



Pupil Personnel Services

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Reading Disabilities

Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District's Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Department is committed to ensuring the delivery of appropriate and effective instruction for students with reading disabilities. To achieve this goal, we are focusing on three initiatives: Professional development for child study team members, speech specialist, teachers and instructional assistants; Ensuring the implementation of appropriate and effective instruction through authentic assessment and progress monitoring to determine growth; Implementing research-based programs for students with reading disabilities. We believe these initiatives are key components to developing appropriate individualized education plans (IEP) that will remediate or teach your child successful compensation techniques to become a functioning reader.

Please read about our initiatives to understand how we design our instruction, target skills and determine appropriate programs. You will find our dedication toward improving your child's reading abilities is grounded in research and individualized to ensure your child progress in his or her program. If you are wondering how long it will take to remediate your child's reading disabilities, Louisa Cook Moats & Karen E. Dakin wrote in their book *Basic Facts about Dyslexia & Other Reading Problems* on page 67,

“In most intervention studies, the most rapid gains are made within the first 12 hours of instruction; after that, progress continues, but the pace can seem very slow to students, parents, and teachers. Some students with the most severe reading disabilities need 2 to 3 years of intensive instruction to become functional readers. It is important for teachers and parents to expect slow, steady progress after the initial period of more rapid gains, and to avoid giving up prematurely.”

Professional Development:

The International Dyslexia Association endorses Project Read as an effective instructional program for students with reading disabilities, specifically dyslexia. Teachers receive training

from a certified Project Read and Orton-Gillingham instructor. Teachers are trained in all areas of Project Read: Phonology, Linguistics, Reading Comprehension, and Written Expression. Throughout the year a teacher can receive refresher trainings in the Project Read program receive guidance from the Project Read coach or contact the Project Read consultant for specific questions about the program, delivery of instruction, individual student needs and reading disabilities. Project Read has been a part of reading instruction in the Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District since 2006.

Our Reading Consultant is a certified Project Read and Orton-Gillingham instructor. The role of the consultant is to provide guidance and ongoing training to all staff on an as needed basis throughout the year. The consultant works with teachers to address the complexities of students who have significant reading disabilities. In addition, our Project Read coach visits classrooms throughout the district to provide support to our teachers with the delivery of Project Read strategies.

The special education teachers have received training in visual figure ground discrimination and have a plethora of resources to use in the classroom to improve this skill. These resources include applications for iPads and opportunities for students to practice visual figure ground discrimination using paper and pencil.

Orton-Gillingham Certification is offered to teachers in Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District. This is a two-year certification program for teachers who learn how to individualize instruction for students with significant decoding deficits. Orton-Gillingham is a reading approach that is language-based, multisensory, structured, sequential, cumulative, and flexible. There have been over 30 district staff members trained in the Orton-Gillingham Certification program.

The Pupil Personnel Department maintains a library of books focusing on reading disabilities. Recommended readings include the following books:

- *How the Brain Learns to Read by David A. Sousa
- *How the Special Needs Brain Learns by David A. Sousa
- *The Fluent Reader by Timothy V. Rasinski
- *Basic Facts About Dyslexia and Other Reading Problems by Louisa Cook Moats and Karen E. Dakin
- *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level by Sally E. Shaywitz
- *Parenting a Struggling Reader by Susan Hall & Louisa Moats

Speech specialists are a resource for parents and district personnel in regards to literacy development. Speech specialists refer to the guidelines developed by the American Speech Language-Hearing Association to provide language based instruction and remediation.

District Programs:

Project Read is a multi-sensory reading program focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The program focuses on spelling, writing, oral language, decoding and listening comprehension. The Florida Center for Reading Research independently researched Project Read and supports the efficacy of the program. The International Dyslexia Association identifies Project Read as an effective instructional program for students with reading disabilities specifically dyslexia.

Mindplay is an online program developed by experts in language, literacy, and assessment. Students experience a virtual one-on-one session with a reading specialist each time they log in. Mindplay is personalized and systematic reading instruction. Students who have utilized this program four times per week for at least 30 minutes each session have made significant gains in reading.

Fast ForWord is an online reading intervention that targets phonemic awareness, language, memory, attention, processing and sequencing skills. There are two series in Fast-ForWord: The Language & Literacy series which builds foundational and reading skills while focusing on listening accuracy and language structure. The second series is Reading. Reading focuses on processing efficiency and builds critical reading skills. Fast-ForWord is supported by studies from the National Center on Intensive Intervention (2013) and National Center on Response to Intervention (2010). Informal district studies have demonstrated that up to 2/3 of the students who participate in FastForword as a prereferral intervention do not become classified up to three years later.

Reading Assistant is an online reading program that “listens” to students as they read out loud, intervenes when students falter, and automatically scores students’ oral reading. Reading selections are designed for a variety of interests and reading levels, plus frequent comprehension checks. When a student has difficulty reading a word, Reading Assistant provides a visual cue. If the student does not self-correct, the software intervenes by pronouncing the word.

Learning Ally is a resource for teachers to use with students with a print disability. Learning Ally contains over 80,000 audio books for teachers to select for their students, providing them access to the essential textbooks and content they need. Teachers can assign books, track progress, and share the results when using this program.

MobyMax is a web-based resource that helps to find and fix learning gaps with the power of personalized learning. MobyMax’s adaptive curriculum in language arts, math, science, and social studies creates an individualized education plan for each student. The embedded curriculum teaches students to be better problem solvers, critical thinkers, and creative geniuses with thousands of cognitive skill manipulatives. Moby allows progress monitoring to be done in real time so that teachers know exactly how each student is doing.

Study Island is a web-based resource for enhancing student skills in language arts and mathematics.. The district offers this resource to all students participating in the Special Education Program in grades 2 through 8. Study Island sessions include lessons, motivational interactive games, and assessments related to the lessons.

Reading A-Z Offers thousands of downloadable, projectable, printable teacher materials, covering all the skills necessary for effective reading instruction. Reading A-Z also provides engaging, developmentally appropriate leveled books at 27 reading levels. Graduated levels of difficulty build students' confidence while increasing comprehension and fluency. Leveled books support instruction in comprehension, vocabulary, close reading of text, and more.

Writing A-Z provides guided lessons in the writing process. Writing A-Z covers a variety of text types, including narrative, informative, and persuasive/opinion pieces. It also includes lessons that teach structure, elements, and purpose of the text types. Writing A-Z also develops a greater sophistication in writing for emergent to fluent writers.

Raz-Kids delivers hundreds of interactive, leveled eBooks spanning 27 levels. There are 400 plus eBooks and open-book eQuizzes, with new books added every month. There are corresponding eQuizzes test comprehension, providing teachers with skill reports for data-driven instruction. Online running records let teachers digitally assess each student, saving valuable classroom time. The motivational "Raz Rocket" gets students excited about reading and strengthens the school-to-home connection.

Students with dyslexia may also have attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity, executive functioning deficits and or behavioral issues. Pupil Personnel Services have implemented the following initiatives to ensure students, parents and staff are working together and communicating effectively to ensure students are learning strategies to manage additional areas of difficulty:

Superflex and the Team of Unthinkables is a social skills program designed to teach students about their own social thinking and strategies to regulate their social behavior. Students can identify with the captivating cartoon heroes who possess traits that either enhance or diminish our social thinking and/or behavior. Superflex is a district wide initiative. Implementing this program ensures all students, parents and staff have one common language and universal expectations when addressing social thinking and behavior.

Rethink First is a Resource for teachers focusing on the delivery of instruction utilizing a task analysis approach while providing a continuum of skill development in a variety of functional areas including students with executive functioning deficits or behavioral concerns. Teachers and instructional assistants have the ability to view over 1500 lessons in action. Student progress is tracked in Rethink to demonstrate growth in each skill.

Effective Instruction

The Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District utilizes authentic assessments as a platform to determine appropriate instructional strategies for students. Progress monitoring is implemented once the skill is identified and the appropriate instructional strategy is determined. Linda S. Fuchs and Douglas Fuchs defined progress monitoring as “when teachers assess students’ academic performance on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) for two purposes: to determine whether children are profiting appropriately from the typical instruction program and to build more effective programs for the children who benefit inadequately from typical instruction.” Once a student is assessed through a probe (easily administered measure) and progress is not made in a specific skill, the instructional strategies are adjusted to better meet the needs of the student. Through progress monitoring we can determine a student’s rate of learning and the amount of progress made from their individualized education plan. It is important to note that a disability such as dyslexia may severely impacts a student’s rate of learning.

A variety of formal and informal assessments to monitor student's progress in the areas of oral language, phonological skill, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, reading comprehension and written expression is performed annually. A few of the assessments we use are listed below:

- A. DIBELS assessment from kindergarten
- B. Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)
- C. DRA 2 protocol and Word Analysis assessment
- D. LinkIt! (given 3x per year)
- E. Writing rubric
- F. Project Read assessments

Louisa Cook Moats & Karen E. Dakin wrote in their book Basic Facts about Dyslexia & Other Reading Problems on page 66 wrote, “For an intervention to be effective, educators and others must frequently monitor a child’s progress and make adjustments as needed for progress to continue.”

New Laws Addressing Reading Disabilities

To learn about the new requirements for districts to follow regarding reading disabilities please visit the attachments below

Chapter 210 (Screening)
Chapter 105 (Professional Development)
Chapter 131 (Definition of dyslexia)

What is dyslexia?

The definition of dyslexia adopted by the New Jersey Department of Education:

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.

The following links are developed by The International Dyslexia Association. The Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District refers to the NJDOE recommendations as well as the guidance set forth in the documents provided by The International Dyslexia Association to address students with reading disabilities.

What can I do if my child has reading difficulties?

1. Develop your child's background knowledge. One of the most effective ways a teacher will introduce a concept is by creating a connection between what the child already knows to what the child is expected to learn. Parents can help teachers by exposing their children to as much as this world has to offer. The more exposure to people, places, things, ideas etc. the easier the connection your child can make to new concepts. Marzano identifies two methods to build background knowledge: through direct experiences or indirect experiences. Direct experiences is the child participating in an actual trip to a location such as museum or lighthouse. Indirect experiences can be virtual trips on the internet using Google Earth or reading a book about a place or idea such as the fountain of youth.
2. Practicing nursery rhymes or playing rhyming games is important and helps teach foundational decoding skills. Having your child recite the ABC song is important. Equally important is having your child know the sound of each letter.
3. Use index cards for the following activities:
 - a. Develop automaticity for the most common words by writing the words on the index card and have the child repeat them until recognition becomes automatic.
 - b. Develop automaticity for the sounds of letters and vowels. Focus on the short sounds and then move on to the long sounds. Write the letters or vowels on an index card and have the child repeat them until recognition becomes automatic.
 - c. Write your child's favorite passage from a book or movie and have them practice reading the passage until it becomes automatic

Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District has earned the Literacy for All award from the New Jersey International Dyslexia Association for our commitment to a

multisensory reading program and dedication to early identification and research based interventions.

The website below is from the American Psychological Association. Please review for further information in regards to how maturity and disabilities impact brain functioning.

<http://www.apa.org/education/k12/brain-function.aspx>