

2019-20

Evaluation of the Dyslexia Services Program

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

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Superintendent of Schools*



2019-20

Evaluation of the Dyslexia Services Program

Approved Report of the Department of Evaluation and Assessment

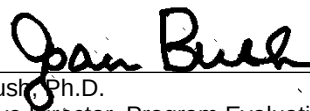
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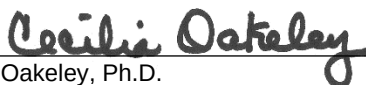
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Afr Am	African American
Approaches+/Appr+	Approaches grade level or above performance standard
BOY	Beginning-of-Year
EOY	End-of-Year
E&A	Evaluation and Assessment
EC	Early Childhood
EL	English learner
EOC	<i>End-of-Course</i>
<i>Esperanza</i>	Esperanza Spanish Language Program
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FLAI	Fundamental Literacy Ability Index
IAP	Individual Accommodations Plan
IEP	Individual Education Plan
KN	Kindergarten
Masters	Masters grade level or above performance standard
Meets+	Meets grade level or above performance standard
MTA	Multisensory Teaching Approach
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
PK	Pre-Kindergarten
SPED	Special Education
STAAR	<i>State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness.</i>
SD	Standard Deviation
TEC	Texas Education Code
TELPAS	<i>Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System</i>
US	United States
<i>Wilson</i>	Wilson Reading System
WIST	<i>Word Identification and Spelling Test</i>

Evaluation of the Dyslexia Services Program

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD), funded by \$1,243,117 of district general operating funds (a decrease from \$1,284,326 in 2018-19) provides campus-based services districtwide for students with dyslexia. The mission of the Dyslexia Services program is “to assist students with dyslexia in the attainment of independent literacy skills by providing services and support to students, their parents, and school personnel through identification, instruction, and community awareness.”¹

Dyslexia is one of the most common language-based learning disabilities; among those exhibiting reading difficulties, 70 to 80 percent are believed to have some form of dyslexia. Estimates place the percentage of people who have dyslexia between 5 and 10 percent;² depending on the definition, this percentage can reach as high as 17 percent.³

Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services has expanded notably over the past four years. In 2016-17, 14 dyslexia evaluators served districtwide, programming was primarily video based, and no dyslexia interventionists were employed. In 2019-20, 183 staff members comprised the Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services department, with 147 dyslexia interventionists serving one to two campuses each, and 27 dyslexia evaluators identifying students and prescribing accommodations.

This evaluation focused on continued district efforts to provide quality dyslexia services to students and their families and to support campuses to serve these students effectively. Specifically, this 2019-20 evaluation planned to examine: 1) the program budget; 2) program components; 3) the identification process and available programming; 4) characteristics of district students with dyslexia; 5) efforts to identify dyslexia early; 6) characteristics of program staff members; 7) dyslexia-related professional development; 8) education and support provided to parents of students with dyslexia; 9) growth in literacy skills and trends in reading and writing achievement for students with dyslexia, and 10) perceptions of interventionists during at-home learning.

For topics included in this report that were affected by the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning starting on March 23, 2020, resulting changes to operations, supports,

and outcomes were addressed within each section of the report, as appropriate.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the components of the Dyslexia Services program?

Before 2017-18, Dyslexia Services used structured literacy programs and video-based programming to support multisensory language learning for students with dyslexia. Video-based programming was the primary method of support for identified students until 2017-18, when the district amplified efforts to expand and enhance services, including increased use of the following systems.

Wilson Reading System. The *Wilson Reading System* (*Wilson*) currently is the most widely used structured literacy program in the district for students with dyslexia. The *Wilson System* is an intensive literacy program provided by a highly-trained teacher – a dyslexia interventionist – to individual students or to small groups in kindergarten through grade eight for 45 minutes a day, four to five days a week. Dyslexia interventionists earn special certification to provide *Wilson Reading System* instruction and support to students. The *Wilson Reading System* focuses on reading, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Other Literacy Programs for Dyslexic Learners. The district also uses 1) the *Esperanza Spanish Language Program* (*Esperanza*) for Spanish literacy (elementary grades); 2) the video-based *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children Dyslexia Training Program* (elementary grades); and 3) the video-based *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children Literacy Program* (secondary grades).

Support for Teachers and Parents

Dyslexia interventionists also work with teachers, providing training in the Multisensory Teaching Approach (MTA), a teaching method specially designed for learners with dyslexia that directly involves students in seeing, hearing, saying, and writing during instruction (Birsh, 2019).

¹ <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/52188>, retrieved 09/28/18.

² A January 2019 report by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) similarly noted that the prevalence of dyslexia in the United States “has not

been determined definitively but [that] the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimates the rate at approximately 10%” (p. ix).

³ University of Michigan Dyslexia Help Center, <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/answers/faq>.

Dyslexia interventionists lead trainings twice per year for campus staff members on dyslexia characteristics. They also provide regular support to parents of students with dyslexia through sessions on supporting continued student growth in the summer and on additional available community supports.

How are students with dyslexia in the Dallas ISD identified, and how many students received dyslexia programming and support?

Identification Process

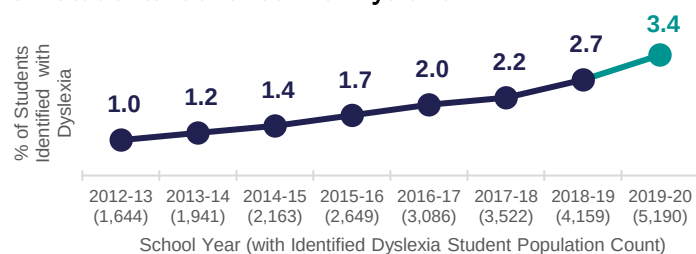
Dyslexia potentially can be identified as soon as a child begins learning to read, and, generally, the sooner dyslexia is identified and intervention provided, the more promising the developmental trajectory.⁴ District students can be referred for assessment through a campus staff member or committee, or by a parent. According to Texas House Bill (HB) 1886, grade one students must be screened for reading difficulties like dyslexia by mid-school year. In 2019-20, campuses used the *Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment System (TX-KEA)* for kindergarten students; *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)* in grade one; *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)* or *ISIP* in grade two; and *MAP*, *STAAR*, or *Common Assessments* for middle school students. Campuses review screening data and grades to assess whether dyslexia may be present.

When dyslexia is suspected and other interventions [like through the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework]⁵ were provided but unsuccessful, parent consent for a dyslexia assessment is obtained, and a variety of additional student data are reviewed, as applicable. After a dyslexia evaluator assesses the student, student support teams and parents meet to determine if the student requires dyslexia services. If so, an Individual Accommodations Plan (IAP)⁶ is created for the student and interventions begin. If the student is identified with dyslexia and needing special education (SPED) services, dyslexia accommodations are integrated into the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Longitudinal Trends in Dyslexia Identification

The rate of district students identified with dyslexia increased from 1.0 percent in 2012-13 to 3.4 percent in 2019-20 (Figure E1). Increases will likely continue due to increased dyslexia staff and improved universal screening.

Figure E1: 2012-2019 Percentages and Number of Dallas ISD Students Identified with Dyslexia



Source: 2018-19 evaluation report (2012-13 through 2018-19; Mejia, 2019). Dallas ISD PEIMS demographic snapshot data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Includes students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date of each year.

Program Placement

As in 2018-19, most students needing Dyslexia Services received *Wilson Language* programming (2018-19: 78%; 2019-20: 74%; Table E1). Because evaluations for dyslexia require in-person interaction between a student and a dyslexia evaluator, dyslexia evaluations were suspended in 2019-20 during at-home learning. This change reduced the number of students placed in 2019-20 Dyslexia programs.

Table E1: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Program Placement of Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia

Dyslexia Program	2018-19 (N=2,287)		2019-20 (N=1,112)	
	N	%	n	%
Wilson Language	1,777	77.7	820	73.7
Esperanza	313	13.7	226	20.3
MTA/Alphabetic Phonics	139	6.1	21	1.9
Dyslexia Training Program	27	1.2	0	0.0
Literacy Program	19	0.8	11	1.0
Other	12	0.5	34	3.1

Source: Dyslexia Services, November 2019 (2018-19) and June 2020 (2019-20).

Note: Total Ns = students actively receiving programming.

What were the characteristics of students served by Dyslexia Services, including one-year trends?

In 2019-20, 5,190 district students were identified with dyslexia. Over half of these students were male (59%; 2016-17: 61%; 2018-19: 60%), eight percentage points above the district rate (51%). While some research has attributed this difference to externalizing problem behavior leading to referral process bias toward diagnosis of boys (Shaywitz et al., 1990), more recent studies provide some evidence that males may be more vulnerable to learning disorders like dyslexia, and, while both boys and girls are commonly under-identified in schools, girls are more frequently under-identified (Quinn & Wagner, 2013).

⁴ See <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353557> for more information.

⁵ See Springer and Kim (2020).

⁶ IAPs are also called section 504 plans and provide accommodations for students not meeting the criteria for SPED but require accommodations to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

The rate of 2019-20 English learners (ELs) with dyslexia (40.7%) was lower than the districtwide percentage of ELs (45.7%), possibly indicating a need for more screening and identification of ELs with dyslexia. Also, 36.3 percent of students with dyslexia received SPED services, up two percentage points from 2018-19 (34.3%). SPED program leadership attributed these findings to a continuum of severity in dyslexia symptoms and the possibility of concurrent disabilities.

What progress was made in 2019-20 to meet the Dyslexia Services early identification goal?

In terms of developmental capacity, most students in prekindergarten through grade three are learning to read; by the end of grade three, most students should be transitioning to reading to learn. This literacy foundation sets a critical stage for academic, career, and social-emotional potential. Students who fail to attain literacy in the early years are at significant risk of dropping out of school.⁷ The goal of Dyslexia Services was to identify and effectively support students with dyslexia as early as possible.

Increases in Dyslexia Services Staffing

To meet the goal of early identification, the program increased the number of staff members who provide dyslexia services. Shortly before 2017-18, the district hired a Dyslexia Services program director. In 2017-18, the program added 22 dyslexia interventionists. Increasing each year since, 147 dyslexia interventionists and 27 lead dyslexia evaluators were employed in 2019-20.

Roles and Dispersion of Staff Members

Dyslexia interventionists, the largest group of Dyslexia Services staff members ($N=147$), are certified teachers with specialized dyslexia training. Interventionists work with identified students to provide supplemental multisensory instruction, most commonly through the *Wilson Reading System*, and continually assess their achievement levels. Further, interventionists train teachers to provide effective curricular accommodations for identified students, according to IAP or IEP guidelines. Interventionists served one or two campuses each, and 168 district campuses (72%) were assigned an interventionist either full- or half-time (139 elementary schools; 29 middle schools).

Dyslexia evaluators ($N=27$) identify needs and prescribe appropriate accommodations and services for students with dyslexia. Including the program director, two accommodations coordinators, staff supervisors, and administrative assistants, 193 employees served the

Dyslexia Services department as of spring 2020. Increased numbers of Dyslexia Services staff members and the type, intensity, and dispersion of services provided districtwide has likely contributed to increased and earlier identification of students with dyslexia.

What types of dyslexia-related training was provided to staff members in 2019-20?

Training for Dyslexia Services Central Staff Members

Attendance at regular professional development (PD) sessions was required of all program staff members. Topics covered for Dyslexia Services staff member PD in 2019-10 included 1) *Wilson* programming, 2) *Esperanza* programming, 3) instruction on the TEA *Dyslexia Handbook*, 4) policies and procedures for dyslexia interventionists, 5) Region 10 resources, 6) interpreting a dyslexia evaluation, 7) PowerSchool navigation, 8) provision of dyslexia-related PD to campuses, 9) *WIST* training, 10) instruction on Section 504, 11) MTSS, and 12) Root Cause Analysis. In addition, interventionists and evaluators met regularly for collaboration and mentoring.

Program leadership maintained regular, detailed communications with dyslexia interventionists and evaluators during at-home learning, with a focus on continuation of services. Staff members used scripts provided by program leadership for communicating effectively and efficiently with parents and attempted to communicate multiple times weekly with parents during at-home learning to ensure students were effectively supported by parents and interventionists. Communications provided links and instructions for navigating online instructional resources, including for the *Wilson* program.⁸

Training for Campus Staff Members

Sessions provided to campus staff members covered 1) the nature of dyslexia, 2) House Bill 1886, 3) the dyslexia screening process, 4) teacher checklists for dyslexia identification, and 5) the role of dyslexia interventionists.

What services and supports did Dyslexia Services offer to parents of students in 2019-20?

Sessions for parents included 1) the role of dyslexia interventionists, 2) the nature of dyslexia, 3) how to meet the needs of students with dyslexia, 4) dyslexia programming, 5) accommodations, and 6) at-home support.

⁷ See <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx> for more information.

⁸ See <https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/pages/tips-for-wrs-online-lesson-delivery/> for more information on resources Dyslexia services staff members provided to address *Wilson* online instruction.

How did students with dyslexia perform and grow in literacy skills and reading and writing achievement in 2019-20?

Because the 2019-20 EOY *WIST* administration and 2020 STAAR were cancelled after the COVID-19 transition to at-home learning, 2019-20 literacy growth and achievement outcomes could not be included in this report.

What were the experiences of Dyslexia Services interventionists during the spring 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning?

In spring 2020, Dyslexia Services staff members administered a survey soliciting feedback from interventionists about experiences during at-home learning. The survey was sent to all interventionists on June 1, 2020 and was closed on June 10, 2020. Of the 147 dyslexia interventionists invited, 93 (63%) completed the survey.

Engagement with Students

Student engagement with dyslexia interventionists varied widely during at-home learning. While 54 percent of respondents indicated that at least half of their students logged in each day, 18 percent of respondents said 25 percent or fewer of their students logged in each day. In addition, when comparing their ability to support students during at-home learning compared to when on campus, most interventionists (72%) reported that they were at least somewhat less adequately able to support their students, meaning a small proportion of respondents (27%) felt they could provide at least the same level of support to students.

The highest percentage of respondents in all grade-level groups considered the communication with students during at-home learning to be easy or very easy, but, importantly, from 23 percent (grades 3-5) to 40 percent (grades K-2) of respondents reported having a difficult or very difficult time communicating with students. These findings indicate that communication hurdles should be carefully examined, and support should be provided to interventionists – particularly to those who serve the younger grade levels.

Engagement with Parents

Dyslexia interventionists reported a notable mix of experiences with engagement with parents and parental support of students during at-home learning. While approximately half (52%) of interventionists reported that overall it was easy or very easy to communicate with parents/caregivers during at-home learning, one in three (32%) reported that it was difficult. Also, the two most common reasons interventionists heard from parents for why students did not log in during at-home learning were 1) no parental supervision (54%) and 2) no internet connectivity (39%).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus on year-over-year growth to ensure that students with dyslexia keep up with peers in reading.

Review ways to improve online engagement in instruction and with interventionists to support students during possible future at-home learning.

Review communication and technological hurdles with students and caregivers during at-home learning and provide more communication support to dyslexia interventionists – particularly to those who serve the younger grade levels.

Evaluation of the Dyslexia Services Program

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION⁹

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) provides specialized campus-based services across the district for students who have been identified with dyslexia. The stated mission of the Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services program is “to assist students with dyslexia in the attainment of independent literacy skills by providing services and support to students, their parents, and school personnel through identification, instruction, and community awareness.”¹⁰

According to research from the University of Michigan Dyslexia Center, dyslexia is one of the most common language-based learning disabilities, and among those exhibiting reading difficulties, 70 to 80 percent are believed to have some form of dyslexia. Estimates place the percentage of people who have dyslexia between 5 and 10 percent¹¹ – though, depending on the definition, this percentage can reach as high as 17 percent.¹²

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia in the following way:

(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.*¹³

Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services uses a variety of methods to support students identified with dyslexia. Programs used with these students include the *Wilson Reading System*, the *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children’s Literacy and Dyslexia Training* programs, and the *Esperanza Spanish Language Program*. Of identified students in the district currently receiving formal dyslexia support, the largest proportion engage with the *Wilson Reading System*.

The Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services program has undergone notable expansion over the past four years. In 2016-17, 14 dyslexia evaluators served across the district to identify and prescribe accommodations for students with dyslexia. Programming was primarily video based, and no dyslexia interventionists were yet employed. As of the 2019-20 school year, 183 staff members comprise the Dallas

⁹ Portions of this report were adapted from Mejia, 2019.

¹⁰ <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/52188>, retrieved 09/28/18.

¹¹ A January 2019 report by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) similarly noted that the prevalence of dyslexia in the United States “has not been determined definitively but [that] the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimates the rate at approximately 10%” (p. ix).

¹² University of Michigan Dyslexia Help Center, <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/answers/faq>.

¹³ See <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003>, retrieved 09/28/18 and 01/19/20.

ISD Dyslexia Services department, with 147 dyslexia interventionists serving one to two campuses each across the district, and 27 dyslexia evaluators working to identify students and prescribe accommodations for them. More detail on this human resource expansion can be found later in this report.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation focused on continued increased efforts by the Dallas ISD to provide quality dyslexia services to students and their families and to support campus staff members in serving these students effectively. Specifically, this evaluation aimed to examine:

- Dyslexia Services budget information;
- Dyslexia Services program components for 2019-20, highlighting changes from previous years;
- The process for identifying students eligible for dyslexia services and the types of programming these students received;
- Characteristics of students identified with dyslexia in the Dallas ISD;
- Efforts to achieve the program goal of early identification of dyslexia;
- Characteristics of program staff members in 2019-20 and trends since 2016-17 in the number and type of staff members providing specialized dyslexia services in the district;
- Dyslexia-related professional development provided to Dallas ISD staff members in 2019-20;
- Education and support provided to parents of students with dyslexia in 2019-20;
- Growth in literacy skills from beginning-of-year (BOY) to end-of-year (EOY) on the *Word Identification and Spelling Test (WIST)* among students with dyslexia participating in the *Wilson Reading Program*; and
- One- and two-year trends in achievement on *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* reading (grades 3 to 8) and writing (grades 4 and 7), and *STAAR* reading progress measures (grades 4 to 8) for students with dyslexia.
- Perceptions and experiences of dyslexia interventionists during spring 2020 at-home learning.

The last day of in-class instruction in the Dallas ISD during 2019-20 was March 13, 2020. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning after spring break beginning on March 23, 2020. As a result, district operations and support functions were modified accordingly, and most state and district assessments were cancelled for the year. For topics included in this evaluation report that were affected by the transition to at-home learning, resulting changes to operations, supports, and outcomes will be outlined and summarized within each section of the report, as appropriate.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

How were Dyslexia Services in the Dallas ISD funded during 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluators summarized 2019-20 program funding information obtained from Dyslexia Services program staff members. Data for 2018-19 were taken from the 2018-19 evaluation report (Mejan, 2019).

Results

The Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services budget in 2019-20 was funded by \$1,243,117 in district general operating funds, a decrease from \$1,284,326 in 2018-19.

What were the components of the Dyslexia Services program?

Methodology

The evaluators conducted interviews with Dyslexia Services central staff members and reviewed program documents to obtain and synthesize information about Dyslexia Services program components.

Results

Direct-to-Student Services

Before 2017-18. In previous years, Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services used structured literacy programs as well as video-based programming to support multisensory language learning for students identified with dyslexia. Video-based programming was the primary method of support provided to identified students until 2017-18, when the district began a concerted effort to expand and enhance services to these students.

2017-18 to Present. *Wilson Reading System.* The *Wilson Reading System (Wilson)* currently is the most widely used structured literacy program in the Dallas ISD for students identified with dyslexia. The *Wilson System* is an intensive literacy program provided by a highly-trained teacher – a dyslexia interventionist – to individual students or to small groups of students in kindergarten through grade eight for 45 minutes a day, four to five days a week. Dyslexia interventionists typically earn special certification to provide *Wilson Reading System* instruction and support to students with language-based learning difficulties. *The Wilson Reading System* focuses on reading, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Other Literacy Programs for Dyslexic Learners. The *Esperanza Spanish Language Program (Esperanza)* provides daily, hour-long structured multisensory literacy lessons in Spanish for elementary level students.¹⁴ The goal of the *Esperanza* program is to provide a multisensory, sequential, systematic approach to achieve Spanish literacy.

The *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children Dyslexia Training Program*, also used by Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services, is a video-based program for students in grades one through five. It provides daily,

¹⁴ <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/52188>, retrieved 09/28/18.

one-hour long lessons covering the alphabet, reading, cursive handwriting, spelling, listening, and language history. The *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children Literacy Program* also is used at the secondary level and likewise provides daily, hour-long video-based lessons in categories comparable to the elementary level program.

Support for Teachers and Parents of Students with Dyslexia

In addition to these direct-to-student services, Dyslexia Services also employs dyslexia interventionists to work with classroom teachers, providing training in the Multisensory Teaching Approach (MTA), a teaching method specially designed for use with learners with dyslexia. As described by Judith Birsh (2019),

“Multisensory teaching and learning is a form of direct instruction of the phonologic, morphemic, semantic and syntactic layers of language. Multisensory strategies...involve visual, auditory, tactile-kinesthetic sensory systems, and/or articulatory-motor components while linking listening, speaking, reading and writing; this means it directly involves students in seeing, hearing, saying and writing during instruction.”¹⁵

Twice each school year, dyslexia interventionists lead trainings on the campus(es) to which they are assigned to educate staff on the characteristics of dyslexia. Additional detail about Dyslexia Services staff member roles (including dyslexia evaluators) and characteristics is provided later in this report.

Dyslexia Services staff members also provide support throughout the year to parents of students with dyslexia, offering sessions on topics such as how to support their children’s continued growth during the summer and on additional supports available through other community entities. Additional detail on education and training offered to parents of students with dyslexia in 2019-20 is provided later in this report.

How are students with dyslexia in the Dallas ISD identified, and how many identified students received specialized dyslexia programming and support?

Methodology

Identification Process and Longitudinal Trends

The evaluators used interviews and other communications with Dyslexia Services staff members to collect and summarize information on student identification processes. In addition, the evaluators used the Dallas ISD Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) snapshot data file for October 28, 2019 and conducted frequency analyses to determine the rate of district students flagged as having dyslexia in 2019-20. Longitudinal student identification data were taken from the 2018-19 evaluation report (Mejan, 2019).

Program Placement

The evaluators reviewed departmental documents and interviewed Dyslexia Services staff members regarding student placement among the programs for students identified with dyslexia (i.e.,

¹⁵ For more information on the Multisensory Teaching Approach, please see: <http://bit.ly/2QAFSGa>.

Wilson, MTA, Esparanza). Frequency and content analyses were used to summarize placement information.

Results

Identification Process and Longitudinal Trends

Identification Process. Research on dyslexia indicates that the disorder potentially can be identified as soon as a child begins learning to read, and, generally, the earlier a child is identified and intervention provided, the more promising the developmental trajectory.¹⁶ Dyslexia Services documents indicate that students in the Dallas ISD can be referred for dyslexia assessment through a campus staff member or committee, or by parent referral. According to Texas House Bill (HB) 1886, students in grade one must be screened for reading difficulties such as dyslexia by mid-school year. Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services currently instructs campuses to use as screeners the *Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment System (TX-KEA)* for students in kindergarten; *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)* for grade one students; *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)* or *ISIP* for grade two students; and *MAP, STAAR*, or *Common Assessments* for middle school students. Campuses are required to review dyslexia screening data along with course grades to determine whether dyslexia may be present.

When dyslexia is suspected and where other warranted interventions [such as those available through the Dallas ISD Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework]¹⁷ have been provided and have not produced the desired outcome(s), parent consent forms for a dyslexia assessment are obtained, and additional student data from a variety of sources are further reviewed. These data may include standardized test scores, hearing and vision test data, attendance records, schoolwork samples, home language survey data, and outside evaluation findings, as applicable. A dyslexia evaluator then conducts a formal dyslexia assessment; the assessment is professionally scored, and student support teams and parents meet to discuss findings, including whether the student meets the criteria for receiving specialized dyslexia services. If the criteria are met, an Individual Accommodations Plan (IAP)¹⁸ is created for the identified student and interventions begin shortly thereafter. If the student is dually-identified with dyslexia and for special education (SPED) services, accommodations for dyslexia are integrated into the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Longitudinal Trends in Identification of Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia. The number and percentage of students identified with dyslexia in the Dallas ISD has increased steadily each year over the past eight school years (Figure 1). In 2012-13, 1.0 percent ($N=1,644$) of all students in the Dallas ISD were identified with dyslexia; by 2019-20, that percentage had more than tripled to 3.4 percent ($N=5,190$; Figure 1). The sharpest increase occurred between 2017-18 and 2019-20, with a 1.2 percentage point increase districtwide. With the addition of approximately 147 dyslexia interventionists and 27 dyslexia evaluators

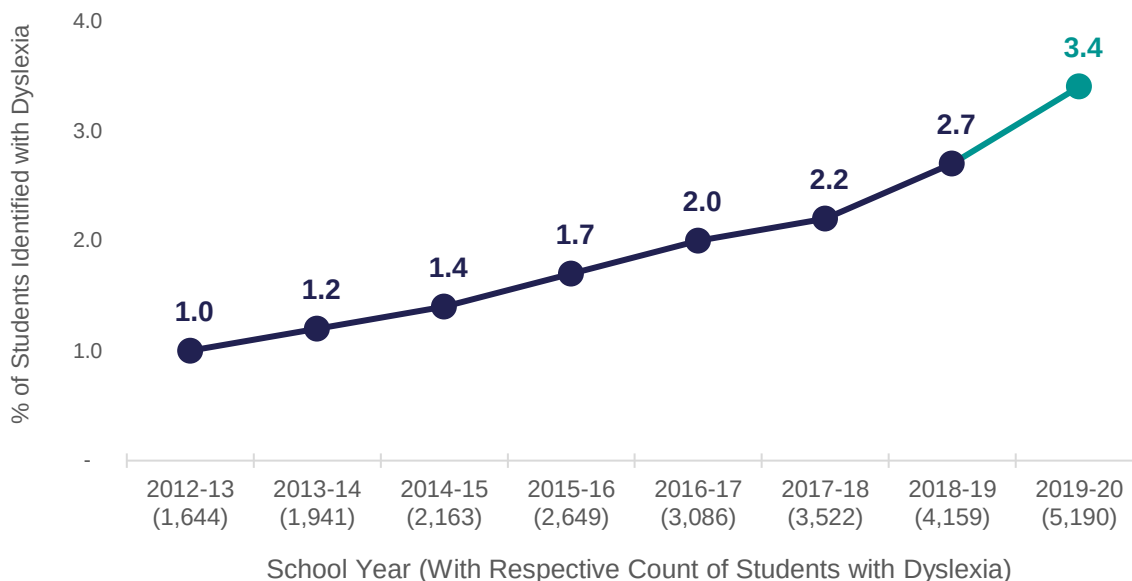
¹⁶ See <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353557> for more information.

¹⁷ For more information about the MTSS framework in the Dallas ISD, please refer to the 2019-20 Evaluation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) report (Springer and Kim, 2020).

¹⁸ An IAP is also referred to as a section 504 plan and provides accommodations for students who do not meet the criteria to receive special education services but still require certain accommodations to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

serving campuses throughout the district as of 2019-20, as well as the continued implementation of MTSS, which emphasizes universal screening, it is likely that the percentage of students in the district identified with dyslexia will continue to rise over the next several years.

Figure 1: 2012-13 to 2019-20 Percentage and Number of Dallas ISD Students Identified with Dyslexia



Source: 2018-19 evaluation report (2012-13 through 2018-19; Mejan, 2019). Dallas ISD PEIMS demographic snapshot data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Includes students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date of each year.

Program Placement

As in 2018-19, the highest percentage of students who received Dyslexia Services received *Wilson Language* programming (2018-19: 78%; 2019-20: 74%). The second most-common program in both 2018-19 (14%) and 2019-20 (20%) was *Esperanza* (Table 1). Because student evaluations for dyslexia require in-person interaction between a student and a dyslexia evaluator, evaluations for dyslexia were suspended in 2019-20 after the transition to at-home learning. This change reduced the number of students placed in a Dyslexia Services program during 2019-20.

Table 1: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Program Placement of Dallas ISD Identified Students with Dyslexia

Dyslexia Program	2018-19 (N=2,287)		2019-20 (N=1,112)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Wilson Language	1,777	77.7	820	73.7
Esperanza	313	13.7	226	20.3
MTA/Alphabetic Phonics	139	6.1	21	1.9
Dyslexia Training Program	27	1.2	0	0.0
Literacy Program	19	0.8	11	1.0
Other	12	0.5	34	3.1

Source: Dyslexia Services internal records provided November 2019 (2018-19) and June 2020 (2019-20).

Note: Totals include students actively receiving Dyslexia Services programming during the year.

What were the characteristics of students served by Dyslexia Services, including one-year trends?

Methodology

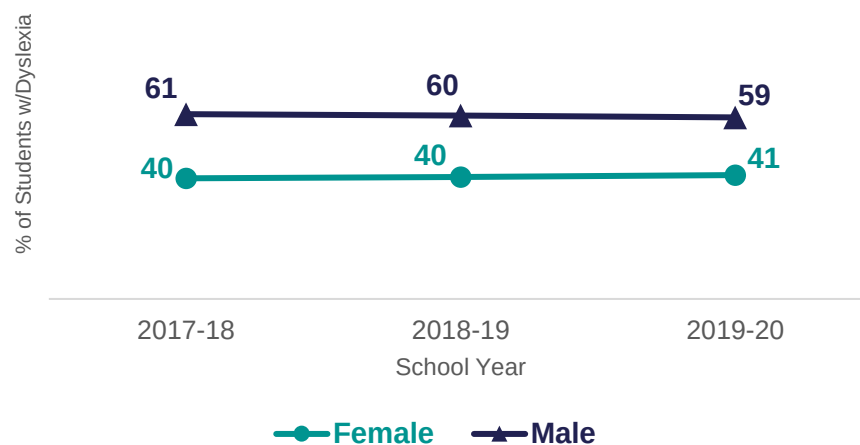
To identify characteristics of students served by Dyslexia Services, the evaluators used the district student demographic data file for the PEIMS snapshot date of October 28, 2019. Frequency and crosstabs analyses were used to identify the number and percentage of students identified with dyslexia by grade level and within various student groups. Comparison data from previous years were taken from the 2018-19 evaluation report (Mejan, 2019). The evaluators also reviewed literature on trends in identification of dyslexia, focusing on sex differences, to provide additional context.

Results

Sex Differences

In 2019-20, 5,190 district students were identified as having dyslexia. Males constituted 59 percent of these students (2017-18: 61%; 2018-19: 60%; Figure 2), a rate of male representation eight percentage points above the districtwide rate of males (51%) in 2019-20. Females constituted 41 percent of all students identified with dyslexia in 2019-20, eight percentage points below the districtwide percentage of female students (49%). A frequently-cited study by Shaywitz, et al. (1990) found no significant difference in the prevalence of reading disorders between boys and girls. Instead, bias in the referral process is commonly in favor of boys, in part because of the greater tendency of boys than girls to engage in externalizing problem behavior (i.e., rambunctiousness). In 2013, Quinn and Wagner published a study suggesting that some modification to the Shaywitz study claim may be in order, asserting in particular that: 1) males are in fact more vulnerable to learning disorders such as dyslexia, 2) both boys and girls with this learning disorder are commonly under-identified in schools, but 3) girls are still more commonly under-identified in schools compared to boys.

Figure 2: 2017-18 (N=3,522), 2018-19 (N=4,159) and 2019-20 (N=5,190) Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia by Sex



Source: District PEIMS demographic data files for the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19) and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Other Student Groups

As shown in Table 2, between early childhood (EC) and grade 12 in 2019-20, students in grade four represented the highest percentage of identified students with dyslexia (13.7%), followed by those in grades five (12.7%), three (12.5%) and six (12.2%). By race/ethnicity, proportions of students with dyslexia were comparable to districtwide percentages, though the rate of white students with dyslexia (6.7%) was slightly higher than the districtwide percentage of white students (5.1%).

Some differences emerged among student groups. First, the rate of English learners (ELs) in 2019-20 with dyslexia (40.7%) was five percentage points lower than the districtwide percentage of ELs (45.7%), indicating a possible need for increased efforts to screen and identify ELs who have dyslexia. Also, 36.3 percent of students with dyslexia received Dallas ISD special education (SPED) services, an increase of two percentage points from 2018-19 (34.3%); districtwide, 9.4 percent of all 2019-20 students participated in SPED. SPED program administrators indicated that this difference in percentage of students in SPED can be attributed to the existence of a continuum of severity in dyslexia symptoms, and, in some cases, the presence of other disabilities that may co-occur with dyslexia. Both phenomena can lead to placement in the SPED program in addition to receipt of specialized dyslexia services.

Table 2: 2019-20 Characteristics of Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia

	Students with Dyslexia (N=5,190)		Districtwide Students (N=153,494)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Grade Level				
EC	1	0.0	531	0.3
PK	0	0.0	11,788	7.7
KN	1	0.0	10,938	7.1
1	62	1.2	11,229	7.3
2	410	7.9	11,063	7.2
3	647	12.5	11,135	7.3
4	709	13.7	11,364	7.4
5	660	12.7	11,974	7.8
6	632	12.2	11,089	7.2
7	533	10.3	10,974	7.1
8	453	8.7	10,300	6.7
9	406	7.8	12,860	8.4
10	321	6.2	10,666	6.9
11	224	4.3	9,258	6.0
12	131	2.5	8,325	5.4
Sex				
Female	2,105	40.6	74,976	48.8
Male	3,085	59.4	78,518	51.2
Ethnicity/Race				
Hispanic/Latino	3,614	69.6	108,063	70.4
Black or African American	1,100	21.2	32,627	21.3
White	346	6.7	7,826	5.1
Other	130	2.5	4,978	3.2
Other Student Groups				
Economically Disadvantaged	4,297	82.8	129,443	84.3
English Learner	2,111	40.7	70,171	45.7
Special Education	1,883	36.3	14,478	9.4
Homeless	63	1.2	2,523	1.6

Source: Dallas ISD PEIMS student demographic file for 10/28/19.

What progress was made in 2019-20 to meet the Dyslexia Services early identification goal?

Methodology

The Goal of Early Identification

The evaluators used interviews and other communications with Dyslexia Services staff members to collect information on efforts to increase early identification of dyslexia among district students. The evaluators also reviewed research literature to provide greater context regarding the goal of early identification.

Increases in Dyslexia Services Staffing

Data on staffing changes across the past four school years were obtained through interviews with program staff members and review of Dyslexia Services department documents.

Results

The Goal of Early Identification

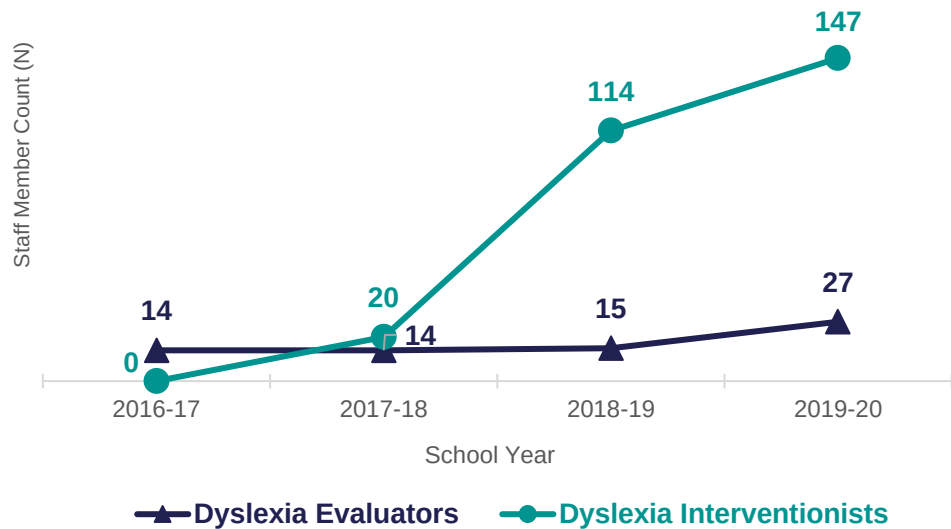
In terms of developmental capacity, most students in prekindergarten through grade three are expected to be learning in order to read; by the end of grade three, most students should be transitioning to reading in order to learn. This foundation of literacy sets a critical stage for academic, career, and social-emotional potential. Students who fail to attain literacy in their early years are at significant risk of dropping out of school.¹⁹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation report, *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, notes that “every student who does not complete high school costs our society an estimated \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity. High school dropouts also are more likely than those who graduate to be arrested or have a child while still a teenager, both of which incur additional financial and social costs” (2010). Early identification of reading difficulties such as dyslexia, therefore, is critical, and Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services administrative staff members thus have made it a goal of the department to identify and effectively support students with dyslexia as early as possible.

Increases in Dyslexia Services Staffing

To meet this goal of early identification, Dyslexia Services program leadership over the past few years identified certain needed elements to reach and effectively intervene for students with dyslexia. Accordingly, the Dyslexia Services program has implemented several changes in recent years. One change entailed a significant increase in the number of staff members who provide specialized dyslexia services.

Shortly before the 2017-18 school year, the Dallas ISD hired a program director for Dyslexia Services. In 2017-18, the program added 22 dyslexia interventionists. By January 2019, the Dallas ISD employed 114 dyslexia interventionists and 15 dyslexia evaluators throughout the district. As of January 2020, a total of 147 dyslexia interventionists and 27 lead dyslexia evaluators were employed throughout the district (Figure 3).

¹⁹ See <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx> for more information.

Figure 3: 2016-17 to 2019-20 Dyslexia Services Personnel Growth

Source: Dyslexia Services program central staff member interview conducted 01/07/20 and Dyslexia Services internal documents provided 01/07/20.

Roles and Dispersion of Staff Members

As noted, the largest group of Dyslexia Services program staff members in 2019-20 were dyslexia interventionists ($N=147$). Dyslexia interventionists are certified teachers with specialized training in dyslexia. Interventionists work with identified students to provide supplemental multisensory instruction, most commonly through the *Wilson Reading System*. They also continually assess the achievement levels of identified students. Further, interventionists train campus teachers to provide effective curricular accommodations for identified students, according to the guidelines established in the IAP or IEP. Dyslexia interventionists served one or two campuses each in 2019-20. As of February 2020, 168 campuses in the Dallas ISD (72%) were assigned a dyslexia interventionist either full- or half-time.²⁰ Of these campuses, 139 were elementary schools and 29 were middle schools.

The second-largest group of Dyslexia Services staff members, dyslexia evaluators ($N=27$), work to identify needs and prescribe appropriate accommodations and services for students with dyslexia. Including the program director, two accommodations coordinators, staff supervisors, and administrative assistants, 193 staff members were employed by the Dyslexia Services department as of spring 2020.²¹

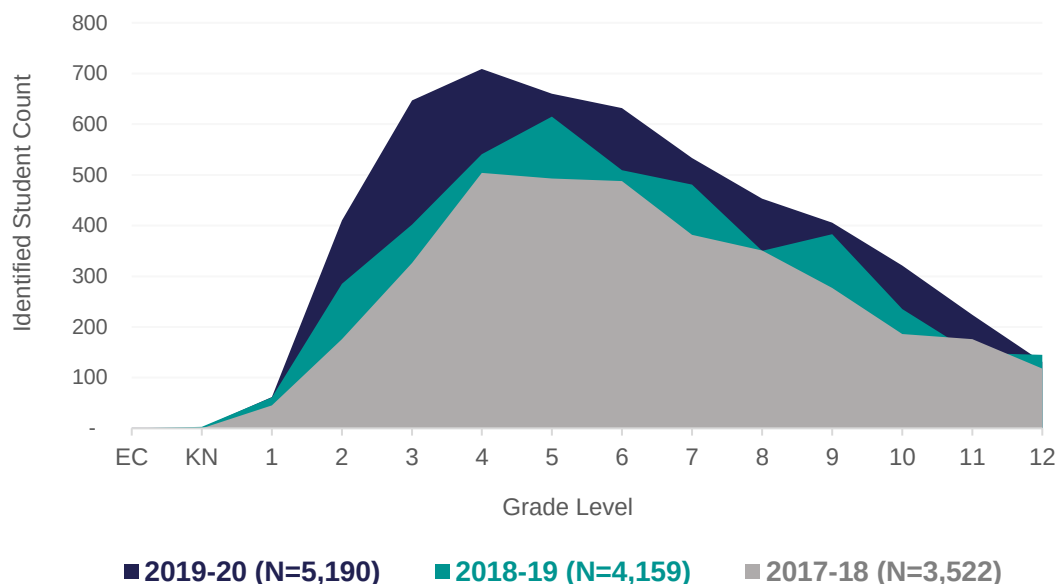
Staffing and Early Identification of Students with Dyslexia

Increased numbers of Dyslexia Services staff members and the type, intensity, and dispersion of services provided throughout the Dallas ISD correlate both with an overall increase in the number and percentage of students in the district identified with dyslexia as well as in the number and percentage of students identified in earlier grades. Figure 4 shows this trend in student identification by grade level for the past three school years.

²⁰ Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services program staff members and Dyslexia Services internal documents, provided February 2020.

²¹ Staff member counts are based on the district personnel file dated 01/07/20 and on conversations with Dyslexia Services program central staff members.

Figure 4: 2017-18 to 2019-20 Count of Students Identified with Dyslexia by Year and Grade Level



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data files for 10/27/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Numbers and percentages by data point are provided in Appendix A.

What were the characteristics of staff members serving in the Dyslexia Services program during 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluators obtained job codes for the two largest groups of Dyslexia Services central staff members: leads (lead dyslexia evaluators and lead dyslexia interventionists) and non-leads (dyslexia interventionists). The evaluators conducted frequency analyses on the district personnel file dated December 10, 2019 to summarize staff member characteristics. After identifying role by job code (lead or non-lead), results were grouped by sex, race/ethnicity, highest degree earned, and years of service. Context information on staffing changes was obtained through interviews and other communications with Dyslexia Services program staff members and summarized.

Results

Characteristics of Dyslexia Services Staff Members

Most leads (86%) and non-leads (95%) were female (Table 3). The largest proportion of leads were white (41%), and the largest percentage of non-leads were Black or African American (50%). High rates of both leads (45%) and non-leads (41%) held a master's degree as the highest degree earned. The average number of years of experience in the Dallas ISD was also high for both groups: 12.1 years for leads and 9.3 years for non-leads.

Table 3: 2019-20 Characteristics of Dyslexia Services Program Staff Members

	Leads (Lead Evaluators and Lead Interventionists) (N=73)		Interventionists (Non-Leads) (N=117)	
	N	%	n	%
Sex				
Female	63	86.3	111	94.9
Male	10	13.7	6	5.1
Race/Ethnicity				
White	30	41.1	22	18.8
Hispanic	23	31.5	34	29.1
Black or Afr Am	19	26.0	58	49.6
Other	1	1.4	3	2.6
Highest Degree Earned				
Bachelor's	38	52.1	61	52.1
Master's	33	45.2	48	41.0
Not Indicated	2	2.7	8	6.8
Years of Experience in the Dallas ISD				
0	3	4.1	3	2.6
1-2	4	5.5	13	11.1
3-5	9	12.3	33	28.2
6-10	21	28.8	27	23.1
11-15	15	20.5	16	13.7
16+	21	28.8	25	21.4
Average	12.1		9.3	
Range	0 to 33		0 to 29	

Source: Dallas ISD personnel data file dated 12/10/19 and communications from Dyslexia Services staff members.

Note: Dyslexia Services staff characteristics were determined based on job codes provided by Dyslexia Services staff members in December 2019. Both lead dyslexia interventionists and lead dyslexia evaluators were identified with the same job code because of their unique leadership duties. Of the 73 leads, 27 were lead dyslexia evaluators and 46 were lead dyslexia interventionists. Other sections of this report show personnel data grouped by either dyslexia evaluator or dyslexia interventionist and are based on internal Dyslexia Services program designations. Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

What types of dyslexia-related professional development were provided to Dallas ISD staff members in 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluators obtained from Dyslexia Services central staff members documents detailing the nature of professional development and other training provided by the Dyslexia Services department to Dallas ISD campus staff members, as well as training provided to Dyslexia Services staff members during 2019-20, including during districtwide at-home learning. Evaluators reviewed and summarized program training information and topics.

Results

In 2019-20, Dyslexia Interventionists were tasked with providing professional development or other training sessions to campus staff members at least once per semester at the campuses to which they were assigned. While most interventionists completed spring semester training before the start of districtwide at-home learning, completing spring 2020 training was not required during at-home learning.

Training for Campus Staff Members

Training sessions offered to campus staff members covered the following topics: 1) the nature of dyslexia, 2) House Bill 1886, 3) the dyslexia screening process, 4) checklists for teachers to assist in identifying students with dyslexia, and 5) the role of the dyslexia interventionist on campus.

Training for Dyslexia Services Central Staff Members

Professional development opportunities also were provided regularly to Dyslexia Services central staff members throughout 2019-20. Program staff members generally were required to attend these sessions. Training sessions offered for 2019-20 Dyslexia Services staff members included the following topics: 1) *Wilson* programming, 2) *Esperanza* programming, 3) instruction on the TEA *Dyslexia Handbook*, 4) policies and procedures for dyslexia interventionists, 5) Region 10 resources, 6) interpreting a dyslexia evaluation (as an interventionist), 7) PowerSchool navigation, 8) provision of dyslexia-related PD to campuses, 9) *WIST* training, 10) instruction on Section 504, 11) MTSS, and 12) Root Cause Analysis. In addition, dyslexia evaluators and interventionists met regularly throughout the year for further professional collaboration and mentoring.

Department Communications to Address At-Home Learning. Program leadership maintained regular detailed communications with Dyslexia Services staff members (interventionists and evaluators) during the districtwide at-home learning. These communications focused on the needs related to continuation of service. Program leadership provided scripts to Dyslexia Services staff members for communicating effectively and efficiently with parents, and they were instructed to make multiple communication attempts with parents weekly during at-home learning to ensure students were effectively supported by both parents and interventionists. For example, email communications provided links and instructions for navigating online instructional resources, including for the *Wilson* program.²²

What services and supports did Dyslexia Services offer to parents of Dallas ISD students with dyslexia in 2019-20?

Methodology

Dyslexia Services personnel provided records of professional development and other training data provided to Dallas ISD staff members in 2019-20. The evaluators reviewed and summarized parent training topics and related information.

²² See <https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/pages/tips-for-wrs-online-lesson-delivery/> for more information on resources Dyslexia services staff members provided to address *Wilson* online instruction.

Results

In 2019-20, dyslexia interventionists provided education sessions at their assigned campuses at least once per semester to parents of students identified with dyslexia. While most interventionists completed spring semester sessions for parents before the start of districtwide at-home learning, completing spring 2020 parent sessions was not required during at-home learning. Parent education sessions covered the following topics: 1) the role of the dyslexia interventionist, 2) the nature of dyslexia, 3) how to meet the needs of students identified with dyslexia, 4) dyslexia programming, 5) accommodations for identified students, and 6) at-home support.

How did the dyslexia-related skills of students in the *Wilson* program grow from the beginning to the end of the 2019-20 program, and how did this growth compare to 2018-19?

Methodology

Following collaboration with Dyslexia Services staff members, the evaluators originally planned to analyze beginning-of-year (BOY) and end-of-year (EOY) *WIST* assessment data for both 2018-19 and 2019-20; however, 2019-20 analyses could not be completed because of the lack EOY *WIST* data resulting from assessment cancellations after the spring 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning. The *WIST* was designed as an assessment administered in-person to the student, and remote administration of the *WIST* as of the time of this report had not been validated for remote administration. Because 2019-20 was the first year that *WIST* data were included in Dyslexia Services evaluation report, results for the previous year were included in this section for informational purposes.

For 2018-19 data, student cases were included in analyses if 1) the data file indicated that the current programming the student received was the *Wilson* system, 2) *Word Identification and Spelling Test (WIST)*²³ scores were available for both BOY and EOY, and 3) the data file showed that BOY and EOY assessments were conducted at least six months apart.

The evaluators merged 2018-19 *WIST* data files provided by Dyslexia Services staff members with the 2018-19 PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for October 26, 2018. The evaluators conducted frequency and crosstabs analyses to calculate the average standard score on the *WIST* Fundamental Literacy Ability Index (FLAI) for grades one to eight students at BOY and EOY and the change in scores from BOY to EOY.²⁴

²³ The *WIST* is the primary assessment instrument of the *Wilson* system. More information on the *WIST* can be found at <https://store.wilsonlanguage.com/word-identification-and-spelling-wist-kit/>.

²⁴ Dyslexia Services program staff members indicated that for a student receiving *Wilson Reading* programming to have a meaningful EOY *WIST* score – that is, a score indicating an amount of time receiving *Wilson Reading* programming adequate to assess for growth, at least six months should separate the *WIST* BOY score from the EOY score. Staff members also determined that a meaningful *WIST* assessment outcome domain was the Fundamental Literacy Index. Therefore, evaluators examined BOY and EOY scores for students who received at least six months of programming during each year and had both a BOY and EOY *WIST* Fundamental Literacy Index score.

Results

As shown in Table 4, data included a total of 1,171 students served by Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services with both BOY and EOY *WIST* scores suitable for analysis. The average BOY Fundamental Literacy Ability Index (FLAI) score across all grade (one through eight) levels was 66.9. By the EOY assessment for 2018-19, the average FLAI score among these students was 75.2: an increase of 8.3 points. Additional statistical details for 2018-19 *WIST* outcomes are provided in Appendix B.

Rates of increase were highest among grade one students (mean increase from BOY to EOY = 21.2 points, Table 4), though this finding should be interpreted with caution because the total number of students in grade one with scores available for analysis was very low ($n=5$). Among students with dyslexia in grade levels with higher numbers of included students, the greatest mean score increases were found among those in grades three (11.5 points from BOY to EOY) and seven (10.0 points from BOY to EOY). The smallest changes from BOY to EOY were seen among students in grades six (an average score increase of 4.1) and two (an average score increase of 7.5).

Table 4: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Mean Standard Score of Students with Dyslexia at BOY and EOY on the *WIST* Assessment Results on the Fundamental Literacy Ability Index

Grade Level	2018-19				2019-20			
	Tested <i>N</i>	BOY Score Mean	EOY Score Mean	Change in Mean Score	Tested <i>N</i>	BOY Score Mean	EOY Score Mean	Change in Mean Score
1	5	51.6	72.8	21.2	2019-20 <i>WIST</i> data not available because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning.			
2	100	64.5	72.0	7.5				
3	165	63.7	75.2	11.5				
4	255	69.4	78.8	9.4				
5	299	69.9	77.5	7.6				
6	197	69.8	73.9	4.1				
7	127	58.9	68.9	10.0				
8	23	57.7	66.1	8.4				
1 to 8	1,171	66.9	75.2	8.3				

Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services *WIST* data file provided December 2019 (2018-19).

Note: Includes data for students with scores on the Fundamental Literacy Ability Index with at least six months between BOY and EOY. Because of the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning, *WIST* assessments were cancelled for spring 2020. 2018-19 findings are provided for informational purposes.

How did students with dyslexia perform on state reading assessments in 2019-20, and what were one- and two-year achievement trends?

Methodology

Because of statewide *STAAR* cancellations in 2019-20 resulting from the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning, *STAAR* data analyses planned for 2019-20 could not be completed. Because some *STAAR* analyses were conducted for the first time in this year's evaluation, results for 2017-18 and 2018-19 were included in this report for historical and informational purposes.

The evaluators reviewed 2017-18 and 2018-19 *STAAR* reading and writing performance data and *STAAR* reading progress measure data to assess literacy-related achievement for district students with

dyslexia. The evaluator merged district STAAR data files for reading (grades 3 to 8) and writing (grades 4 and 7) for 2017-18 and 2018-19²⁵ with the PEIMS demographic snapshot data file for each year.²⁶ All versions and administrations of STAAR were included in analyses.²⁷ Students were included in analyses if they 1) were enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date for the respective year and 2) were flagged in the PEIMS demographic file as having dyslexia.

For 2017-18 and 2018-19 STAAR reading and writing performance, the evaluators conducted frequency and crosstabs analyses to determine the rate of students at each performance standard [Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+), Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+), Masters Grade Level (Masters)], grouping by subject, grade level, and SPED status. For progress measures, the evaluators used frequency and crosstabs analyses to determine the rate of students at Limited, Expected, and Accelerated progress, grouped by grade level and SPED status. Progress measures are not available for writing because STAAR writing assessments are not conducted in consecutive grade levels.

Results

Findings outlined in this section focus on results for an aggregation of all grades by subject for students diagnosed with dyslexia who were not receiving SPED services.²⁸ Detailed results for 2017-18 and 2018-19 by subject, grade level, and SPED status are provided in Appendices C and D.

Reading scores remained somewhat stable for students with dyslexia from 2017-18 to 2018-19 with a slight uptick in Approaches+ and Meets+ rates. As shown in Figure 5, in 2017-18, 49.0 percent of students with dyslexia scored at the Approaches+ level in reading; in 2018-19, that percentage rose to 52.7 percent. The percentage of students with dyslexia scoring at Meets+ in reading in 2017-18 was 16.8; in 2018-19, the Meets+ rate for reading rose slightly to 18.2.

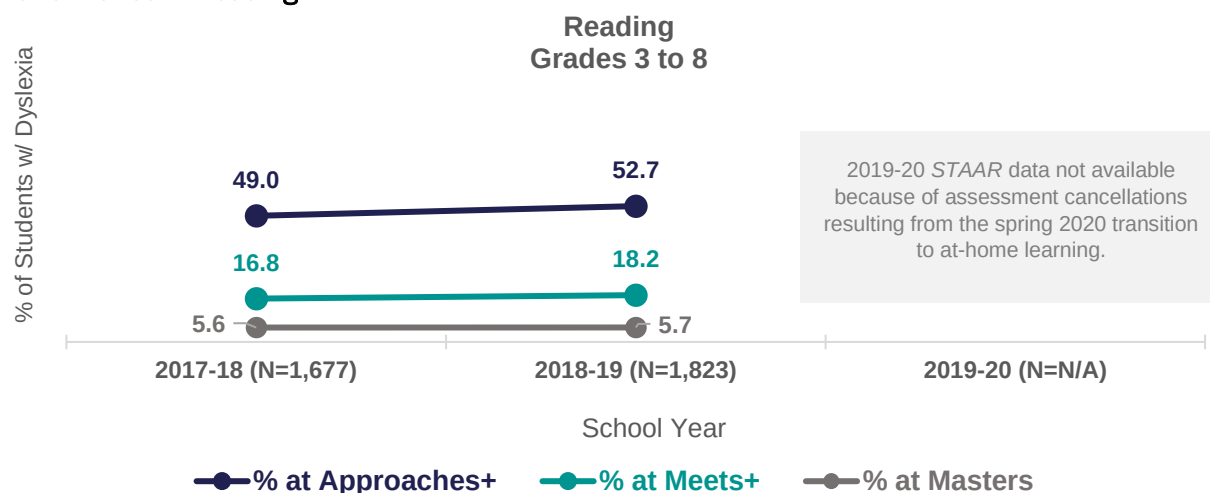
²⁵ STAAR files used were dated 09/06/18 (2017-18) and 01/23/20 (2018-19).

²⁶ PEIMS snapshot dates were 10/30/17 (2017-18) and 10/28/18 (2018-19).

²⁷ Students with dyslexia taking the STAAR Alternate 2 version of STAAR accounted for between < 0.1 percent and 2.5 percent of those included in analysis.

²⁸ This section focuses on students with dyslexia who were not also receiving special education services, because students with dyslexia who also require special education services have a variety of contributing factors that may also affect achievement outcomes.

Figure 5: 2017-18 and 2018-19 - Students with Dyslexia (Not Receiving SPED Services): STAAR Performance in Reading

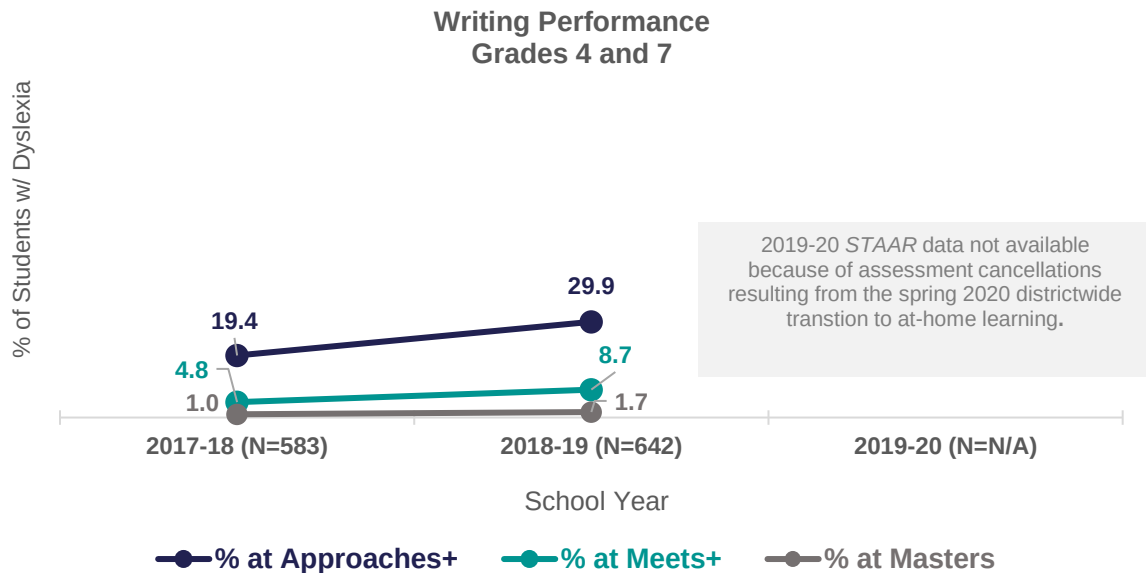


Source: District STAAR files dated 09/06/18 (2017-18) and 01/23/20 (2018-19). PEIMS snapshot demographic data files snapshot for 10/30/17 (2017-18) and 10/26/18 (2018-19).

Note: Results include all versions and administrations of STAAR. Details by grade level and SPED placement are provided in Appendix C.

Improvement in writing scores for students with dyslexia from 2017-18 to 2018-19 was more pronounced than for reading. As shown in Figure 6, in 2017-18, 19.4 percent of students with dyslexia scored at the Approaches+ level in writing; in 2018-19, that percentage rose to almost 30 percent (29.9%). The percentage of students with dyslexia scoring at Meets+ in writing in 2017-18 was 4.8; in 2018-19, that percentage rose to 8.7 (Figure 6).

Figure 6: 2017-18 and 2018-19 - Students with Dyslexia (Not Receiving SPED Services): STAAR Performance in Writing

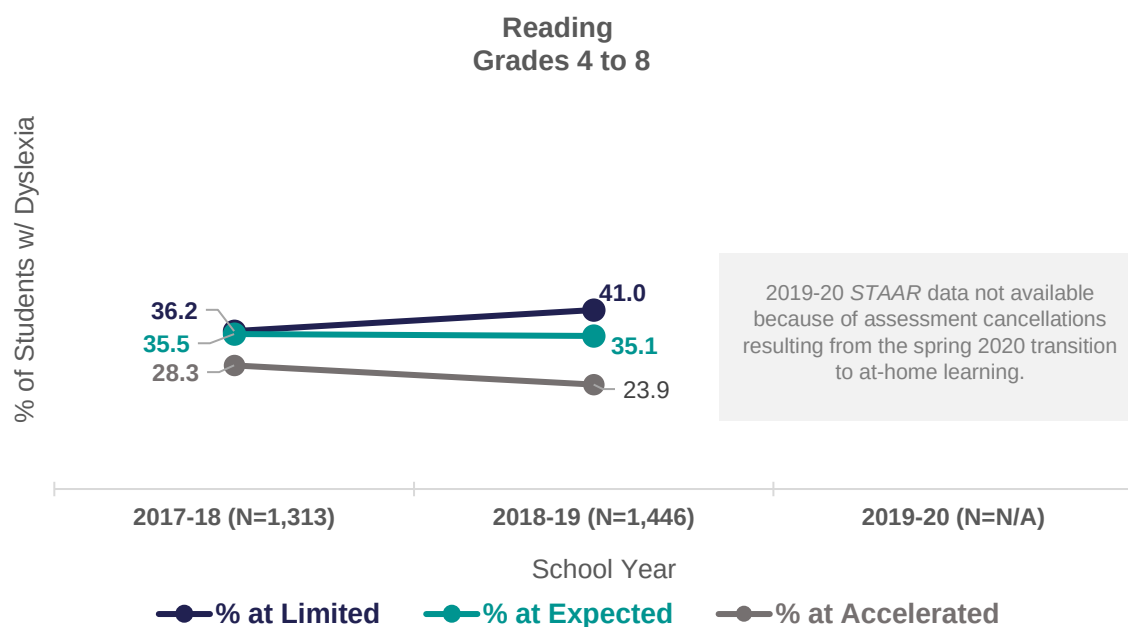


Source: District STAAR files dated 09/06/18 (2017-18) and 01/23/20 (2018-19). PEIMS snapshot demographic data files snapshot for 10/30/17 (2017-18) and 10/26/18 (2018-19).

Note: Results include all versions and administrations of STAAR. Details by grade level and SPED placement are provided in Appendix C.

Progress measures showed some evidence of limited growth in reading performance (grades 4 to 8) between 2017-18 and 2018-19 for students with dyslexia. As shown in Figure 7, in 2017-18, 35.5 percent scored at the expected rate of progress; in 2018-19, that rate held steady at 35.1 percent of this student group. The percentage of students with limited growth, however, increased almost five percentage points from 2017-18 to 2018-19, and the rate of students with accelerated growth decreased by more than four percentage points in that same time period, indicating that stakeholders should focus on year-over-year growth to ensure that students with dyslexia keep up with peers in reading.

Figure 7: 2017-18 to 2019-20 Students with Dyslexia (Not Receiving SPED Services): STAAR Progress in Reading



Source: District STAAR files dated 09/06/18 (2017-18) and 01/23/20 (2018-19). PEIMS snapshot demographic data files snapshot for 10/30/17 (2017-18) and 10/26/18 (2018-19).

Note: Results include all versions and administrations of STAAR. Details by grade level and SPED placement are provided in Appendix D.

What were the experiences of Dyslexia Services interventionists and the students they served during the spring 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning?

Methodology

In late spring of 2020, Dyslexia Services staff members administered a survey soliciting feedback from dyslexia interventionists about their experiences during the districtwide transition to at-home learning. The evaluators provided feedback on survey item content and design to Dyslexia Services central staff members, but final decisions about survey content were decided by Dyslexia Services staff members. The survey covered topics related to at-home learning, including 1) the percentage of students served; 2) common issues perceived to have hampered student engagement; 3) perceived efficacy of the services staff members were able to provide to students during this time; and 4) the ease of communication between the interventionists and students and their parents during this time. The survey was sent to all 147 dyslexia interventionists on June 1, 2020 and was closed on June 10, 2020. Periodic reminders were sent to those who had yet to respond. The evaluators used frequency analyses to calculate response rates to closed-ended questions and content-analyzed and summarized responses to open-ended questions.

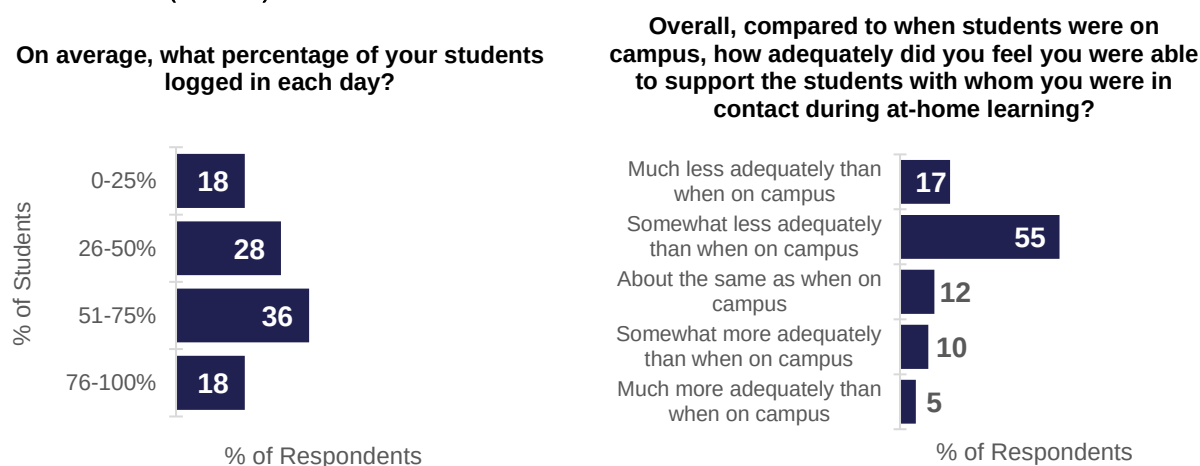
Results

Of the 147 dyslexia interventionists invited to participate in the survey, 93 (63%) completed the survey. Key survey findings were summarized and are provided by topic in this section. Detailed results of the Dyslexia Interventionist At-Home Learning survey by response are provided in Appendix E.

Engagement with Students

The percentage of students with dyslexia believed to have logged in each day to engage with dyslexia interventionists during at-home learning varied widely, as shown in Figure 8. While 54 percent of respondents indicated that at least 51 percent of their students logged in each day, 18 percent of respondents reported that 25 percent or fewer of their students logged in each day. In addition, when comparing their ability to support students during at-home learning compared to during on-campus learning, most respondents (72%) reported that they were somewhat less or much less able to adequately support their students, meaning a small proportion of respondents (27%) felt they could provide at least the same level of support to students. These findings indicate that stakeholders should review ways to improve engagement and processes that allow interventionists to support students during possible future at-home learning scenarios.

Figure 8: 2019-20 At-Home Learning Experience Survey of Dyslexia Interventionists: Engagement with Students (N = 93)

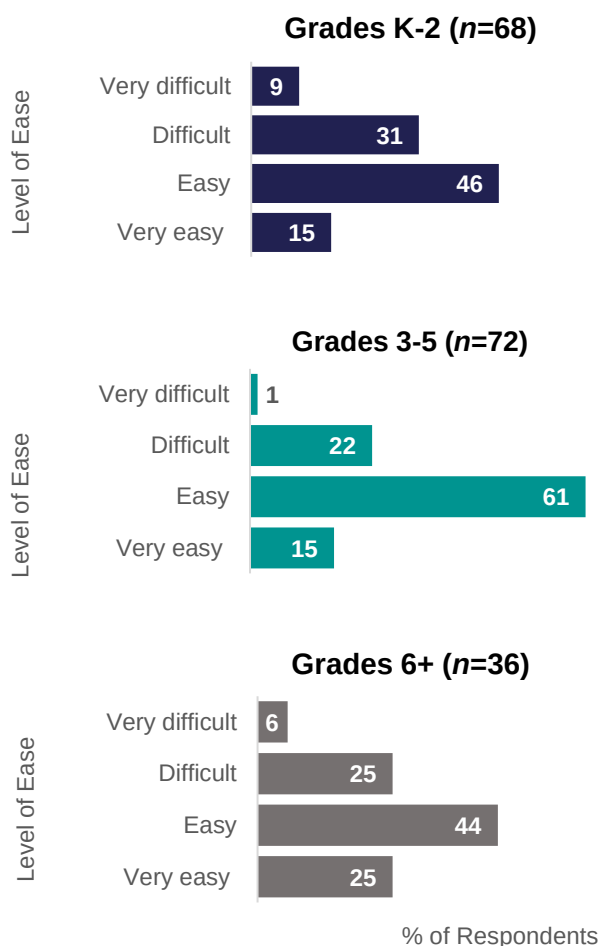


Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services Interventionist Survey, June 2020.

Note: Figures exclude respondents who chose N/A. Percentages may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Response rate details are provided in Appendix E.

As shown in Figure 9, the highest percentage of respondents in all grade-level groups considered the communication with students during at-home learning to be easy or very easy, but, importantly, from 23 percent (grades 3-5) to 40 percent (grades K-2) of respondents reported having a difficult or very difficult time with communication. These findings indicate that communication hurdles should be carefully examined, and support should be provided to interventionists, particularly to those who serve the younger grades.

Figure 9: 2019-20 At-Home Learning Experience Survey of Dyslexia Interventionists: Ease of Communication with Students (by Grade Level Group) During At-Home Learning (N = 93)



Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services Interventionist Survey, June 2020.

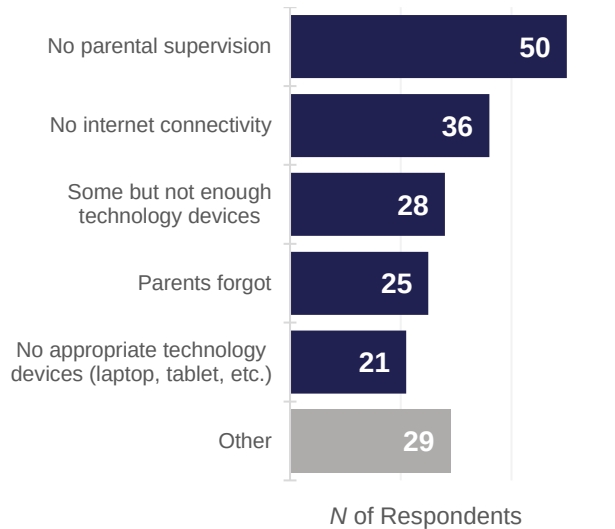
Note: Data exclude respondents who indicated that the grade level was not applicable to them or that they were not sure. Total respondents across each grade level range is higher than the total number of respondents because respondents could respond to the question for multiple grade levels, as applicable. Response rate details are provided in Appendix E.

Engagement with Parents

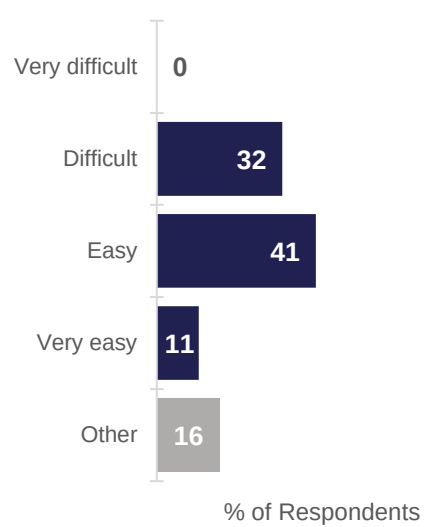
As shown in Figure 10, interventionists reported a notable mix of experiences regarding engagement with parents and parental support of students with dyslexia during at-home learning. While approximately half (52%) of interventionists reported that overall it was easy or very easy to communicate with parents/caregivers during at-home learning, one in three (32%) reported that it was difficult. Also, the two most common reasons interventionists heard from parents for why students did not log in during at-home learning were 1) no parental supervision (54%; $n=50$) and 2) no internet connectivity (39%; $n=36$). Answers to this question also suggested inadequate technological device availability at home.

Figure 10: 2019-20 At-Home Learning Experience Survey of Dyslexia Interventionists: Engagement with Parents During At-Home Learning (N = 93)

What were the top two reasons parents gave for their students NOT logging in during at-home learning? *



Overall, how easy was it to communicate with parents during at-home learning?



Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services Interventionist Survey, June 2020.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. * = Participants could provide more than two answers, although they were instructed to provide two. Response rate details are provided in Appendix E.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

Expanding notably over the past few years, the Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services department employed 14 dyslexia evaluators and no interventionists and served 3086 students in 2016-17. By 2019-20, 27 evaluators and 147 interventionists served 5,190 district students, with a budget \$1,243,117 (a decrease from \$1,284,326 in 2018-19). The primary goal identified by Dyslexia Services program administrators for 2019-20 was to increase identification of students with dyslexia in the early grades.

- Compared to previous years, the increase in staffing and resulting identification of more students with dyslexia coincided with a greater proportion of students identified with dyslexia in earlier grades, indicating progress toward the department goal to increase early identification.
- Because of the statewide cancellation of the 2019-20 STAAR as a result of the spring 2020 COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning, planned analyses of STAAR reading and writing and progress measure outcomes for the current year were not conducted.
- Because of the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning, *WIST* data for 2019-20 were incomplete and therefore planned analyses of 2019-20 *WIST* outcomes were not included.
- Student engagement with dyslexia interventionists varied widely during at-home learning. While 54 percent of interventionists indicated that at least 51 percent of their students logged in each day, 18 percent reported that 25 percent or fewer of their students logged in each day.
- When comparing their ability to support students during at-home learning to during on-campus learning, most dyslexia interventionists (73%) reported they were at least somewhat less able to adequately support their students, meaning a small proportion of respondents (27%) felt they could provide at least the same level of support to students.
- Most dyslexia interventionists considered the communication with students during at-home learning to be easy or very easy, but, importantly, from 23 percent (grades 3-5) to 40 percent (grades K-2) of respondents reported having a difficult or very difficult time with communication.
- Interventionist experiences of parent engagement and parental support of students with dyslexia during at-home learning were wide-ranging. While approximately half (52%) of interventionists reported that overall communication with parents/caregivers during at-home learning was easy, about a third (32%) reported difficulty. The two most common reasons interventionists heard from parents for why students did not log in during at-home learning were 1) no parental supervision (54%) and 2) no internet connectivity (39%).

Recommendations

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Focus on year-over-year growth to ensure that students with dyslexia keep up with peers in reading.

Although no STAAR outcomes were available for 2019-20, STAAR progress measures showed some evidence of limited growth in reading performance (grades 4 to 8) between 2017-18 and 2018-19 for

students with dyslexia. The rate of students with dyslexia with expected reading growth held relatively steady around 35 percent between 2017-18 and 2018-19. The percentage of students with limited growth, however, increased almost five percentage points, and the rate of students with accelerated growth decreased by over four percentage points from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Progress measures should be used in the future to follow students with dyslexia and ensure they are not falling behind.

Review ways to improve online engagement in instruction and with interventionists to support students during possible future at-home learning. The percentage of students reported to have logged in daily to engage with dyslexia interventionists during at-home learning varied widely. While 54 percent of interventionists indicated at least half (51%) of their students logged in daily, 18 percent reported that 25 percent or fewer logged in each day. In addition, when comparing their ability to support students during at-home learning to when on campus, most respondents (72%) were at least somewhat less adequately able to provide support, meaning a small proportion of respondents (27%) felt they could provide at least the same level of support to students. Mitigating barriers to engagement should bolster the ability of interventionists to serve students more regularly and adequately.

Review communication and technological hurdles with students and caregivers during at-home learning, and provide more communication support to dyslexia interventionists, particularly to those who serve the younger grade levels. Between 23 percent (grades 3-5) and 40 percent (grades K-2) of interventionists reported having difficulty with communication during at-home learning. In addition, 32 percent of interventionists reported difficulty communicating with caregivers of students with dyslexia during at-home learning. Parents most commonly told interventionists that students did not log in during at-home learning because of 1) no parent instructional supervision (54%) and 2) no internet connectivity (39%). Stakeholders should consider how to overcome these barriers to ensure that communication with students and caregivers continues adequately during future at-home learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A: 2017-18 to 2019-20 Dallas ISD Count of Students Identified with Dyslexia by Year and Grade Level

Grade Level	2017-18 (N=3,522)		2018-19 (N=4,159)		2019-20 (N=5,190)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
EC	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0
PK	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
KN	0	0.0	3	0.1	1	0.0
1	45	1.3	61	1.5	62	1.2
2	176	5.0	285	6.9	410	7.9
3	326	9.3	402	9.7	647	12.5
4	504	14.3	541	13.0	709	13.7
5	493	14.0	615	14.8	660	12.7
6	488	13.9	509	12.2	632	12.2
7	382	10.8	481	11.6	533	10.3
8	351	10.0	350	8.4	453	8.7
9	277	7.9	383	9.2	406	7.8
10	186	5.3	235	5.7	321	6.2
11	176	5.0	149	3.6	224	4.3
12	118	3.4	145	3.5	131	2.5

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data files for 10/27/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Appendix B

Appendix B: 2018-19 BOY and EOY *WIST* Fundamental Literacy Ability Index (FLAI): Average Standard Scores by Grade Level

Grade Level	Tested <i>N</i>	BOY Score Mean	BOY <i>SD</i>	EOY Score Mean	EOY <i>SD</i>	Change in Mean Score
1	5	51.6	28.4	72.8	14.2	21.2
2	100	64.5	12.6	72.0	20.2	7.5
3	165	63.7	15.3	75.2	17.1	11.5
4	255	69.4	18.9	78.8	20.2	9.4
5	299	69.9	20.3	77.5	20.6	7.6
6	197	69.8	18.7	73.9	17.0	4.1
7	127	58.9	24.3	68.9	25.1	10.0
8	23	57.7	22.4	66.1	22.2	8.4
1 to 8	1,171	66.9	19.5	75.2	20.2	8.3

Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services data provided December 2019.

Note: Change in mean standard score is from BOY to EOY. SD=standard deviation. Outcomes include students assessed with both age- and grade-based norms, who had both a BOY and EOY score, were identified as currently (in 2018-19) receiving *Wilson Reading System* intervention programming, and assessed with at least six months between BOY and EOY. Standard Scores on the *WIST*: <69=Very Poor, 70-79=Poor, 80-89=Below Average, 90-110=Average, 111-120=Above Average, 121-130=Superior, >131=Very Superior.

Appendix C

Appendix C: 2017-18 to 2019-20 STAAR Outcomes for Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia - Reading and Writing

Grade Level	2017-18				2018-19				2019-20			
	Tested <i>N</i>	App+ %	Meets+ %	Masters %	Tested <i>N</i>	App+ %	Meets+ %	Masters %	Tested <i>N</i>	App+ %	Meets+ %	Masters %
Students with Dyslexia NOT Receiving SPED Services												
Reading												
3	218	52.8	11.5	3.7	240	54.2	17.9	6.7	2019-20 data not available because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning.			
4	348	40.8	14.4	5.2	335	46.6	15.2	4.2				
5	335	67.5	27.2	7.5	407	77.1	30.5	9.1				
6	316	31.0	11.7	3.5	309	32.7	8.7	2.9				
7	238	34.5	13.4	3.8	302	38.1	16.2	6.6				
8	222	71.2	21.2	10.4	230	63.0	16.5	3.0				
All Grades	1,677	49.0	16.8	5.6	1,823	52.7	18.2	5.7				
Writing												
4	347	15.3	4.3	1.2	336	30.1	8.0	0.9				
7	236	25.4	5.5	0.8	306	29.7	9.5	2.6				
All Grades	583	19.4	4.8	1.0	642	29.9	8.7	1.7				
Students with Dyslexia Receiving SPED Services												
Reading												
3	95	35.8	4.3	1.1	142	32.4	6.3	1.4	2019-20 data not available because of assessment cancellations resulting from the 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning.			
4	128	25.8	7.9	0.8	178	30.3	7.3	1.7				
5	142	47.2	15.1	4.2	192	50.0	13.2	3.6				
6	134	12.7	1.5	2.2	169	18.3	2.4	3.0				
7	110	18.2	6.4	1.8	149	27.5	5.6	4.7				
8	121	33.1	6.7	4.1	113	36.3	6.3	2.7				
All Grades	730	28.9	7.2	2.5	943	32.8	7.1	2.9				
Writing												
4	126	9.5	4.0	0.8	175	15.4	1.1	0.0				
7	111	9.9	0.0	0.9	148	15.5	4.2	2.7				
All Grades	237	9.7	2.1	0.8	323	15.5	2.5	1.2				

Source: District STAAR files dated 09/06/18 (2017-18) and 01/23/20 (2018-19). PEIMS snapshot demographic data files snapshot for 10/30/17 (2017-18) and 10/26/18 (2018-19).
Note: All STAAR administrations and versions of STAAR included. Students with dyslexia taking the *Alternate 2* version of STAAR accounted for between < .1 percent and 2.5 percent of those included in analysis.

Appendix D

Appendix D: 2017-18 to 2019-20 STAAR Progress Measure Outcomes for Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia - Reading

Grade Level	2017-18				2018-19				2019-20			
	Tested <i>N</i>	Limited %	Expected %	Accelerated %	Tested <i>N</i>	Limited %	Expected %	Accelerated %	Tested <i>N</i>	Limited %	Expected %	Accelerated %
Students with Dyslexia NOT Receiving SPED Services												
	Reading											
4	332	47.6	32.2	20.2	317	55.2	29.0	15.8	2019-20 data not available because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.			
5	293	14.7	38.6	46.8	374	15.2	43.0	41.7				
6	242	71.1	26.0	2.9	236	80.1	17.4	2.5				
7	226	34.1	35.8	30.1	294	40.5	35.7	23.8				
8	220	11.4	46.4	42.3	225	23.6	48.0	28.4				
All Grades	1,313	36.2	35.5	28.3	1,446	41.0	35.1	23.9				
Students with Dyslexia Receiving SPED Services												
	Reading											
4	120	46.7	23.3	30.0	165	59.4	25.5	15.2				
5	128	22.7	38.3	39.1	178	24.7	34.3	41.0				
6	113	73.5	20.4	6.2	147	77.4	17.8	4.8				
7	104	37.5	36.5	26.0	144	44.8	31.5	23.8				
8	114	26.3	42.1	31.6	107	39.4	35.8	24.8				
All Grades	579	40.9	32.1	26.9	741	48.9	28.7	22.4				

Source: District STAAR files dated 09/06/18 (2017-18) and 01/23/20 (2018-19). PEIMS snapshot demographic data files snapshot for 10/30/17 (2017-18) and 10/26/18 (2018-19).

Note: All STAAR administrations and versions of STAAR included. Students with dyslexia taking the *Alternate 2* version of STAAR accounted for between < .1 percent and 2.5 percent of those included in analysis.

Appendix E

Appendix E, Table 1: 2019-20 Dyslexia Interventionist At-Home Learning Survey

	Dyslexia Interventionists (N = 93)	
	n	%
On average, what percentage of your students logged in each day?		
0-25%	17	18.3
26-50%	26	28.0
51-75%	33	35.5
76-100%	17	18.3
Overall, compared to when students were on campus, how adequately did you feel you were able to support the students with whom you were in contact during at-home learning?		
Much less adequately than when on campus	16	17.2
Somewhat less adequately than when on campus	51	54.8
About the same as when on campus	11	11.8
Somewhat more adequately than when on campus	9	9.7
Much more adequately than when on campus	5	5.4
I'm not sure	0	0.0
N/A	1	1.1
What were the top 2 reasons parents gave for their students NOT logging in during at-home learning? *		
No parental supervision	50	53.8
No internet connectivity	36	38.7
Other	29	31.2
Some but not enough technology devices (such as multiple students sharing a limited number of devices)	28	30.1
Parents forgot	25	26.9
No appropriate technology devices (laptop, tablet, etc.)	21	22.6
Overall, how easy was it to communicate with parents during at-home learning?		
Very difficult	0	0.0
Difficult	30	32.3
Easy	38	40.9
Very easy	10	10.8
Other	15	16.1

Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services Interventionist Survey, June 2020.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. * = Participants could provide more than two answers, although they were instructed to provide two.

Appendix E, Table 2: 2019-20 Dyslexia Interventionist At-Home Learning Survey

	N	Very Difficult		Difficult		Easy		Very Easy		I'm not sure		Not Applicable	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Overall, how easy was it to communicate effectively with students during at-home learning?													
Grades K-2	93	6	6.5	21	22.6	31	33.3	10	10.8	0	0.0	25	26.9
Grades 3-5	93	1	1.1	16	17.2	44	47.3	11	11.8	1	1.1	20	21.5
Grades 6+	93	2	2.2	9	9.7	16	17.2	9	9.7	0	0.0	57	61.3

Source: Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services Interventionist Survey, June 2020.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.