



Hattiesburg Public Schools

Dyslexia Therapy Manual
2025-2026

HPS Mission

The Mission of Hattiesburg Public Schools is to educate all students to become productive citizens of a dynamic, global community.

HPS Vision

To create a model teaching and learning environment that graduates EVERY student prepared for success in life, college, and the workforce.

Goal

Our goal is to bring the gift of reading to individuals with the written language disorder of dyslexia and to ensure that students receive the systematic, explicit, multisensory instruction necessary for success in all components of literacy.

Introduction

Hattiesburg Public Schools may employ a dyslexia therapist, consultant, or other qualified individuals to serve students with dyslexia, as well as those who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia. For general education students who exhibit such characteristics and have not been diagnosed with dyslexia, dyslexia therapy may serve as a Tier 3 intervention when other reading interventions have not been successful.

Based on research indicating that early intervention is most effective for students who display difficulties in foundational literacy skills, a dyslexia therapist in Hattiesburg Public Schools will primarily focus on serving students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Dyslexia therapy groups will be formed based on the therapist's clinical judgment, but should not exceed four students. The small group setting ensures that instruction will be individualized and allow for the student's progress to drive how quickly or slowly they move through the method. Students may/will be seen 4-5 days per week and progress monitoring will be conducted weekly.

***The Department of Education shall require school districts to conduct four hours of awareness training for dyslexia and other related disorders to all licensed educators and paraprofessionals responsible for instruction. Section 37-173-16, MS Code of 1972: HPS teachers and paraprofessionals have been trained, students may receive MTSS Tier reading intervention from a teacher, tutor, or dyslexia therapist based on data and MTSS documentation.*

Dyslexia Screening

The Mississippi State Department of Education's House Bill 1046 mandates that each local school district screen **ALL** students for dyslexia in the spring of Kindergarten and the Fall of Grade 1 using a State Board of Education approved screener.

If a student fails the screener, the parent or legal guardian will be notified of the results of the screener. A failed screener does not provide a Dyslexia diagnosis. Students who fail the screener will also be referred to MTSS and the Teacher Support Team (TST) will determine if additional Tier II or Tier III supports are needed after reviewing all data, parent concerns, Dyslexia checklist (MTSS Documentation Packet), and teacher recommendations. Results will be placed in the student's cumulative records.

Criteria for Enrollment

The following criteria will be considered by the School's TST (Teacher Support Team) when determining whether or not a student is eligible for enrollment in dyslexia therapy:

- Student has a dyslexia diagnosis on file
- Student has an IEP indicating an eligibility of Specific Learning Disability: Basic Reading Skills or Reading Fluency or 504 plan indicating an impairment of Dyslexia or Phonological Processing Disorder
- First grade student who failed both parts of the fall dyslexia screener and is receiving Tier 3 interventions in ELA for a minimum of 4-6 weeks with limited or no success
- Kindergarten student who failed both Level I and Level II of the spring dyslexia screener and is currently repeating kindergarten, and is receiving Tier 3 interventions
- Kindergarten student who failed both Level I and Level II of the spring dyslexia screener and has an IEP with a reading goal(s); must have an average to above average IQ on file from a formal evaluation
- Student who has previously received dyslexia therapy services and has not yet completed their program

However, the school's teacher support team should review the dyslexia evaluation report to determine the greatest area(s) of need, design interventions, develop strategies, and provide the necessary accommodations to address the needs of your student. Services can be provided in the general education setting through the three-tier model and the intervention process. Support may consist of, but is not limited to, services provided by a therapist, placement in TIER II or TIER III intervention, Orton-Gillingham or multisensory-based intervention programs, classroom accommodations, modifications, and accommodations on state testing.

***Due to the diagnostic and systematic nature of our Dyslexia Therapy program, each school has a limited amount of space available to take dyslexia therapy students. When the school reaches capacity, students who meet the criteria will be placed on a list created to hold a spot for receiving therapy the following year.*

Criteria for Dismissal

The following will be considered when determining eligibility for dismissal from dyslexia therapy:

- Current student grades
- Standardized testing results
- Universal screener data
- IRP
- Progress monitoring/informal assessment data
- Students with excessive absences, as determined by the school's teacher support team (TST), will be subject to consideration for dismissal from dyslexia therapy and may have to participate in alternative intervention.

Class Schedule

Dyslexia Therapy will be implemented four to five days a week for 30-50 minutes. This time will be designated and protected by each school's administration.

Parental Expectations

- In order to ensure success, consistency and regular attendance is a must.
- Provide support and encouragement to your child.
- Open communication regarding questions and concerns about your child's progress and program.

Behavior Policy

- Consistent disruption of the learning environment that results in the inability to provide adequate therapy
- Bullying or speaking negatively to peers and others
- Persistent lack of participating in therapy sessions

If a student refuses to comply with these expectations, it may result in your child being dismissed from the program.

HPS Dyslexia therapist uses research based Orton-Gillingham methodology to deliver comprehensive dyslexia therapy to students with dyslexia and related disorders.

Order of Instruction

**William Carey
University's
Methodology
Phonological Awareness
Handwriting
Initial Reading Deck**

**Spelling Deck
Concept
Reading
Practice-Domains of
Language
Spelling Practice**

**Extended Reading and
Writing
Oral Language
Read Aloud**

Dyslexia Therapy Parental Form

_____ I understand my student, _____, will be receiving dyslexia therapy services from _____ during the school hours. I would like to receive monthly reports on my student's progress.

_____ I do not want my child to participate in these additional services provided by _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Email
preferred method of contact

Parent/Guardian Phone
preferred method of contact

Do you have any expectations, questions, or comments concerning your student and dyslexia therapy?

Hattiesburg Public Schools shall not discriminate in its policies and practices with respect to compensation, terms or conditions of employment because of an individual's race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, height, weight, age, marital status, political beliefs, disability, or handicap which does not impair an individual's ability to perform adequately in that individual's particular position or activity.



Dyslexia Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

GENERAL

- 1. What is dyslexia?** 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.
- 2. What do I do if I think my child has dyslexia?** Contact your child's school and request a TST meeting. The TST is a problem-solving team that consists of parent, teacher, administrator, and others, who look at the available data and discuss the child's academic performance. This team will decide what appropriate interventions should be put in place to address the student's deficits.
- 3. Is the school responsible for evaluating a student for dyslexia?** No, however each local school district shall adopt a policy to ensure that students will be screened by a screener approved by the State Board of Education in the spring of Kindergarten and the fall of Grade 1. The screener must consist of phonological and phonemic awareness, sound/symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, encoding skills and rapid naming. If a student fails the screener, the parent or legal guardian will be notified. The school district, in its discretion, may perform a comprehensive dyslexia evaluation, however, this is not required and is a decision to be made by the district.
- 4. Who is qualified to diagnose a student with dyslexia?** Dyslexia evaluations may be administered by licensed professionals including, psychologists, psychometrists, or speech language pathologists.
- 5. Once a student receives a dyslexia diagnosis, what is the responsibility of the school/district in-regards to this diagnosis?** Each local school district shall develop interventions and strategies to address the needs of a student diagnosed with dyslexia and provide the necessary accommodations to enable

the student to achieve appropriate educational progress allowing the student to become college and/or career ready upon graduation.

- 6. If a student is diagnosed with dyslexia does he/she automatically receive special education services?** No, each local school district shall make an initial determination whether a student with dyslexia qualifies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to receive services and funding under the provisions of the IDEA. If the student is ineligible for special education services, then the local district may decide if a 504 Plan is warranted.
- 7. If a student does not qualify for special education services, yet has a dyslexia diagnosis, what services, if any, will he/she receive?** Students with a dyslexia diagnosis are provided services in the general education setting through the three-tier model and the intervention process. Schools may utilize the information that is provided in the diagnosis documentation to help target interventions.
- 8. Is it possible for a student with dyslexia to struggle in mathematics?** It is possible for a dyslexic student to struggle in his/her math class. A dyslexic student may have difficulty with math facts, multi-step problems, and directionality, just to name a few areas that may be of concern. Math teachers may provide accommodations in the general education classroom. Continued communication with your child's math teacher is recommended.
- 9. If a student is dyslexic does that mean he/she also has Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, or Attention Deficit Disorder?** An individual can have more than one learning or behavioral disorder. Although disabilities may co-occur, one is not the cause of the other. In various studies 50% of those diagnosed with a learning or reading disability have also been diagnosed with ADHD.