Nueces Canyon CISD

Dyslexia & Related Disorders Handbook

District Dyslexia and Related Disorders Handbook

NCCISD's Dyslexia and Related Disorders Instructional Program is designed to offer an educational option for any student exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders.

Nueces Canyon Consolidated Independent School District
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The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

Kristi Powers, Superintendent

All complaints shall be handled through established channels and procedures beginning with the building principal, followed by appeal to the appropriate central administration contact, and finally the board of trustees, in accordance with Policy FNG.
If you need the assistance of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the Department of Education, the address of the OCR Regional Office that covers Texas is:

Dallas Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education
1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620 Dallas, TX 75201-6810
Telephone: (214) 661-9600 Facsimile: (214) 661-9587
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Contents

I. Definition of Dyslexia.....1

II. Procedures Required by State Law and District Procedures. 1

III. Referral Process for Dyslexia.....2

IV. Assessment for Dyslexia 5

V. Identification of Students with Dyslexia.....7

VI. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia.....9

VII. Accommodations for Students with Dyslexia.....11

VIII. Progress Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria.....15

IX. Definition of Dysgraphia.....16

X. Referral Process for Dysgraphia.....17

XI. Assessment for Dysgraphia.....18

XII. Identification of Students with Dysgraphia.....20

XIII. Instruction for Students with Dysgraphia 20

XIV. Accommodations for Students with Dysgraphia.....22

XV. Progress Monitoring and Dysgraphia Program Exit Criteria.....23

XVI. Resources 24

I. Definition of Dyslexia

The student who struggles with reading and spelling often puzzles teachers and parents. The student displays ability to learn in the absence of print and receives the same classroom instruction that benefits most children; however, the student continues to struggle with some or all of the many facets of reading and spelling. This student may be a student with dyslexia.

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003
(1) "Dyslexia" means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence and sociocultural opportunity.
(2) "Related disorders" includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The definition of Dyslexia by the International Dyslexia Association states:

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

The primary difficulties of a student identified as having dyslexia occur in phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression. These difficulties in phonological awareness 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.

II. Procedures Required by State Law and District Procedures

In accordance with Texas Education Code §28.006, Nueces Canyon Independent School District administers early reading instruments in kindergarten, first, and second grades to determine students' reading development and comprehension. Additionally, a reading instrument from the Commissioner's approved list will be administered at the beginning of grade 7 to any student who did not demonstrate

proficiency on the reading assessment administered under TEC §39.023(a). Parents/guardians are notified of the results of the reading instrument to include notification of the audio book resource. In addition, for those students who are at risk for dyslexia or other reading disorders, an accelerated (intensive) reading program that appropriately addresses students' reading difficulties and enables them to "catch up" with their typically performing peers is implemented. Should students continue to struggle with reading, writing, and spelling during the intensive reading instruction, then NCCISD will initiate procedures to recommend these students for assessment for dyslexia. The information from the early reading instruments will be one source of information in deciding whether to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia. Other sources may include but are not limited to: performance on state mandated test(s), a student's grades/performance in reading and written spelling, and teachers' observations of the characteristics of dyslexia.

In accordance with Texas Education Code §38.003, NCCISD screens all kindergarten and first-grade student for dyslexia and related disorders, as well as students beyond first grade as appropriate. The purpose of the screening administered by qualified personnel is to determine which students are at risk for dyslexia or reading difficulties and/or a related disorder. Parents/guardians are notified of the results of the screening instrument to include notification of the audio book resource. Screening results will be reviewed to determine if a student needs to be evaluated further, so that reading difficulties can be addressed. Campus Personnel conducting screenings will report the results of dyslexia and related disorder screenings required for each student in kindergarten and first grade through PEIMS.

The District must report through PEIMS the number of students enrolled in the District who are identified as having dyslexia.

III. Referral Process for Dyslexia

At any time, a student demonstrates poor performance in one or more areas of reading and spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade, or demonstrates characteristics and risk factors of dyslexia indicated in Definitions of Dyslexia and Primary Reading/Spelling Characteristics of Dyslexia, Nueces Canyon CISD will collect additional information about the student. Progression through the Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia.

Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia assessment at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia assessment has been made, Nueces Canyon CISD will review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is a reason to believe the student has a disability. If a

disability is suspected, the student will be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in this Handbook and the State Dyslexia Handbook. If NCCISD does not suspect a disability and determines that an evaluation would not be warranted, the parents/guardians will be notified of the reasons an evaluation is denied including documentation that the denial is based on data and given a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. The Notice of Proposal to Evaluate provided and explained to parents contains a link to TEA's Dyslexia Handbook. Additional information about changes in dyslexia can be found in the Dyslexia Evaluation, Identification, and Instruction FAQ. Parents can also request a copy of the Dyslexia Handbook from their child's campus.

Data Gathering:

Information will be used to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. This information should include data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction and data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction.

This cumulative data also includes information from parents/guardians. Sources and examples of cumulative data are:

- Vision screening
- Hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations or interventions provided
- Academic progress reports and/or report cards
- Gifted and Talented assessments
- Samples of school work
- Parent conference notes
- Speech and language assessment
- Results of Kindergarten-Grade 1 universal screening
- The K-2 reading instrument as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)
- State student assessment program results as described in TEC §39.002
- 7th -grade reading instruments results as required in TEC §28.006
- Observations of instruction provided to the students
- Previous evaluations
- Outside evaluations
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures

● Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction
● Screening data
● Parent survey
Data that support that the difficulties are not due to cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantage. Having data related to these factors may help in determining whether the student's struggles with reading are due to a lack of opportunity or a reading disability, including dyslexia.

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

● Poor performance in one or more areas of reading and the related area of spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade, and;
● Characteristics of dyslexia.

Primary Reading/Spelling Characteristics of Dyslexia:

• Difficulty reading words in isolation
• Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
• Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored)
• Difficulty spelling

It is important to note that individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment.

The reading/spelling characteristics are most often associated with the following:
• Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
• Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
• Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory)
• Rapidly recalling the names of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming)
Consequences of dyslexia may include the following:
• Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
• Variable difficulty with aspects of written composition
• Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences

When a referral for dyslexia assessment is made, NCCISD will ensure that evaluation procedures are followed in accordance with all Special Education processes, policies, and procedures.

IV. Assessment for Dyslexia

Students enrolling in NCCISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teachers' input, and parents' or guardians' input. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28), the earlier the better. While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

When formal evaluation is recommended, NCCISD will complete the Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE) process as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Procedural safeguards under IDEA will be followed. The Notice of Proposal to Evaluate provided and explained to parents contains a link to TEA's Dyslexia Handbook. The parents are also provided a copy of the Overview for Special Education Parents and ARD Guide. The Dyslexia Handbook may also be accessed for the NCCISD website or parents may request a copy from their child's campus.

Formal assessment includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dyslexia. Findings from the formal assessment will be different for each child. Professionals conducting assessment for the identification of dyslexia, to also include a multidisciplinary team member with dyslexia and reading knowledge, that will look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom reading performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining reading and spelling abilities and difficulties.

Tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials will meet the following criteria in compliance with IDEA:

- Be validated for the specific purpose for which the evaluation or measures are valid or reliable
- Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely materials that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient
- Be selected and administered so as to ensure that, when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
- Be selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory Include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion-referenced assessments, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)

● Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
● Be used for the purpose for which the assessment or measures are valid or reliable
● Be provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form, most likely to yield accurate information regarding what the child can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer

Domains to Assess

The school administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Difficulties in the areas of letter knowledge, word decoding, and fluency (rate and accuracy) may be evident depending upon the student's age and stage of reading development. In addition, many students with dyslexia may have difficulty with reading comprehension and written composition.

Academic Skills
● Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
● Reading words in isolation
● Decoding unfamiliar words accurately
● Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy are assessed)
● Reading comprehension
● Spelling

Cognitive Processes
● Phonological/phonemic awareness
● Rapid naming of symbols or objects Possible Additional Areas

Possible Additional Areas
● 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

Re-evaluation for Dyslexia

Unless otherwise provided by law, a student determined to have dyslexia during

screening, testing or accommodated because of dyslexia may not be rescreened or retested for dyslexia for the purpose of reassessing the student's need for accommodations until the district reevaluates the information obtained from previous screening or testing of the student.

V. Identification of Students with Dyslexia

If the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, the Admissions, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee, to also include a multidisciplinary team member with dyslexia and reading knowledge, must then determine if the student has dyslexia. For English Learners (ELs), a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) representative must be included on the ARD committee. In order to make an informed determination, the ARD committee must include members who are knowledgeable about:

- The Reading Process
- Dyslexia and related disorders, and
- Dyslexia instruction

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.
The ARD committee must first determine if a student's difficulties in the area 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 (both rate and/or accuracy)
- Spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia

If, through the evaluation process, it is established that the student has the condition of dyslexia, then the student meets the first prong of eligibility under the IDEA (identification of condition). The identification of dyslexia meets the criterion for the condition of a specific learning disability in basic reading and/or reading fluency. However, the presence of a disability condition alone, is not sufficient to determine if the student is a student with a disability under the IDEA. Eligibility under the IDEA consists of both identification of the condition and a corresponding need for specially designed instruction as a result of the disability.

In IDEA, dyslexia is considered one of a variety of etiological foundations for specific learning disability (SLD). Section 34 C.F.R. §300.8(c)(10) states the following:

> *Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.*

Once the condition of dyslexia has been identified, a determination must be made regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student. If a student with dyslexia is found eligible for special education (i.e., student requires specially designed instruction), the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) must include appropriate reading instruction. Appropriate reading instruction includes the components and delivery of dyslexia instruction. If a student has previously met special education eligibility and is later identified with dyslexia, the ARD committee should include in the IEP goals that reflect the need for dyslexia instruction and determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia instruction.

Assessment of Students Identified Outside the District

Students identified as having dyslexia or related disorders from an outside source will be reviewed for placement in the district's program. After NCCISD's review of the information obtained from the previous testing of the student, NCCISD may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student. In either situation, the appropriate committee will determine the identification status of a student enrolled in NCCISD, and the placement of the student in the dyslexia program.

VI. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia

NCCISD serves students identified as dyslexic in kindergarten through grade 12. NCCISD uses research-based programs to accelerate the learning of our identified dyslexic students who are served in the program. Instruction is provided in a small group setting according to the dyslexia program protocols to maximize student success. Individualized instruction is provided by dyslexia specialists who are highly trained in the identification and instruction of students with dyslexia.

NCCISD believes that students receiving support for dyslexia are best served in small group settings with curriculum that meets all of the specifications indicated by the state. In NCCISD, all Campus Dyslexia Interventionists have been trained to utilize **Reading by Design** this method is a multi-sensory program. The program includes phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. Students generally receive instruction in a pull-out arrangement and are grouped with others working at a similar level. This allows the specialists to focus on high-quality instruction that meets the needs of the learners and allows the students to progress at an appropriate pace. Students receive instruction according to the program protocols. The dyslexia program is provided for 30-45 minutes depending on the number of days each week instruction is provided. While the components of instruction for students with dyslexia include good teaching principles for all teachers, the explicitness and intensity of the instruction, fidelity to program descriptors, grouping formats, and training and skill of the teachers are wholly different from core classroom instruction.

Instruction decisions for a student with dyslexia must be made by an ARD committee that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia.

Evidence-Based Dyslexia Instruction

Evidence-based dyslexia instruction is specially designed instruction provided in special education that provides evidence-based, multisensory structured literacy instruction for students with dyslexia. It is explicit, systematic and intentional in its approach and provided in a small group setting. It is taught by a trained instructor and implemented with fidelity to the program.

Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Instruction

Phonological Awareness – instruction in this area enables students to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sound in spoken language.

Sound-Symbol Association – instruction that takes advantage of the letter-sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds and sounds are written with letters in the right order. Students with this understanding can blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing.

Syllabication- A unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. The six basic types of syllables in the English language are: closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, r-controlled, vowel pair (or vowel team), and consonant-le (or final stable syllable).

Orthography-Written spelling patterns and rules in a given language.

Morphology – study of meaningful units of language such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

Syntax – set of principles that dictate the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar, sentence structure and variation, and the mechanics of language.

Reading Comprehension-process of extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader with the text to be comprehended and the specific purpose for reading.

Reading Fluency- read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension

Delivery of Instruction

Simultaneous, multisensory-Teaching is done using all learning pathways in the brain (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) simultaneously

Systematic and cumulative-Systematic and cumulative, each step must be based on components already learned. Concepts taught must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory.

Explicit instruction-explained and demonstrated by the teacher one language and print concept at a time.

Diagnostic teaching to automaticity—teaching plan is based on continual assessment of the individual's needs so that a reading skill becomes automatic.

Synthetic instruction- presents the parts of the language and then teaches how the parts work together to form a whole.

Analytic instruction- presents the whole and teaches how this can be broken into its component parts.

Instructional Intervention Consideration for Emergent Bilingual Learners (EBs) with Dyslexia

English Learners (EBs) receiving dyslexia services will have unique needs. Provision of dyslexia instruction will be in accordance with the English as a Second Language (ESL) model the student is currently receiving in Nueces Canyon CISD. Interventionists working with EBs will have additional certification/training on the specialized needs of EBs.

Dyslexia instruction for EBs must incorporate the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). A few strategies to consider include the following:
• Establish routines so that EBs understand what is expected of them
• Provide native language support when giving directions or when students do not understand the task
• Provide opportunities for repetition and rehearsal so that the new information can be learned to mastery
• Adjust the rate of speech and the complexity of the language used according to the second language proficiency level of each student
• Provide extra time for the EB to process the English language. This is especially necessary during the early stages of second language development
• Provide extra time for the EB to formulate oral and written responses
• Emphasize text that includes familiar content and explain the structure of the text

VII. Accommodations for the Student with Dyslexia

The following MAY be appropriate instructional accommodations for students identified as dyslexic. It should be noted that the decision-making committee should select ONLY those accommodations that BEST meet the needs of the individual student. Additionally, accommodations should be limited to those *necessary* for the student to demonstrate educational progress, such as those deemed appropriate by the teacher or requested by the student. Students with a reading disability have access to the Talking Book Services through the Texas State Library. Parents are given information about the Talking Book Services annually.

Textbooks and Curriculum

Books/Reading
- Assign peer reading buddies
- Do not require student to read aloud or allow for practice
- Provide a one-page summary and/or a review of important facts

● Provide CDs or digital textbooks and have student follow the text while listening
● Provide preview questions, study guides or outlines
● Provide summaries of chapters
● Review vocabulary prior to reading
● Talk through the material one-to-one after reading assignments
● Use colored transparency or overlay
● Use marker or highlighting tape to highlight important textbook sections

Curriculum

● Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of critical concepts
● Shorten spelling tests to focus on mastering the most functional words
● Substitute alternatives for written assignments (posters, oral/taped or video presentations, Projects, collages, etc.)
● Utilize assistive technology, as appropriate

Classroom Environment

● Provide a computer for written work
● Provide quiet during intense learning times
● Reduce the need for copying
● Seat student close to teacher in order to monitor understanding

Instruction and Assignments

Directions

● Accompany oral directions with visual clues
● Ask student to repeat; check for understanding
● Break complex directions into small steps—arrange in a vertical list format
● Give directions in small steps and with as few words as possible
● Read written directions to student, then model/demonstrate
● Use both oral and written directions

Writing

● Allow student to dictate answer to essay questions
● Allow student to respond orally
● Allow student to use a keyboard when appropriate
● Allow use of erasable pens
● Grade only for content not spelling or handwriting
● Have student focus on a single aspect of a writing assignment (ideas, voice, etc.)
● Provide a "designated note taker;" photocopy another student's or teacher's notes
● Provide a print outline for note-taking
● Provide graphic organizers

● Reduce copying tasks and/or written work

Math

● Allow student to use a calculator without penalty
● Break problems into smaller steps
● Present information in small increments and at a slower pace
● Read story problems aloud
● Take time to reteach if student is struggling to understand
● Use grid paper to help correctly line up math problems
● Use visuals and concrete examples

Grading

● Allow student to type responses
● Avoid penalizing for spelling errors, reversals, etc.
● Evaluate oral performances more than written
● Provide opportunity to test orally, when appropriate
● Read test to student or read questions and answer choices

Testing

● Allow student to respond on tape or by dictating responses
● Allow tests to be taken in a room with few distractions
● Go over directions orally
● Permit as much time as needed to complete tests; avoid timed testing
● Provide typed test materials in easy to read font
● Read test materials and allow oral responses
● Separate content from mechanics/conventions grade

Homework

● Accept work dictated by student to a parent/tutor
● Go over homework directions orally
● Limit amount of time to spend on homework; have parents verify time spent on assignments
● Provide textbooks on CD or digital textbooks, when possible
● Reduce reading assignments

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 should not be limited by whether an accommodation is allowable on a state assessment.

Texas State Student Assessment Program Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Educators, parents, and students must understand that accommodations provided during classroom instruction and testing might differ from accommodations allowed for use on state assessments. The state assessment is a standardized tool for measuring every student's learning in a reliable, valid, and secure manner. An accommodation used in the classroom for learning may invalidate or compromise the security and integrity of the state assessment; therefore, not all accommodations suitable for instruction are allowed during the state assessments. It is important to keep in mind that the policies for accommodation use on state assessments should not limit an educator's ability to develop individualized materials and techniques to facilitate student learning. Instruction comes first and can be customized to meet the needs of each student.

For the purposes of the statewide assessments, students needing accommodations due to a disability include the following:

- Students with an identified disability who receive special education services and meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations.
- Students with an identified disability who receive §504 services and meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations.
- Students with a disabling condition who do not receive special education or §504 services but meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations.

For students who receive special education or §504 services the decisions for student use of accommodations during the statewide assessments is made by the ARD committee or §504 placement committee. In those rare instances where a student does not receive services but meets the eligibility criteria due to a disability condition, the decision about using accommodations on the state-wide assessments is made by the appropriate team of people at the campus level, such as the RtI team or student assistance team.

Technology Integration for Students with Dyslexia (TEC §38.0031)

Technology is not intended to take the place of quality reading instruction. It should be used in combination with teacher-directed instruction and intervention. Technology should never be used as a substitute for quality instruction; it is intended to supplement, not supplant. The *Technology Integration for Students with Dyslexia online tool* (TEC §38.0031) is a resource developed to support instructional decisions regarding technology that benefits students with dyslexia.

Professional Development Relative to Dyslexia for All Teachers

To ensure that teachers are knowledgeable about dyslexia, TEC §21.054(b) and TAC §232.11(e) require educators who teach students with dyslexia to be trained in new

research and practices related to dyslexia as a part of their continuing professional education (CPE) hours. http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.21.htm Teachers of students with dyslexia must be prepared to use the techniques, tools, and strategies. They may also serve as trainers and consultants in the area of dyslexia and related disorders for regular, remedial, and special education teachers.

VIII. Progress Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria

Progress reports will be prepared and communicated to a parent specifically on the students progress as a result of that program at least one per grading period.

Upon successful completion of the district dyslexia program, as measured by program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals, students will be dismissed from the district dyslexia program through the ARD committee. Additional criteria for exit may include, but is not limited to:

- grades from progress reports or report cards
- state assessment data
- benchmarks
- progress monitoring data
- teacher and/or parent observations/checklists
- individual dyslexia program requirements

Students that have completed the NCCISD dyslexia program will receive regular monitoring to include monitoring progress report to the parents. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to the collection/evaluation of:

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

Students qualifying for dyslexia services that are identified as Special Education will follow monitoring requirements outlined in federal law. A student determined to have dyslexia during testing under TEC §38.003(a) or accommodated because of dyslexia

may not be retested for dyslexia for the purpose of reassessing the student's need for accommodations until the district reevaluates the information obtained from previous testing of the student.

No one factor is sufficient to warrant dismissing a student from direct dyslexia services.

Dismissal is determined by consensus of the ARD committee. The committee considers the following factors when recommending dismissal or reduction of dyslexic services:

• Completion of the district dyslexia program

• The reevaluation and/or post-testing of student shows student growth to be closer to grade level proficiency standards

• 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

• Committee recommendation

• Parents request in writing that the student exit the program

If a student has shown substantial progress and the appropriate committee determines the student is ready to be dismissed completely from the program, the committee may recommend monitoring services instead of direct services.

Dysgraphia

IX. Definition of Dysgraphia

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 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. It is not solely due to lack of instruction and is not associated with other developmental or neurological conditions that involve motor impairment.

Characteristics of Dysgraphia

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 (Andrews & Lombardino, 2014)

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

Dysgraphia is not:

- Evidence of a damaged motor nervous system
- Part of a developmental disability that has fine motor deficits (e.g., intellectual disability, autism, cerebral palsy)
- Secondary to a medical condition (e.g., meningitis, significant head trauma, brain trauma)
- Association with generalized developmental motor or coordination difficulties (Developmental Coordination Disorder)
- Impaired spelling or written expression with typical handwriting (legibility and rate) (Berninger, 2004)

Dysgraphia can be due to:

- Impaired feedback the brain is receiving from the fingers
- Weaknesses using visual processing to coordinate hand movement and organize the use of space
- Problems with motor planning and sequencing
- Difficulty with storage and retrieval of letter forms (Levine, 1999)

X. Referral Process for Dysgraphia

The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow Child Find procedures for conducting a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA.

Data Gathering

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 during handwriting (too hard or too soft)
- Excessive erasures
- Poor spacing between words
- Poor spacing 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

The academic history of each student will provide with the Nueces Canyon CISD cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dysgraphia is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in handwriting, spelling, and written expression. Cumulative data may include:
• Vision screening
• Teacher reports of classroom concerns
• Parent reports of concerns about handwriting, spelling, or written expression
• Classroom handwriting assessments
• Classroom spelling assessments
• Samples of written work (e.g., journal, story responses, writing samples, etc.)
• Accommodations or interventions provided
• Academic progress reports (report cards)
• Gifted/talented assessments
• Samples of written schoolwork (both timed and untimed)
• State student assessment program results as described in TEC §39.022
• Observations of instruction provided to the student
• Full Individual and Initial Evaluation
• Outside evaluations
• Speech and language assessment
• School attendance
• Curriculum-based assessment measures
• Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction
• Universal screening
• Parent survey

NCCISD will recommend evaluation for dysgraphia if the student demonstrates the following:
• Impaired or illegible handwriting that is unexpected for the student's age/grade
• Impaired handwriting that interferes with spelling, written expression, or both that is unexpected for the student's age/grade

Assessment for Dysgraphia

Formal assessment includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dysgraphia. Findings from the formal assessment will be different for each child. Professionals

conducting assessment for the identification of dysgraphia will look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom writing performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with

determining handwriting, spelling and written expression abilities and difficulties.
When formal evaluation is recommended, NCCISD will complete the evaluation process as outlined in the IDEA. Procedural safeguards under IDEA will be followed.
Tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials will meet the following criteria in compliance with IDEA:
● Be validated for the specific purpose for which the evaluation or measures are valid or reliable
● Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely materials that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient
● Be selected and administered so as to ensure that, when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
● Be selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory Include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion-referenced assessments, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)
● Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
● Be used for the purpose for which the assessment or measures are valid or reliable
● Be provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form, most likely to yield accurate information regarding what the child can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer

Domains to Assess

Academic Skills
• Letter formation
• Handwriting
• Word/sentence dictation (timed and untimed)
• Copying of text
• Written expression
• Writing fluency (both accuracy and fluency)

Cognitive Processes
• Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing)

Possible Additional Areas
• Phonological awareness
• Phonological memory
• Working memory

• Letter retrieval
• Letter matching

XII. Identification of Students with Dysgraphia

The ARD committee will make a determination, using formal and informal data, whether a student's difficulties in the areas of writing and spelling reflect a pattern of evidence for the primary characteristics of dysgraphia with unexpectedly low performance for the student's age and educational level in some or all of the following areas:
• Handwriting
• Writing fluency (accuracy and rate)
• Written Expression
• Spelling

Once dysgraphia has been identified, a determination must be made regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student.

If, through the evaluation process, it is established that the student has the condition of dysgraphia, then the student meets the first prong of eligibility under the IDEA (identification of condition). The identification of dysgraphia meets the criterion for the condition of a specific learning disability. However, the presence of a disability condition alone, is not sufficient to determine if the student is a student with a disability under the IDEA. Eligibility under the IDEA consists of both identification of the condition and a corresponding need for specially designed instruction as a result of the disability.

Once the condition of dysgraphia has been identified, a determination must be made regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student. If a student with dysgraphia is found eligible for special education (i.e., student requires specially designed instruction), the student's IEP must include appropriate writing instruction from a related service provider. If a student has previously met special education eligibility and is later identified with dysgraphia, the ARD committee should include in the IEP goals that reflect the need for writing instruction and determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's instruction.

XIII. Instruction for Dysgraphia

NCCISD serves students identified as dysgraphia in kindergarten through grade 12. NCCISD uses research-based programs to accelerate the learning of our identified dysgraphic students who are served in the program. Instruction is provided in a small group setting to maximize student success. Individualized instruction can be provided by dyslexia specialists who are highly trained in the identification and instruction of students with dysgraphia or other qualified staff.

NCCISD believes that students receiving support for dysgraphia are best served in small

group settings with curriculum that meets all of the specifications indicated by the state. In NCCISD, all Campus Dyslexia Interventionists have been trained to utilize Reading by Design. This method is a multi-sensory program, which includes instruction to address dyslexia, as well as dysgraphia.

If a student has both dyslexia and dysgraphia, the ARD committee may determine that the student is best served in this program. If a student is only identified with dysgraphia the committee may determine that an alternate program that includes required program components is appropriate. Students generally receive instruction in a pull-out arrangement and are grouped with others working at a similar level. This allows the specialists to focus on high-quality instruction that meets the needs of the learners and allows the students to progress at an appropriate pace. The appropriate committee will determine the frequency and duration of the services provided.

While the components of instruction for students with dysgraphia include good teaching principles for all teachers, the explicitness and intensity of the instruction, fidelity to program descriptors, grouping formats, and training and skill of the teachers are wholly different from core classroom instruction.

Handwriting

Effective handwriting instruction that includes posture, grip, letter formation and sequence with the intensity, frequency and delivery according to the student's specific need.

Spelling

Explicit and systematic instruction in phonological, orthographic and morphological aspects of words.

Writing

Explicit strategies for composing including planning, generating, reviewing/evaluation, and revising different genre including narrative, informational, compare and contrast, and persuasive compositions.

Instruction decisions for a student with dyslexia must be made by a committee (§504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dysgraphia.

Delivery of Instruction

Simultaneous, multisensory~Teaching is done using all learning pathways in the brain

(Visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) simultaneously

Systematic and cumulative~Systematic and cumulative, each step must be based on components already learned. Concepts taught must be systematically and reviewed to strengthen memory.

Explicit instruction~explained and demonstrated by the teacher and provides guidance and immediate corrective feedback before the student is independent.

Diagnostic teaching to automaticity—teaching plan is based on continual assessment of the individual's needs so that a writing skill becomes automatic.

XIV. Accommodations for the Student with Dysgraphia

The following MAY be appropriate instructional accommodations for students identified with dysgraphia. It should be noted that the decision-making committee should select ONLY those accommodations that BEST meet the needs of the individual student. Additionally, accommodations should be limited to those *necessary* for the student to

demonstrate educational progress, such as those deemed appropriate by the teacher or requested by the student.

- Allow more time for written tasks
- Written assignments of reduced length
- Provide copies of notes or note that only require student to fill in missing information
- Student may audio record important assignments and/or take oral tests
- Break or develop writing assignments into logical steps to complete a writing assignment instead of all at once
- Use of technology (e.g., speech to text software, etc.)
- Have student to use cursive or manuscript, whichever is most legible and efficient
- Use graph paper for math, or to turn lined paper sideways, to help with lining up columns of numbers
- Use alternatives to a written project such as an oral report, dramatic presentation, or visual media project

Student accommodations as part of their Individual Accommodation Plan or Individual Education Plan are accessible to teachers who provide services. The provision of accommodation(s) can be documented through work samples, checklists and/or gradebook comments.

XV. Progress Monitoring and Dysgraphia Program Exit Criteria

Progress will be monitored regularly through program progress data gathering. If student is not making progress, the therapist will use tools such as accommodations or other program adjustments while maintain the fidelity of the program. Data will be collected on the effectiveness of those tools. If the student continues not to make progress, an ARD or 504 meeting will be called to review the data and determine the next steps.

The progress of students in the dysgraphia will be reviewed annually by either the Campus Child Study Team, the Campus 504 Committee or ARD Committee, as appropriate to the student's identification. Consideration of all available data shall be given when determining a student's progress toward grade level goals.

Upon successful completion of the district dysgraphia program, as measured by program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals, students will be dismissed from the district dysgraphia program as determined by the appropriate committee. Additional criteria for exit may include, but is not limited to:

- grades from progress reports or report cards
- state assessment data
- benchmarks
- progress monitoring data
- teacher and/or parent observations/checklists
- individual dyslexia program requirements

Students that have completed the NCCISD dysgraphia program will receive regular monitoring. 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

XVI. Resources

• *All Kinds of Minds* by Mel Levine, M.D.

• *Basic Facts About Dyslexia & Other Reading Problems* by Louisa Cook Moats, Karen E. Dakin

• *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print—A Summary* by Marilyn Jager Adams

• *Dyslexia, Fluency, and the Brain* by Maryanne Wolf

• *Dyslexia: Theory and Practice of Instruction, Third Edition* by Diana Brewster Clark, Joanna Kellog Uhry

• *English Isn't Crazy!* by Diana Handbury King

• *Helping Children Overcome L.D.* by Gerome Rosner

• *Homework Without Tears: A Parent's Guide for Motivating Children To Do Homework and To Succeed in School* by Lee Canter, Lee Hausner

• *How Dyslexic Benny Became a Star: A Story of Hope for Dyslexic Children and Their Parents* by Joe Griffith

• *Informed Instruction for Reading Success: Foundations for Teacher Preparation* by The International Dyslexia Association

• *Josh: A Boy With Dyslexia* by Caroline Janover

• *Keeping A Head in School: A Student's Book about Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders* by Mel Levine, M.D.

• *Learning Outside the Lines: Two Ivy League Students with Learning Disabilities and AdHD Give You the Tools for Academic Success and Educational Revolution* by Jonathan Mooney, David Cole

• *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, 2nd Edition* by Judith R. Birsh (Ed.)

• *My Name is Brain Brian* by Jeanne Betancourt

• *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at An Level* by Sally Shaywitz, M.D.

• *Parenting a Struggling Reader* by Susan L. Hall, Louisa C. Moats

• *Proust and the Squid, The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* by Maryanne Wolf

• *Reading David: A Mother and Son's Journey Through The Labyrinth of Dyslexia* by Lissa Weinstein, Ph.D.

• *Smart Kids with School Problems: Things to Know & Ways to Help* by Pricilla Vail

• *Speech to Print* by Louisa C. Moat

• *Straight Talk About Reading: How Parents Can Make a Difference During the Early Years* by Susan L. Hall, Louisa C. Moats

• *The Difficult Child* by Stanley Turecki, M.D., Leslie Tonner

- *The Many Faces of Dyslexia* by Margaret Byrd Rawson
- *The Misunderstood Child: Understanding and Coping with Your Child's Learning Disability* by Larry B. Silver, M.D.
- *The Read Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease
- *The Source for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia* by Regina Richards
- *The Tuned-in, Turned-on Book about Learning Problems* by Marnell Hayes
- *The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research* by Peggy McCardle, Vinita Chhabra
- *The Worst Speller in Jr. High* by Caroline Janover, Rosemary Wellner
- *"What's Wrong with Me?" Learning Disabilities at Home and School* by Regina Cicci

Resources, Technology Tools

- Technology Supports for Dyslexia and Related Disorders

Resources, Related Links

- Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA)
- Council of Educators of Students with Disabilities (CESD)
- International Dyslexia Association (IDA)
- International Literacy Association (ILA)
- LD Online
- Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
- Texas Center for Learning Disabilities
- Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021
- Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Texas Talking Book Program
- The College Board
- The Florida Center for Reading Research