



Commerce ISD
Dyslexia Operating
Guidelines

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DYSLEXIA SERVICES

Procedures:

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

Definitions and Characteristics

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

"Dyslexia" is a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.

"Related disorders" include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The International Dyslexia Association defines "dyslexia" in the following way:

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 Association Board of Directors, November 12, 2002).

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

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience difficulties in:

- Reading words in isolation,
- Accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Oral Reading
- Spelling

(Individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all of these characteristics.)

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

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

Evidence-Based Core Reading Instruction (Tier 1)

To comply with House Bill 3, based by the 86th Legislature, the District must provide a phonics curriculum that uses systematic, direct instruction in kindergarten through third grade to ensure all students obtain necessary early literacy skills. The District must ensure that all kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers complete a teacher literacy achievement academy to increase teacher knowledge and implementation of the science of teaching reading. Additionally, the District must prioritize placement of highly effective teachers in kindergarten through second grade and integrate reading instruments to diagnose reading development and comprehension to support each student in prekindergarten through third grade.

State Requirements

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

A related state law, Texas Education Code §28.006, requires each district to administer to students in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade a reading instrument to diagnose student reading development and comprehension.

Commerce ISD Dyslexia Screeners/Reading Instruments

Commerce ISD administers the following screeners/assessments: MAP

Kindergarten

Beginning, Middle, End of Year- MAP

1st Grade

Beginning, Middle, End of Year-MAP

2nd Grade

Beginning, Middle, End of Year- MAP

7th Grade

Beginning, Middle, End of Year- MAP

Students may also be assessed at other times throughout the year, as deemed appropriate.

Screening for students in grades 3-12 may include, but is not limited to: MAP, Fluency, performance on state mandated test(s), a student's grades/performance in reading, writing and spelling, and teachers' observations of the characteristics of dyslexia. The information will be utilized when deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia.

Parents/Guardians of each student in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade are notified if the student is determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties based on the results of the screeners and reading instruments. In accordance with TEC §28.006(g), an accelerated reading instruction program is provided to these students.

Because early intervention is critical, a process for early identification, intervention, and support for students at risk for dyslexia and related disorders must be available in each district as outlined in the "Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders". However, the District may not use early intervention strategies, such as multi-tiered systems of support, to delay or deny the special education evaluation of a student suspected of having a specific learning disability, including dyslexia or a related disorder.

*The District is required to consider prior screenings and testing before rescreening or retesting a student determined to have dyslexia during a prior screening or test.

Dyslexia Codes

The classroom teacher (or other certified teacher) conducting screenings will report the results of screeners/assessments to the campus administrator or designee for PEIMS coding. This indicates whether a student has been screened and whether or not the student is at-risk for dyslexia or related disorders. The principal or designee will enter the Dyslexia Risk Code as follows:

01. Screened and determined to not be at-risk for dyslexia or related disorder
02. Screened and determined to be at-risk for dyslexia or related disorder
03. Not Screened for dyslexia or related disorders

If a student is identified as having dyslexia or a related disorder, the Dyslexia Services Code, as defined by TEC 42.006, will be entered as follows:

00. Student is identified with dyslexia or a related disorder but does not receive services.
01. Student receives services for dyslexia or a related disorder with an individualized education program developed for the student under Section 29.005; or a plan developed for the student under Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
02. Student receives instruction that meets applicable dyslexia program criteria established by the State Board of Education; and is provided by a person with specific training in providing that instruction.
03. The student is permitted, on the basis of having dyslexia or a related disorder, to use modifications in the classroom or accommodations in the administration of assessment instruments under Section 39.023

Students identified with dyslexia or a related disorder may be coded with multiple services codes, as indicated on the PEIMS Coding Overview.

Dyslexia Screening

Screening is defined as a universal measure administered to all students by qualified personnel to determine which students are at risk for dyslexia or reading difficulties and/or a related disorder. Screening is not a formal evaluation. Screening for all kindergarten students should take place in the latter half of the school year. Considerations for scheduling the kindergarten screener may include the following factors:

1. Has adequate time for instruction been provided during the school year?
2. Has adequate time been provided to compile data prior to the end of the school year?
3. How will the timing of the screener fit with the timing of other required assessments?
4. Has sufficient time been provided to inform parents in writing of the results of the reading instrument and whether the student is at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties?
5. Has adequate time been provided for educators to offer appropriate interventions to the student?
6. Has sufficient time been provided for decision making regarding next steps in the screening process?

Screenings for all first-grade students should take place no later than the middle of the school year and must conclude by January 31 of each year.

Administration of Screening Instruments/Training

All campus personnel conducting and interpreting screenings must receive training, designed specifically for the selected instrument, in the following areas:

- Characteristics of dyslexia, including challenges with reading words in isolation, decoding, reading orally, and spelling.
- Interpretation of screening results and at-risk indicators and decisions regarding placement/services.

Campus administration will verify all campus personnel conducting and interpreting screenings have undergone the required training and are properly certified to fill this role. Commerce ISD ensures that appropriately trained and qualified individuals administer and interpret the results of the selected screening instrument. (Please note that an educational aide is not eligible to administer or interpret the dyslexia screening instrument.) Individuals who administer and interpret the screening instrument must, at minimum, be certified/licensed in dyslexia **or** be a classroom teacher who holds a valid certification for kindergarten and first grade. Anyone that screens and treats students with dyslexia and related disorders must be trained in instructional strategies that use individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods, as well as a variety of writing and spelling components.

Kindergarten/Grade 1 Universal Screening: Interpretation

After the screening has been administered, the next steps are to analyze results, identify level of risk for each student, and make informed decisions. Depending on the results, the student may be referred for evaluation, begin targeted intervention, and/or continue with core instruction.

In general, students scoring below the publisher-determined cut point are considered “at risk” for dyslexia, while those who score above the cut point are considered “not at risk” for dyslexia. If a student is at risk for reading difficulties, campus personnel will provide targeted intervention provided by the appropriate staff as determined by the district.

Based on the universal screener for reading and dyslexia, if a student is at low risk for reading difficulties, the campus will continue evidence-based core reading instruction and continue to monitor the student for reading difficulties in the future.

Ongoing Monitoring

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

Procedures for the Evaluation and Identification of Students with Dyslexia

The determination to refer a student for an evaluation must always be made on a case-by-case basis and must be driven by data-based decisions. The basic framework is outlined below.

Data-Driven Meeting of Knowledgeable Persons

A team with knowledge of the student, instructional practices, and instructional options meets to discuss data collected, including data obtained during kindergarten and/or first grade screening, and the implications of that data. These individuals may include, but are not limited to the classroom teacher, administrator, dyslexia specialist, and/or interventionist. This team may also include the parents and/or a diagnostician. The team of knowledgeable persons is not the ARD committee

When the Data Does Not Lead to a Suspicion of Dyslexia or a Related Disorder

If the team determines that the data does not give the members reason to suspect that a student has dyslexia, a related disorder, or other disability, the team may decide to provide the student with additional support in the classroom or through the RTI/MTSS process. The student should continue to receive grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction, (Tier 1) and any other appropriate tiered interventions. However, the student is not referred for an evaluation at this time.

When the Data Leads to a Suspicion of Dyslexia or a Related Disorder

If the team suspects that the student has dyslexia, a related disorder, or other disability included within the IDEA, the team must refer the student for full individual initial evaluation (FIIE) under IDEA. If the parent gives consent, the school will conduct the FIIE within 45 school days of the date of receipt of parent consent, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier 1) and any other appropriate tiered interventions while the school conducts the FIIE.

Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.

Once a parent request has been made for dyslexia evaluation, the school district is obligated to review the student's data history to determine whether there is reason to suspect the student has a disability.

Before a FIIE is conducted to determine whether a student who is suspected of having dyslexia or a related disorder has a disability under the IDEA, the district must comply with the special education procedures related to Prior Written Notice and Referral for Possible Special Education Services, and provide the parent with all information indicated above, a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards, an opportunity to give written consent for an initial FIE.

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.

Regardless of the process in place for screening and data review, whenever accumulated data indicates that a student continues to struggle with one or more of the components of reading, despite the provision of adequate instruction and intervention, the student must be referred for a full individual and initial evaluation under the IDEA.

If a decision is made to evaluate a student for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, consent will be obtained from the parent or guardian via IDEA procedures. Commerce ISD uses previously collected, as well as current information, to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance.

Data Gathering

When evaluating a student for dyslexia, the collection of various data will provide information regarding factors that may be contributing to the student's struggles with reading and spelling. The academic history of each student will provide the school with the cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dyslexia and/or dysgraphia is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading. This information should include data that demonstrates that the student was provided appropriate instruction and include data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. This cumulative data also includes information from parents/guardians.

Sources and examples of cumulative data include, but are not limited to:

- Vision and hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations or interventions provided
- Academic progress reports and/or report cards
- Gifted/talented assessments
- Parent conference notes
- Samples of classwork
- K-2 and 7th grade reading instrument
- K-1 mCLASS screener
- State assessments results (if applicable)
- Observations of instruction provided to the student
- Full Individual and Initial Evaluations (if applicable)
- Outside evaluations (if applicable)
- Speech and language assessments (if applicable)
- Attendance records
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction
- Screening
- Parent Survey

Language Proficiency

Additional data sources for English Learners may include:

- Home Language Survey
- Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency
- Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) information ●
Instructional interventions provided to address language needs
- Information regarding previous schooling inside and/or outside the US ●
Type of language program model provided and language of instruction

Formal Evaluation

After data gathering, the next step in the process is formal evaluation. This is not a screening, rather, it is an individualized evaluation used to gather evaluation data. Formal evaluation includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. As part of the evaluation when dyslexia is suspected, the multidisciplinary evaluation team should include members who have specific knowledge regarding the reading process, dyslexia and related disorder, and dyslexia instruction.

When formal evaluation is recommended, the school will complete the evaluation process as outlined in the IDEA. Procedural safeguards under IDEA must be followed.

Domains to Assess Specific to Dyslexia

- Academic skills
 - Letter knowledge
 - Reading words in isolation
 - Decoding unfamiliar words accurately
 - Reading fluency (both rate, accuracy, and prosody)
 - Reading comprehension
 - Spelling
- Cognitive Processes
 - Phonological/Phonemic Awareness
 - Rapid Naming

- Possible Additional Areas
 - Listening comprehension
 - Vocabulary
 - Verbal Expression
 - Written expression
 - Handwriting
 - Orthographic processing (memory for letter or symbol sequences)
 - Phonological memory
 - Verbal working memory
 - Processing Speed
 - Mathematical calculation/reasoning

Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluations

The ARD committee must interpret test results in light of the student's educational history, linguistic background, environmental or socioeconomic factors.

A determination must be made regarding whether a student's difficulties in the areas of reading and spelling reflect a 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 (rate and/or accuracy and/or prosody)
- Spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia)

When determining phonological awareness deficits, evaluation personnel should examine subtest scores, including discreet phonological awareness skills, instead of limiting interpretation to composite scores, since a deficit in even one skill will limit reading progress.

If the ARD committee determines the student exhibits weakness in reading and spelling, the committee will then examine the student's data to determine whether these difficulties are unexpected in relation to the student's other abilities, sociocultural factors, language difference, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate and effective instruction. **Therefore, it is not one single indicator but a preponderance of data (both formal and informal) that provide the committee with evidence for whether the student's difficulties are unexpected.**

Dyslexia Identification

If the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, the ARD committee must then determine if the student has dyslexia. The following questions must be considered when making a determination regarding dyslexia:

- Does the data show the following characteristics of dyslexia?
 - Difficulty with accurate and/or fluent reading
 - Poor spelling skills
 - Poor decoding ability
- Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in the phonological component of language?
- Are these difficulties unexpected for the student's age in relation to the student's other abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction?

After the initial evaluation, if it is determined that the student has an IDEA eligible condition such as dyslexia or a related disorder, the ARD committee (including parents or guardians), determines if a need for special education services exists. 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.

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 and the 504 committee 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.

*A school can only seek consent for an evaluation under Section 504 if the parent refuses consent for an evaluation under IDEA.

Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction

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

- Phonological awareness (recognize and manipulate sounds in words)
- Sound-symbol association (sounds letters make)
- Syllabication (breaking words into parts)
- Orthography (knowing how to spell words)
- Morphology (prefixes, roots, suffixes)
- Syntax (knowledge of how words are arranged in meaningful sentences)
- Reading fluency (reading connected text with ease)
- Reading comprehension (understanding what you read)

Delivery of Dyslexia Instruction

Intervention for dyslexia directly, explicitly and systematically teaches an awareness of the sounds of language, letter-sound associations, vocabulary and strategies for understanding written language. Guided, repeated practice enables the child to apply what they have learned efficiently. Intensity (e.g., smaller group size, extended length of sessions and treatment, more individualized lessons) is what distinguishes dyslexia intervention from regular reading instruction. Commerce ISD uses MTA for dyslexia instruction.

Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluation

To appropriately understand evaluation data, the ARD committee must interpret test results in light of the student's educational history, linguistic background, environmental or socioeconomic factors, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

Instructional Intervention Consideration for English Learners with Dyslexia

English Learners (ELs) receiving dyslexia services will have unique needs. Provision of dyslexia instruction should be in accordance with the program model the student is currently receiving. It is also necessary to incorporate ESL strategies during the intervention process and all content areas. In addition, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) maintains documentation (TAC §89.1220(g)-(i)) that is necessary to consider when identifying EBs with dyslexia. The LPAC is required to meet annually to review student placement and progress and consider instructional accommodations and interventions to address the student's linguistic needs. Since the identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be aligned to the student's linguistic environment and educational background, involvement of the LPAC is required.

Additional data sources for EBs are provided below:

- 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 for four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).
- Instructional interventions provided to address language needs
- Information regarding previous schooling inside and/or outside the United States •
Type of language program model provided and language of instruction

A professional involved in the evaluation, interpretation of evaluation results, and identification of ELs with dyslexia must have the following training/knowledge:

- Knowledge of first and second language acquisition theory
- Knowledge of the written system of the first language: transparent (e.g., Spanish, Italian, German), syllabic (e.g., Japanese-kana), Semitic (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew), and morpho syllabic (e.g., Chinese-Kanji)
- Knowledge of the student’s literacy skills in native and second languages
- Knowledge of how to interpret results from a cross-linguistic perspective
- Knowledge of how to interpret TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System) results
- Knowledge of how to interpret the results of the student’s oral language proficiency in two or more languages in relation to the results of the tests measuring academic achievement and cognitive processes as well as academic data gathered and economic and socioeconomic factors.

Although data from previous formal testing of the student’s oral language proficiency may be available, as required by TEC §29.056, additional assessment of oral language proficiency should be completed for a dyslexia evaluation due to the importance of the information for— •

consideration in relation to academic challenges,

- planning the evaluation, and
- interpreting evaluation results.

If there is not a test in the native language of the student, informal measures of evaluation such as reading a list of words and listening comprehension in the native language may be used.

Providers of Dyslexia Instruction

Dyslexia instruction should be provided by highly trained educators, such as reading specialists, master reading teachers, general education classroom teachers, or special education teachers, who have specific training on the critical components of dyslexia instruction and the program they use. Teachers must deliver the instruction with fidelity. Dyslexia teachers do not have to hold a specific license or certification but must at a minimum have additional documented dyslexia training aligned to 19 TAC §74.28(c) and do not have to be certified as a special educator when serving a student who receives special education. Students receiving special education should be provided dyslexia services by the best person to provide the instruction.

Dysgraphia

Definition and Characteristics of Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a neurodevelopmental disorder manifested by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. This difficulty is the result of deficits in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms) (Berninger, 2015). Secondary consequences may include problems with spelling and written expression. The difficulty is not solely due to lack of instruction and is not associated with other developmental or neurological conditions that involve motor impairment.

The characteristics of dysgraphia include the following:

- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Excessive erasures and cross-outs
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting

Additional consequences of dysgraphia may also include:

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

Procedures for Identification of Dysgraphia

The referral process for dysgraphia is the same as dyslexia. The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow Child Find procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA.

Documentation of the following characteristics of dysgraphia could be collected during the data gathering phase:

- Slow or labored written work
- Poor formation of letters
- Improper letter slant
- Poor pencil grip
- Inadequate pressure
- Excessive erasures
- Poor spacing between/inside words
- Inability to recall accurate orthographic patterns for words
- “b” and “d” reversals beyond developmentally appropriate time
- Inability to copy words accurately
- Inability of student to read what was previously written
- Overuse of short familiar words such as “big”
- Avoidance of written tasks
- Difficulty with visual-motor integrated sports or activities

Schools should recommend evaluation for dysgraphia if the student demonstrates impaired or illegible handwriting that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade or impaired handwriting that interferes with spelling, written expression, or both that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade.

Data Gathering

The collection of various data will provide information regarding factors that may be contributing to or primary to the student’s struggles with handwriting, spelling, and written expressions. This information should include data that demonstrate that the student was provided appropriate instruction and include data-based documentation of repeated evaluations of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal evaluation of student progress during instruction.

Formal Evaluation

After data gathering, the next step in the process is formal evaluation. When formal evaluation is recommended, the school will complete the evaluation process as outlined in IDEA. Procedural safeguards under the IDEA will be followed.

Domains to Assess

Areas for evaluation of dysgraphia include academic skills - letter formation, handwriting, word/sentence dictation (timed and untimed), copying of text, written expression, spelling, writing fluency (both accuracy and fluency), and cognitive processes - memory for letter or symbols sequences (orthographic processing). Possible additional areas may include phonological awareness, phonological memory, working memory, letter retrieval, and letter matching.

To make an informed determination the ARD committee must include members who are knowledgeable about the student being assessed, evaluation instruments being used, and interpretation of the data being collected. The committee members must also have knowledge regarding the handwriting process, dysgraphia and related disorders, dysgraphia instruction, and district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for evaluation.

Dysgraphia Identification

If the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities the ARD committee must then determine if the student has dysgraphia. The following questions must be considered to determine the identification of dysgraphia:

- Does the data show the following characteristics and consequences of dysgraphia?
 - Illegible and/or inefficient handwriting with variably shaped and poorly formed letters
 - Difficulty with unedited written spelling
 - Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

- Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in graphomotor function hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms)?

- Are these difficulties unexpected for the student's age in relation to the student's other abilities, and the provision of effective classroom instruction?

Once dysgraphia has been identified a determination must be made regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student. The ARD committee will determine whether the student is eligible under IDEA as a student with a specific learning disability. The student is eligible under IDEA if he/she has dysgraphia and, because of the dysgraphia needs special education services. If the student is found eligible, the student's IEP must include appropriate writing instruction, which might include instruction from a related services provider. If a student is identified and not considered a student with a disability under the IDEA, then the student may receive appropriate accommodations and services under Section 504.

Handwriting Hierarchy of Instruction

Posture - "Watch Our Writing" (W.O.W.)

Grip - Normal tripod grip with pencil resting on the first joint of middle finger with the thumb and index fingers holding the pencil in place at a 45 degree angle.

Letter Formation - Emphasis placed in the following order: Shape, Proportion, Size, Rhythm/fluency, Slant

Sequence - Lower case letters, Capitals as needed (first letters of student name), Manuscript, Cursive, Letters, Syllables, Words, Phrases, Sentences, Paragraphs

Dysgraphia intervention should be simultaneous and multisensory, systematic and cumulative, include explicit instruction, and be taught to automaticity.

*Students will also benefit from systematic, explicit instruction in spelling, as well as writing.

Privately Obtained Evaluation

A parent/guardian may choose to have his/her child evaluated by a private diagnostician or other source. To be valid, this assessment must comply with the requirements set forth in the guidelines of the Dyslexia Handbook. Students identified as having dyslexia or a related disorder from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the district's program. Commerce ISD may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student. If the committee does not refer for evaluation, the parents/guardians must be given a copy of their due process rights. The parent should be provided the reasons an evaluation is denied. If evaluation is recommended, the District will seek parental consent for an FIIE and all data reviewed by the DAC team

Parent Request for Evaluation and Identification of Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia

Parents or guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia evaluation has been made, the school district is obligated to review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is reason to believe the student has a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student needs to be evaluated following the guidelines as indicated in the Dyslexia Handbook. If the school does not suspect a disability and determines that evaluation would not be warranted, the parent/guardians must be given a copy of their due process rights. Parents should be provided the reasons an evaluation is denied.

Progress Monitoring

Students who have completed the program from the Commerce ISD dyslexia program will receive regular monitoring.

Time after Dismissal Monitoring Interval

First Year	Once six weeks
Second Year and Beyond	Once a semester

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

- progress monitoring
- report cards
- state assessment data
- teacher reports/checklists
- parent information
- counselor reports
- other program reports
- additional assessment data

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

- **Program Participation** - Completion of the district dyslexia program
- **Student Growth** - Student growth shows the student is approaching or at grade level expectations
- **Student Behaviors** - The student demonstrates self-monitoring, self-correction behaviors as evidenced through informal observation by teacher and/or dyslexia teacher.
- **Student Achievement** - Passing grades

Instructional Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In addition to dyslexia instruction, accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom.

Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodation. Listed below are some **examples** of reasonable classroom accommodations:

- Copies of notes
- Note-taking assistance
- Additional time on class assignments and tests
- Reduced/shortened assignments
- Oral reading of directions or written material
- Alternative test location (quiet environment and reduced distractions)
- Audiobooks
- Text to speech
- Speech to text

Parent Education Program

The district must provide parents or guardians of students suspected of having dyslexia or related disorder a copy or link to the electronic version of the Dyslexia Handbook as soon as the suspicion arises.

The district must also offer a parent education program for parents or guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program must include:

- Awareness and characteristics of dyslexia and related disorder
- Information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia and related disorders
- Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia and related disorders
- Information on qualifications of those delivering services to students with dyslexia and related disorders
- Awareness of information on accommodations and modifications, including those for statewide assessments
- Information on eligibility, evaluation requests, and services available to the student under Section 504 and IDEA, and information regarding intervention processes, such as Response to Intervention
- Contact information for the relevant regional and/or District specialists for dyslexia and related disorders

TEC §28.006 (g-2) requires school districts to notify the parents or guardians of students determined, on the basis of dyslexia screening or reading instrument results to have dyslexia or a related disorder, or to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties, to have difficulties, to have access to the Talking Book Program (TBP) maintained by the Texas State Library Archives Commission. The TBP provides students with reading disabilities the ability to borrow audiobooks free of charge or links for Talking Book, Learning Ally, and it includes over 100,000 which are in Spanish.

The Talking Book Program can be found at the following web address:
<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html>

Tips for Families

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

Resources

TEA Dyslexia Website

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

TEA Dyslexia Handbook

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

TEA Dyslexia Handbook (Spanish)

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/Spanish_Dyslexia_Handbook

TEA Dyslexia PEIMS-Coding Overview

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/peims_dyslexia_flowchart-8-17-22.pdf