only with broad-based dialogue that includes input from educators and professionals in the field of reading and dyslexia and related disorders from across the state. Screening should only be done by

individuals/professionals who are trained to assess students for dyslexia and related disorders.

- B. A school district shall purchase a reading program or develop its own reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders, as long as the program is characterized by the descriptors found in “Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders.” Teachers who screen and treat these students must be trained in instructional strategies which utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components described in the “Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders” and in the professional development activities specified by each district and/or campus planning and decision-making committee.
- C. Before an identification or assessment procedure is used selectively with an individual student, the school district must notify the student’s parent or guardian or another person standing parental relation to the student.
- D. Parents/guardians of students eligible under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, §504, must be informed of all services and options available to the student under that federal statute.
- E. Each school must provide each identified student access at his or her campus 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.
- F. Because early intervention is critical, a program for early identification, intervention, and support for students with dyslexia and related disorders must be available in each district as outlined in the “Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorder.”
- G. Each school district shall provide a parent education program for parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program should include awareness of characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders; information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia; information on effective strategies for teaching dyslexic students; and awareness of information on modification, especially modifications allowed on standardized testing.

Source: The provisions of this §74.28 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 4311; amended to be effective September 1, 2001, 25 TexReg 7691; amended to be effective August 8, 2006. 31 TexReg 6212.

Advantage Academy Board Policies Regarding Dyslexia

Policy Group 6 – Special Education – Dyslexia

Sec. 1. Dyslexia and Related Disorders

The Board shall ensure that procedures for identifying and providing appropriate instructional services to students for dyslexia and related disorders are implemented by Advantage Academy. These procedures shall be implemented in accordance with the most recently updated version of the State Board of Education's *Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders (Dyslexia Handbook)*.

Sec. 2. Parental Notifications and Consent

Anytime a child is suspected to have dyslexia or a related disorder and may need dyslexia intervention services, the LEA must seek parental consent for a Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. The process of seeking informed parental consent under the IDEA must include proper prior written notice and be accompanied by the notice of procedural safeguards.

Advantage Academy shall provide to parents of children suspected to have dyslexia or a related disorder a copy of or link to the electronic version of the most recently updated version of the State Board of Education's *Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders (Dyslexia Handbook)*.

Parents and guardians of students with dyslexia or a related disorder must be informed of all services and options available to the student, including general education interventions under response to intervention and multi-tiered systems of support modules as required by Section 26.0081 of the Education Code.

Sec 3. Identification and Testing

A process for early identification, intervention, and support for students at risk for dyslexia and related disorders must be available, as outlined in the *Dyslexia Handbook*. The program must include a screening at the end of each school year for all kindergarten students and by January 31st for first grade students.

Advantage Academy may not use early intervention strategies, including multi-tiered systems of support, to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation to a child suspected of having a specific learning disability, including dyslexia or a related disorder.

Sec 4. Personnel Qualifications

Highly trained individuals must deliver dyslexia instruction. Teachers who provide dyslexia intervention for students are not required to hold a specific license or certification. However, these educators must at a minimum have additional documented dyslexia training aligned to 19 TAC §74.28(c) and must deliver the instruction with fidelity. A provider of dyslexia instruction does not have to be certified as a special educator when serving a student who also receives

special education and related services if that provider is the most appropriate person to offer dyslexia instruction.

Sec. 5. Treatment and Services

Advantage Academy shall provide each identified student access at his or her campus to instructional programs and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related services. Advantage Academy may, with the approval of each student's parents or guardians, offer additional services at a centralized location, so long as such centralized services do not preclude each student from receiving services at his or her campus.

a) Reading Program

Advantage Academy shall purchase a reading program or develop its own reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that is aligned with the descriptors found in the *Dyslexia Handbook*.

Teachers who screen and treat these students must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multi-sensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components described in the *Dyslexia Handbook*. The professional development activities specified by each school and/or campus planning committee shall include these instructional strategies.

b) Reassessment

Unless otherwise provided by law, a student determined to have dyslexia during testing or accommodated because of dyslexia may not be retested for dyslexia for the purpose of reassessing the student's need for accommodations until Advantage Academy reevaluates the information obtained from previous testing of the student.

Sec 6. Parent Education Program

Advantage Academy shall develop and provide a parent education program for parents and guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program should include:

- Awareness of characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders;
- Information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia;
- Information on effective strategies for teaching dyslexic students; and
- Awareness of information on modification, especially modifications allowed on standardized testing.

Education Code 38.003; 19 TAC 74.28.

Sec. 7. Reporting

Advantage Academy must report through the Public Education Information Management System to the Texas Education Agency the number of students enrolled who are identified as having dyslexia.

Screening for Dyslexia

Dyslexia screening is a tool for identifying children who are at risk for this learning disability, particularly in preschool, kindergarten, or first grade. This means that the screening does not “diagnose” dyslexia. Rather, it identifies “predictor variables” that raise red flags, so parents and teachers can intervene early and effectively.

—Richard Selznick, *Dyslexia Screening: Essential Concepts for Schools and Parents*, 2015

Advantage Academy administers early reading instruments to all students in kindergarten, first, and second grades to assess students’ reading development and comprehension. In accordance with Texas Education Code §38.003 and TAC §74.28, Advantage Academy will **screen kindergarten students for dyslexia at the end of the school year, and first grade students for dyslexia by January 31st.**

Figure 2.2. Criteria for English and Spanish Screening Instruments	
Kindergarten	First Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter Sounds Knowledge or Letter Naming Fluency • Phonological Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word Reading Accuracy or Fluency • Phonological Awareness

Additionally, Advantage Academy administers a **reading instrument from the commissioner’s approved list at the beginning of seventh grade to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency** on the reading assessment administered under TEC §39.023(a).

Advantage Academy utilizes the following universal reading screeners:

- Kindergarten: Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA)
 - This assessment includes evaluations of letter sounds, letter naming, and phonological awareness. It shows at-risk students and meets the state's requirements.
- Grade 1 & 2: mCLASS®
 - This assessment includes a built-in dyslexia screener with a risk indicator that clearly shows at-risk students and meets the state's requirements.
- Grade 7: Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)
 - This assessment is used for students who did not demonstrate proficiency on the 6th Grade Reading assessment: STAAR.

Advantage Academy ensures that appropriately trained and qualified individuals administer and interpret the results of the selected screening instruments. This includes a classroom teacher who holds a valid certification, a dyslexia therapist, or a special education teacher. An educational aide or teacher assistant is not eligible to administer or interpret the dyslexia screening

instrument. It is best practice that the student's current classroom teacher administers the screening instrument whenever possible.

Screening data is always shared with parents. Once the screener has been completed, Advantage Academy campuses will send the appropriate reports home to parents/guardians. If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, a meeting is called to discuss and interpret the results of the screening tool.

Screener Interpretation

The purpose of screening is to help identify, as early as possible, the students at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties so that targeted intervention can be provided. Screening alone will not improve outcomes for students; it must lead to effective instruction for it to be useful. Therefore, once the screening has been administered, the next steps are to analyze results, identify the level of risk for each student, and make informed decisions.

1. Data-Driven Meeting of Knowledgeable Persons: Student Success Team (SST)

A qualified team is required to review all data to make an informed decision about whether a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia. The team must consist of individuals who:

- Have knowledge of the student,
- Are appropriately trained in administration of the screening tool,
- Are trained to interpret quantitative and qualitative results from the screening process, and
- Recognize characteristics of dyslexia.

These individuals include, but are not limited to, the classroom teacher, campus administrator, dyslexia therapist, an LPAC representative (as appropriate), and/or instructional coach. This team may also include the parents and/or a diagnostician familiar with testing and interpreting evaluation results.

At Advantage Academy, this group of knowledgeable persons is called the Student Success Team (SST). Anytime a teacher, parent, or administrator has an academic, behavioral, or social/emotional concern about a student who is not served under IDEA or Section 504, a SST meeting is called. There is initial referral paperwork completed that includes informal as well as formal assessment and observation data. The SST includes the parent/guardian and makes decisions in the best interest of the student.

The following recommendations can be made for the student:

- Start an Intervention Plan
- Continue with an Intervention Plan
- Special Education Evaluation Referral
- Monitor Student Progress

If the process of identification is initiated under IDEA, meaning the student is already served under Section 504 or the IDEA (Special Education), the team must also include the parent and all IDEA procedures must be followed. This meeting is then called an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting or a Section 504 meeting. The team must use the screening data to make a plan-of-action for each student at-risk for dyslexia. The meeting and the resulting plan must be documented, as required by IDEA.

2. 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 (Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support process). The student will continue to receive grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction and any other appropriate tiered interventions. However, the student is not referred for an evaluation at this time.

3. When the Data Leads to a Suspicion of a Disability, Including Dyslexia or a Related Disorder

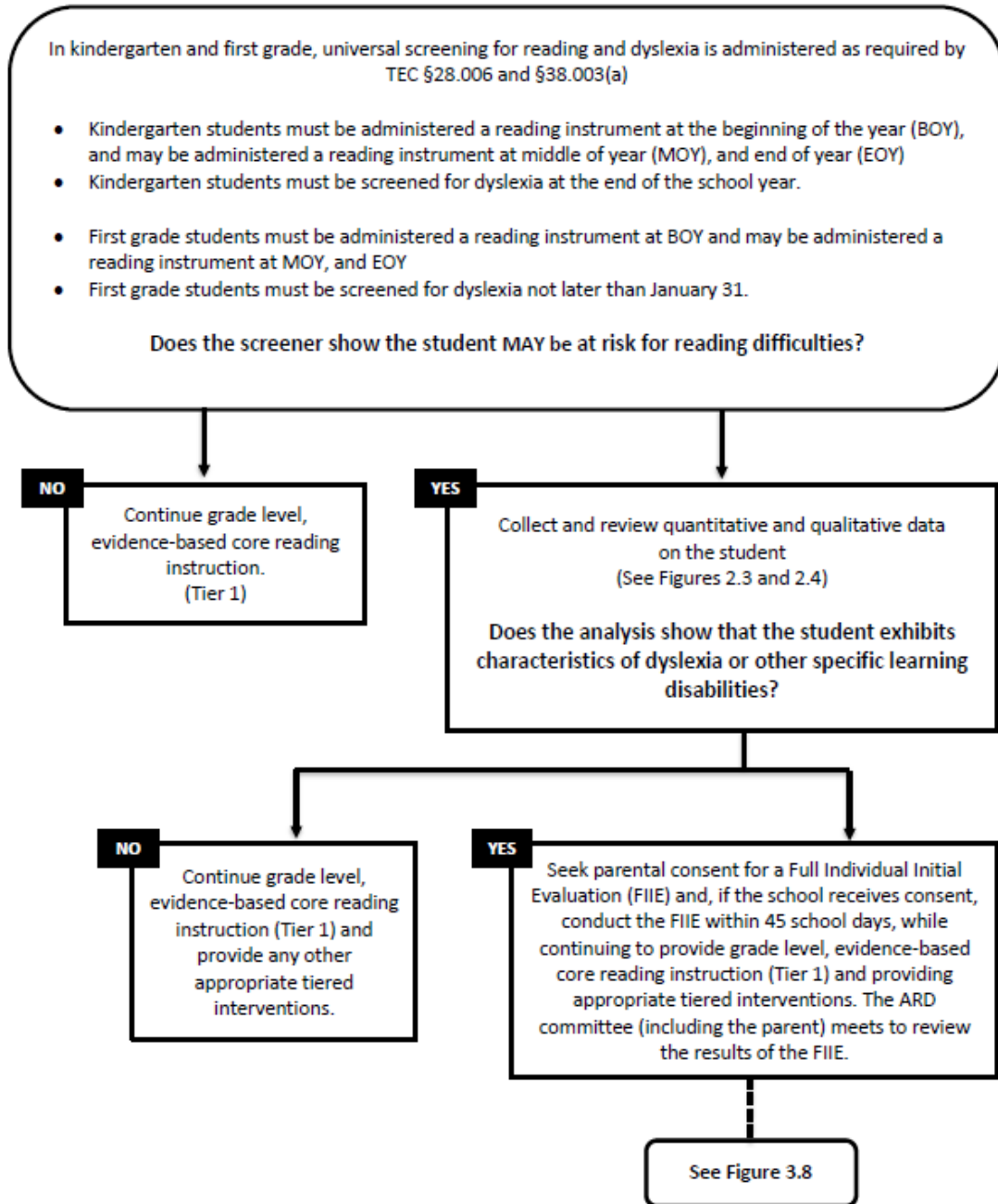
If the team suspects that the student has dyslexia, a related disorder, or another disability included within the IDEA, the team will refer the student for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE). In most cases, an FIIE under the IDEA must be completed within 45-school days from the time a district receives parental consent. The student will continue to receive grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction and any other appropriate tiered interventions while the school conducts the FIIE.

At any point in the data review process a referral for a FIIE under the IDEA may be initiated. Parents also have the right to request a FIIE at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia evaluation has been made, Advantage Academy 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, Advantage Academy can refuse the request to evaluate, and if so, parents are given prior written notice of the refusal to evaluate, including: an explanation of why the school chooses not to conduct an FIIE, 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 denial for 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.

The *Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk* (figure 2.5) is a flowchart that follows, and it provides information regarding the decisions campuses will make for each student as the school reviews screening results.

Figure 2.5
Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk



Identification of Dyslexia and Related Disorders

Among the actions that the team of knowledgeable persons can take when discussing a student about whom there are academic concerns, is a recommendation that the student be assessed for dyslexia. At any point (from kindergarten through grade 12) if a student demonstrates characteristics of dyslexia and a review of data reflects a disability is suspected, Advantage Academy will refer the student for a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE).

Advantage Academy will invite parents and other knowledgeable persons to a meeting to ensure fully informed parent participation and to seek consent to conduct a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE) through Special Education. When formal evaluation is recommended, Advantage Academy will complete the evaluation process as outlined in the IDEA. Procedural Safeguards under IDEA are followed; parents are informed of the procedural protections and rights afforded to them and their child under IDEA. For more information on Procedural Safeguards, see TEA's Parent Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process (Parent's Guide) and the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If consent is declined, the District will provide a Prior Written Notice of proposal to conduct an evaluation through Special Education, and offer to complete the evaluation consistent with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Regardless of which type of dyslexia evaluation is conducted, parents must provide informed consent in writing before a Full Initial and Individual Evaluation (FIIE) for dyslexia or related disorders can begin. Once consent is obtained, a Nationally Certified Educational Diagnostician (NCED) will complete testing that follows the guidelines from the 2021 Texas Dyslexia Handbook, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), and, if appropriate, Section 504 guidelines.

Formal Evaluation

Information is gathered by the Nationally Certified Educational Diagnostician (NCED) in order for him/her to write a comprehensive, detailed, and objective report of student performance and potential. Information collected includes the following:

- Data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction (tier 1).
- Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring).
- Data reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction.
- Family history, grade history, parent and teacher input, state assessment scores, and informal assessment data are other information collected.
- Data that support that the difficulties are not primarily the result of sociocultural factors which include language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background.

The Nationally Certified Educational Diagnostician (NCED) will also administer formal assessments to assist in building a clear picture of the student's strengths, areas for growth, and

overall habits/trends when it comes to learning. 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 assessed through the use of these instruments are related to the student's educational needs. Depending upon the student's age and stage of reading development, the following are areas related to reading that are 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/Written composition
- Cognitive 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 sequences, 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, to 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

Formal Evaluation: English Language Learners

This refers to students served in Advantage Academy's ESL program 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 aligned 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 through the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) documentation, which includes the following:

- Home Language Survey,
- Assessment related to identification for Limited English Proficiency, such as oral language proficiency tests and norm-referenced tests,
- Texas English Language Proficiency and Assessment System (TELPAS) information,
- Type of language programming provided and language of instruction,
- Linguistic environment and second-language acquisition development, and
- Previous schooling in and outside of the United States.

Test results of English Language Learners (ELL) are 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.

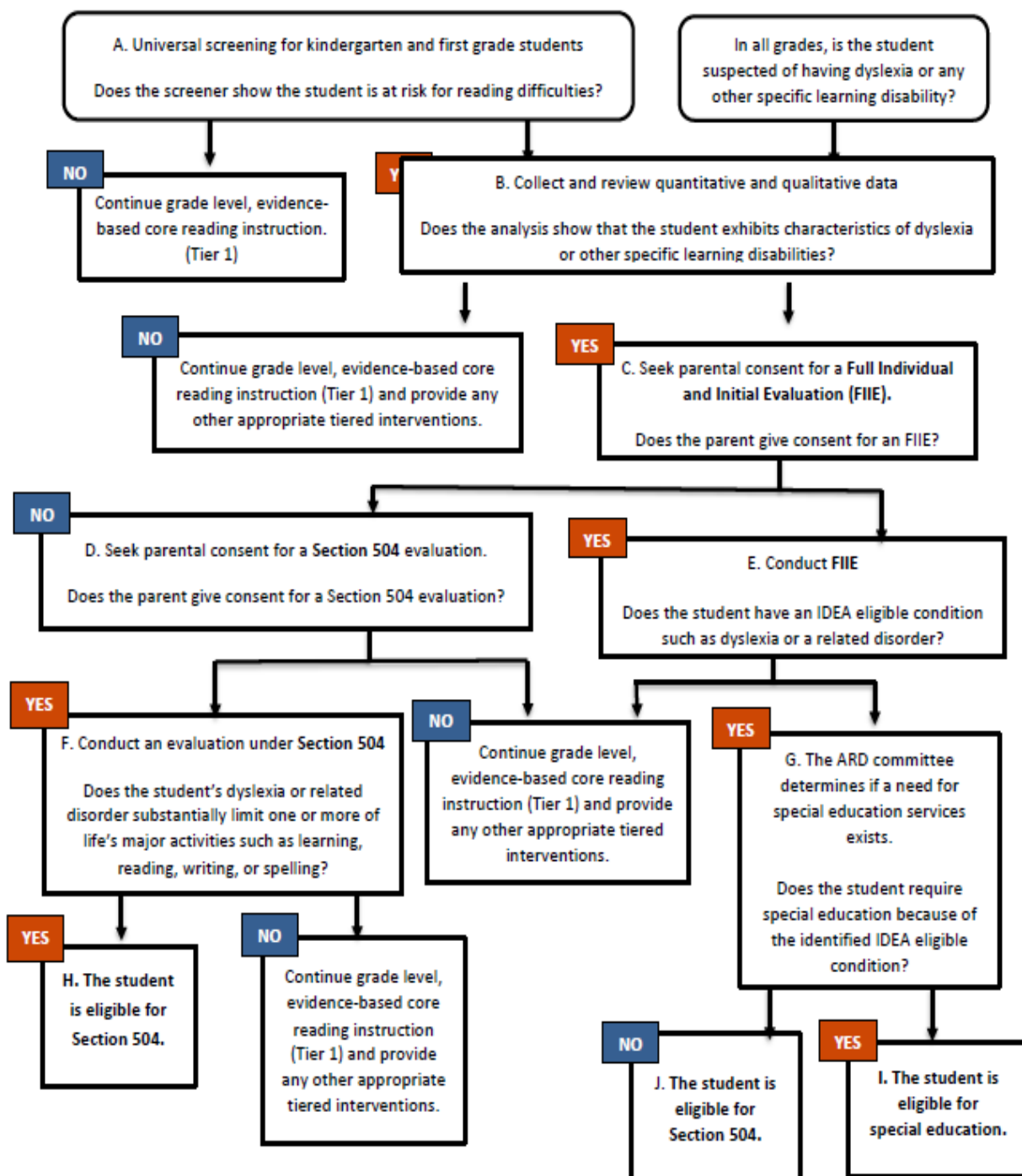
Review & Determination

After the formal evaluation is completed, the Nationally Certified Educational Diagnostician (NCED) compiles all of the data and observations into a report that is then considered by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal committee (ARDC) or, if appropriate, by the 504 Committee. For English Learners (ELs), a LPAC representative must be included on the ARD committee. The appropriate committee collaboratively determines if the student has dyslexia, decides appropriate placement for the student, and agrees on services to be provided.

To support proper identification, evaluation, and placement of students with dyslexia, Advantage Academy follows the Dyslexia Identification Flow Chart (figure 3.8) from the 2021 Dyslexia Handbook.

Figure 3.8

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



*See next page for additional detail

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

<p>A. Universal Screening for reading and dyslexia is administered to all students in kindergarten and first grade as required by TEC §28.006 and §38.003(a).</p>	
<p>B. If a student is at risk for reading difficulties or the student is suspected of having dyslexia or any other specific learning disability, collect and review quantitative and qualitative data on the student. See Figures 2.3 and 2.4 in Dyslexia Handbook for more information.</p>	
<p>C. If the analysis shows that the student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or other specific learning disabilities, seek parental consent for a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIIE), while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.</p>	
<p>D. For students suspected of having dyslexia, if the parent does not give consent for an FIIIE, seek parental consent for a Section 504 evaluation, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.</p>	<p>E. If the parent gives consent for an FIIIE, conduct the FIIIE within 45 school days (subject to limited exceptions) of the date of receipt of parent consent, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions. The ARD committee (including the parent) must meet to review the results of the FIIIE.</p>
<p>F. If the parent gives consent for a Section 504 evaluation, conduct an evaluation under Section 504 while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.</p>	<p>G. If a student has an IDEA eligible condition such as dyslexia or a related disorder, the ARD committee determines if a need for special education services exists.</p>
<p>H. If the student's dyslexia or related disorder substantially limits one or more of life's major activities such as learning, reading, writing, or spelling, the student is eligible for Section 504, the 504 committee (parent participation is recommended) develops a Section 504 plan for the student to provide services including standard protocol dyslexia instruction, accommodations, and/or related aids specific to the student's disability.</p>	<p>I. If the student requires special education because of the identified IDEA eligible condition, the student is eligible for special education. The ARD committee develops the IEP for the student to receive specially designed instruction which can include any appropriate special education and related services, and general education programs and services, including standard protocol dyslexia instruction. While an IEP is individualized to the student, the IEP should address critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction such as phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. The determination of eligibility and the development of an IEP, if the student is eligible, must be done within 30 days (subject to limited exceptions) from the date that the written FIIIE evaluation report is completed. Obtain parental consent for special education services.</p>
	<p>J. If the parent declines, the LEA must still provide all general education services including any protections available under Section 504.</p>

Services and Monitoring

Whether a student is identified with dyslexia and/or a related disorder and placed into the district dyslexia program, or a student is not identified and is referred to the Student Support Team (SST) for support, the campus develops a plan to support the needs of the student through either the tiered intervention process or through program placement.

Services

Services may be provided as follows:

- If a student is not identified with dyslexia/related disorders, the student may be referred to the campus SST. The team will identify appropriate interventions following Advantage Academy's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) procedures. The team will also monitor student progress over time to ensure success.
- If a student is determined to have dyslexia/related disorders and is served under Section 504 or Special Education, the 504 or ARD Committee will develop an individualized plan according to Advantage Academy procedures. This plan will include any instructional accommodations and/or modifications necessary for success in the classroom. The committee must also consider and document whether the student is eligible for and requires accommodations related to state assessments. The 504 Committee should also consider whether, at any time, a referral for Special Education evaluation is appropriate.
- Every student, regardless of his/her designation, if identified as having dyslexia and in need of intervention, is offered dyslexia therapy. Dyslexia therapy is offered four (4) times per week, 45 minutes each session using approved curriculum that is multisensory, systematic, cumulative, and explicit, as outlined in the Instruction section.

Progress Monitoring

Teachers and administrators at Advantage Academy must be mindful that screening for at risk is an ongoing process. Decisions should be reevaluated and altered as more information is obtained and instruction continues. While some kindergarten and first grade students may not initially appear to be at risk for dyslexia based on screening results, they may actually still be at risk. Students who have learned to compensate for lack of reading ability and twice-exceptional students are two groups who may not initially appear to be at risk for dyslexia. Advantage Academy will continue to monitor students for common risk factors of dyslexia in second grade and beyond. A referral for a dyslexia evaluation can be considered at any time; in kindergarten through high school.

Students in the dyslexia program at Advantage Academy receive a dyslexia progress report with each report card at the nine week intervals of the school year. Their progress is also reviewed annually by either the campus 504 or ARD committee. Consideration of all available data shall be given when determining a student's progress.

Instruction for Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders

Advantage Academy has purchased a reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that is aligned with the descriptors found in the *Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2021* [19 TAC §74.28(©)]. The descriptors include the components of phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency.

Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia are made by a committee (Section 504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia. As is the case with any instructional program, differentiation that does not compromise the fidelity of a program may be necessary to address different learning styles and ability levels and to promote progress among students receiving dyslexia instruction.

Advantage Academy ensures that:

- Students receiving support for dyslexia and related disorders are served using curriculum that meets all specifications indicated by the state. Reading by Design and Take Flight are the program curriculum implemented at Advantage Academy.
- Students receive instruction in a pull-out arrangement and are grouped with others working at a similar level. This allows the teachers to focus on high-quality instruction that meets the needs of learners and allows the students to progress at an appropriate pace.
- Both the teacher of dyslexia and the regular classroom teacher provide multiple opportunities to support intervention and to strengthen these skills; therefore, responsibility for teaching reading and writing is shared by classroom teachers, interventionists, and teachers of dyslexia programs.

Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction

At Advantage Academy, standard protocol dyslexia instruction (SPDI) is offered kindergarten through grade 12. The components of instruction include additional focused intervention as appropriate for the reading needs of the student with dyslexia.

Standard protocol dyslexia instruction (SPDI) must be:

- Evidence-based and effective for students with dyslexia,
- Taught by an appropriately trained instructor, and
- Implemented with fidelity.

Standard protocol dyslexia instruction includes spelling, phonics, and decoding, phonological awareness, listening and verbal expression, reading comprehension, writing and study skills.

Instructional approaches include simultaneous, multisensory, systematic and cumulative, explicit, diagnostic teaching to automaticity, synthetic and analytic instruction (19 TAC §74.28).

Specially Designed Instruction

Specially designed instruction (SDI) 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 SPDI under the IDEA. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction could be part of the specially designed instruction and services provided to meet the student's needs.

For students with dyslexia who have been determined eligible for and who are receiving special education services, specially designed instruction must also address the critical, evidence-based components described in this chapter.

Instructional approaches include simultaneous, multisensory, systematic and cumulative, explicit, diagnostic teaching to automaticity, synthetic and analytic instruction (19 TAC §74.28).

Instructional Accommodations for Students with Dyslexia/Related Disorders

Decisions about which accommodations to use are very individualized and are made for each student by the ARD or Section 504 committee, as appropriate. Students, after learning what accommodations are available, play a significant role in choosing and using accommodations based on their individual areas of need. The more input students have in their own accommodation choices, the more likely it is that they will use and benefit from the accommodations.

When making decisions about accommodations, instruction is always the foremost priority. Not all accommodations used in the classroom are allowed during a state assessment. However, an educator's ability to meet the individual needs of a student with dyslexia or a related disorder or provide support for the use of an accommodation should not be limited by whether an accommodation is allowable on a state assessment. Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather the impact of dyslexia or the related disorder on the individual student determines the accommodation. Accommodations provide students with dyslexia or related disorders effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom.

When considering accommodations for students with dyslexia or related disorders, consider the following:

- Rate of producing work,
- Volume of the work to be produced,
- Complexity of the tasks,
- Tools used to produce the written product,
- Format of the product (Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, 2018, p. 5).

Examples of appropriate accommodations for students with dyslexia or related disorders:

Textbooks and Books

- Assign peer reading buddies
- Do not require student to read aloud
- Provide access to text to speech and have student follow the text while listening
- Provide summaries of chapters
- Review vocabulary prior to reading
- Allow/encourage highlighting of important text

Curriculum/Instruction

- Provide a hard copy of complete or skeletal lecture notes
- Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of critical concepts
- Allow extended time for tests, assignments, and quizzes
- Oral administration or text to speech for tests, assignments & quizzes
- Utilize assistive technology as appropriate
- Accompany oral directions with visual clues
- Ask student to repeat, check for understanding during independent practice

- Allow opportunity for re-teaching difficult concepts
- Break complex directions into 1-3 small steps—arrange in a vertical list format
- Provide preview questions, study guides or outlines
- Provide hard copy of test materials Writing
- Allow extended time for written tasks, including note taking & copying
- Reduce the length of written assignments
- Allow student to audio record important information or assignments
- Allow student to use manuscript or cursive, whichever is most legible and efficient
- Allow assistive technology (e.g., speech to text) for written work
- Allow typed responses
- Grade for content not spelling or handwriting
- Provide a hard copy of complete or skeletal lecture notes
- Shorten spelling tests or multiple choice spelling test format
- Provide graphic organizers
- Offer alternative to written projects, such as oral report, or visual media project

Math

- Allow student to use a 4 function calculator
- Break problems into smaller steps and at a slower pace
- Read story problems aloud
- Take time to reteach difficult concepts
- Use graph paper or lined paper sideways, to correctly line up math problems
- Use visuals, manipulatives, and concrete examples

Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria

Dismissal from Advantage Academy's Dyslexia Program is determined by §504 or ARD committee. These committees follow monitoring/re-evaluation requirements outlined in federal law. No one factor is sufficient to warrant exiting a student from direct dyslexia services. The committee considers the following factors when recommending exiting or reduction of dyslexia therapy:

- Exiting a student is considered upon completion of Advantage Academy's Dyslexia Program. (The entire curriculum has been delivered).
- Progress throughout dyslexia intervention is measured through program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals. The 504 or ARD committee believe that the nine week progress reports demonstrate mastery.
- 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.

Additional criteria considered for exit may include, but is not limited to: grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessments, benchmarks and unit assessments, reading progress monitoring data, teacher reports, and parent input.

Monitoring

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.

Students that have completed Advantage Academy's 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

Exiting a student from standard protocol dyslexia intervention (SPDI) is also considered when a student demonstrates lack of progress and is not benefitting from the district's SPDI program. This lack of progress will be documented in the student's §504 or ARD minutes and the §504 or ARD committee will determine the best plan to continue to support the student's reading needs. Data considered may include, but is not limited to: mastery checks, grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessments, benchmarks and unit assessments, reading progress monitoring data, teacher reports, and parent input.

Advantage Academy's instructional coaches will work collaboratively with classroom teachers to support application of literacy skills to students' classwork and assessments. After exiting the dyslexia program, students may continue to receive accommodations, as determined by the §504 or ARD committee.

If progress monitoring indicates a concern, the §504 or ARD committee will determine appropriate student support.

Additional Resources

[Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2021, TEA](#)

- <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/texas-dyslexia-handbook-2021.pdf>

[Fact Sheet for Families – English](#)

[Fact Sheet for Families – Spanish](#)

[Dyslexia Handbook: Important Changes – English](#)

[Dyslexia Handbook: Important Changes - Spanish](#)

Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) <http://www.altaread.org>

Council of Educators of Students with Disabilities (CESD) <http://www.504IDEA.org>

Education Service Center Dyslexia Contacts www.tea.state.tx.us/ESC/index.html

International Dyslexia Association (IDA) <http://www.interdys.org>

International Reading Association (IRA) <http://www.reading.org>

Learning Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov>

Texas Center for Learning Disabilities <http://www.texasldcenter.org>

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

[TEA Dyslexia Resources](#)

- <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/dyslexia-and-related-disorders>

[Frequently Asked Questions: Dyslexia and Related Disorders:](#)

- <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/dyslexia-faq-jan-2021-march.pdf>

The College Board <http://www.collegeboard.com>

iPad Apps for Learners with Dyslexia/ Reading and Writing Difficulties

<https://4.files.edl.io/b6cb/08/16/21/121946-5a15af04-3793-4b1d-8498-18598058f5f3.pdf>