



## Texarkana ISD Dyslexia Program Guidelines for Families

The purpose of this guidance document is to increase awareness and understanding of dyslexia and dysgraphia and to explain how Texarkana ISD complies with all federal and state guidelines related to dyslexia and dysgraphia.

### Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Overview

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003

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

The definition of Dyslexia by the International Dyslexia Association states:

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

In plain language, dyslexia is a brain-based learning disability that impacts reading, spelling, and writing despite average intelligence. Review the following difficulties associated with dyslexia below:

#### Primary Academic Difficulties

- Phonological and phonemic awareness
- Reading words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar words
- Spelling
- Oral reading fluency

#### Secondary Academic Difficulties

- Primary academic difficulties may persist
- Reduced reading experiences
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Reading comprehension
- Written expression

## Characteristics of Dyslexia

Review the following characteristics associated with dyslexia below:

### PreKindergarten-Kindergarten

- Delay in learning to talk
- Trouble with rhyming
- Difficulty pronouncing words (garage = mamaj)
- Word retrieval challenges
- Trouble learning names of letters and numbers
- Difficulty mapping sounds to letters

### Grades 1-3

- Difficulty blending, segments, and manipulating sounds in words (ship = /sh/-/i/-/p/)
- Difficulty recognizing common sight words (their, who, move)
- Reliance on picture clues in stories
- Difficulty with spelling
- Avoidance of reading and spelling
- Slow and/or inaccurate word, sentence, or passage reading fluency

### Grades 4-12

- Poor spelling, reading, and writing skills
- Frustration with homework and in-class assignments
- Avoidance of reading and writing tasks
- Poor reading comprehension compared to listening comprehension

## Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a brain-based learning disability characterized by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. This learning difficulty is considered a related disorder to dyslexia. Students with dyslexia may also experience dysgraphia and are evaluated through special education. Review the following characteristics associated with dysgraphia below:

### Characteristics of Dysgraphia

- Illegible handwriting
- Difficulty with spelling
- Unusual (or dysfunctional) pencil grip, pencil pressure, paper position, body position while writing
- Unusual spacing between letters and words
- Labored writing

## Screening

Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §38.003, all kindergarten and first-grade students in TISD shall be screened at appropriate times for dyslexia and related disorders. Kindergarten students are screened at the end of the school year and first-grade students are screened before January 31st. Screening components include:

| Kindergarten                                                                                    | First Grade                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Letter Sound Knowledge or Letter Naming Fluency</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Word Reading Accuracy or Fluency</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Phonological Awareness</li></ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Phonological Awareness</li></ul>           |

Texarkana ISD uses Circle Kindergarten Progress Monitoring, TPRI, & Tejas LEE to meet the requirements of (TEC), §38.003, K/1 Dyslexia Screening. Notifications are given to families of students determined to be at-risk for dyslexia (based on screening results). Moreover, families (of students found to be at-risk) are notified of the ability to borrow audiobooks free of charge through the Texas State Library and Archives Commission for students at risk for dyslexia or other reading disabilities:

*Senate Bill 2075 was passed by the 86th Legislature requiring school districts to notify the parents or guardians of students who have or are at risk to have dyslexia or other reading difficulties of the Talking Book Program (TBP) maintained by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The TBP offers audio books at no-cost. For more information, contact the TBP at 1-800-252-9605 or 512-463-5458 or visit their [website](#).*

At this time, there is not an instrument available for the purposes of screening for dysgraphia, nor is formal screening required.

## Reading Instrument

All TISD kindergarten, first, and second graders shall be administered a reading instrument to identify student reading development and comprehension. In accordance with TEC §28.006, as outlined in the TEA [Reading Instrument Guidance](#) document, Texarkana ISD administers Circle Kindergarten Progress Monitoring in kindergarten and TPRI & Tejas Lee in first and second grades to determine students' reading development and comprehension. If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at-risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties, the students' families are notified. Campus teams should meet to review the results of the reading instrument and additional points to determine the need for supplemental instruction, intervention, or referral for evaluation.

## Evaluation and Determination

Students enrolled in Texarkana ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003(a)) depending upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teachers' input, and family input. Note, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28), as early intervention is most effective. While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

## Texarkana ISD Dyslexia Program Guidelines for Families

Evaluation for dyslexia and dysgraphia has moved to a single pathway for identification under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This means that anytime it is suspected that a student has dyslexia or a related disorder and may need dyslexia intervention services, Texarkana ISD shall seek parental consent for a Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. Using a single pathway for identification of dyslexia and related disorders ensures Texarkana ISD fulfills our Child Find obligations under the IDEA.

To meet federal and state requirements, TISD will provide timely evaluation and identification of students with dyslexia. Professionals conducting assessment for the identification of dyslexia, (e.g. school psychologists or educational diagnosticians) look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom reading performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining reading and spelling abilities and difficulties.

Identification of dyslexia is made by an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) or Section 504 committee, as applicable, of persons knowledgeable about the reading process, dyslexia and dyslexia instruction, the assessments used, and the meaning of the collected data. Of note, rescreening or retesting for the purpose of reassessing the need for accommodations of a student determined to have dyslexia or accommodated because of dyslexia does not occur until after current testing has been reviewed, unless otherwise provided by law.

### Emergent Bilinguals/English Learners

The terms Emergent Bilinguals, or English learners, refer to students served in Bilingual and ESL programs as well as students designated Limited English Proficient (LEP) whose parents have denied services. Much diversity exists among Emergent Bilinguals. A student's language proficiency may be impacted by any of the following: native language, English exposure, parent education, socioeconomic status of the family, amount of time in the United States, experience of formal schooling, immigration status, community demographics, and ethnic heritage (Bailey, Heritage, Butler, & Walqui, 2000). The identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be in step with the student's linguistic environment and educational background. In Texarkana ISD, the LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee) will be involved in the decision-making process.

### Dyslexia Handbook

Families are provided a copy or link to the Dyslexia Handbook when a student is suspected to have dyslexia or a related disorder. See links at the end of this guidance document.

### Instruction

In accordance with 19 TAC §74.28(c), Texarkana ISD has purchased evidence-based reading programs for students with dyslexia and related disorders to be implemented by a trained teacher in dyslexia.

### Highly Trained Staff

To ensure that teachers are knowledgeable about dyslexia per TEC §21.054(b) and TAC §232.11(e), TISD provides teachers training in new research and practices related to dyslexia as a part of their continuing professional education hours. TISD employs highly trained individuals to deliver dyslexia instruction that have additional documented dyslexia training aligned to 19 TAC §74.28(c) and deliver the instruction with fidelity. These teachers have received training in critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction and deliver multisensory instruction that is

systematic, explicit, and cumulative. Of note and per TEA: *A provider of dyslexia instruction does not have to be certified as a special educator when serving a student who also receives special education and related services if that provider is the most appropriate person to offer dyslexia instruction.*

## Components of Instruction

The instructional program should be offered in a small group arrangement and include reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate. Components of instruction, as appropriate for the reading needs of the student with dyslexia, include all of the following:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phonological awareness   | The understanding of the internal sound structure of words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be distinct from other sounds. The ability to segment spoken words into their component phonemes is an important aspect of phonological awareness. (Birsh, 2001, p.19).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Sound-symbol association | The knowledge of the various speech sounds in any language to the corresponding letter or letter combinations that represent those speech sounds. The mastery of sound-symbol association (alphabetic principle) is the foundation for the ability to read (decode) and spell (encode). (Birsh, 2011, p.19).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Syllabication            | A unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. The six basic types of syllables in the English language are: closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, r-controlled, vowel pair (or vowel team), and consonant-le (or final stable syllable). (Birsh, 2001, p.19).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Orthography              | The written spelling patterns and rules in a given language. The instruction should be integrated with phonology and sound-symbol knowledge.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Morphology               | The study of how a base word, prefix, root, suffix (morphemes) combine to form words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a given language. (Birsh, 2011, p.19).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Syntax                   | The sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. (Birsh, 2011, p.19).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Reading comprehension    | The process of extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader with the text to be comprehended and the specific purpose for reading. The reader's skill in reading comprehension depends upon the development of accurate and fluent word recognition, oral language development, background knowledge, use of appropriate strategies to enhance comprehension and repair it if it breaks down, and the reader's interest in what he or she is reading and motivation to comprehend its meaning. (Birsh, 2011, pp. 9 and 368; Snow, 2002). |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading fluency | The ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension. (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 52). Both the teacher of dyslexia and the regular classroom teacher should provide multiple opportunities to support intervention and to strengthen these skills; therefore, responsibility for teaching reading and writing must be shared by classroom teachers, reading specialists, interventionists, and teachers of dyslexia programs. |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Delivery of Dyslexia Instruction

Principles of effective intervention for students with dyslexia include all of the following:

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Simultaneous, multisensory (VKAT)   | Utilizes all learning pathways in the brain (visual, auditory, kinesthetic-tactile) simultaneously in order to enhance memory and learning. (Birsh, 2001, p.19).                                                                                              |
| Systematic and cumulative           | Requires the organization of material following the order of the language. The sequence must begin with the easiest concepts and progress methodically to more difficult concepts, with each step based on elements previously learned. (Birsh, 2011, p. 19). |
| Explicit instruction                | Explained and demonstrated by the teacher one language and print concept at a time, rather than left to discovery through incidental encounters with information. (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58).                                                               |
| Diagnostic teaching to automaticity | Knowledge of prescriptive instruction that will meet individual student needs of language and print concepts. (Birsh, 2001, p. 19).                                                                                                                           |
| Synthetic instruction               | Presents the parts of any alphabetic language (morphemes) to teach how the word parts work together to form a whole. (Birsh, 2011, p. 19)                                                                                                                     |
| Analytic instruction                | Presents the whole and teaches how the whole word can be broken into its component parts. (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).                                                                                                                                               |

## Consideration for Emergent Bilinguals with Dyslexia

Learning to read, write, and spell in two languages can be facilitated by building on a student's native language knowledge and helping to transfer that knowledge to a second language. While direct, systematic instruction is still required for all aspects of reading, additional explicit instruction will be needed to address the similarities and differences in sounds, syllable structure, morphology, orthography, and syntax between the first and second languages. Direct and systematic instruction of the cross-linguistic correlations is beneficial for emergent bilinguals. Instruction can subsequently include those sound-symbol correlations that partially overlap or present a slight variation from the native language to the second language. Unfamiliar phonemes (sounds) and letters then can be presented. In addition to all the components of effective instruction previously mentioned, intervention for emergent bilinguals also must emphasize oral language development. The similarities of words in the native language and English must be explicitly taught.

It is also necessary to incorporate ESL strategies during the intervention process and in all content areas. In Texas, school districts are required to implement the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) as an integral part of each subject area in the required curriculum (TAC §74.4). Dyslexia instruction for emergent bilinguals must incorporate the ELPS. A few strategies to consider include:

- Establish routines so that emergent bilinguals understand what is expected of them.
- Provide native language support when giving directions or when students do not understand the task.
- Provide opportunities for repetition and rehearsal so that the new information can be learned to mastery.
- Adjust the rate of speech and the complexity of the language used according to the second language proficiency level of each student.
- Provide extra time for the emergent bilinguals to process the English language. This is especially necessary during the early stages of second language development.
- Provide extra time for the emergent bilinguals to formulate oral and written responses.
- Emphasize text that includes familiar content, and explain the structure of the text.

### Instructional Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In addition to intervention, accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom. Accommodations are changes to materials, actions, or techniques, including the use of technology, that enable students with disabilities to participate meaningfully in grade-level or course instruction. They do not alter the learning objective or expectation. Accommodations are not a one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the accommodation. Listed below are examples of reasonable classroom accommodations:

- Copies of notes (teacher or peer provided)
- Note-taking assistance
- Additional time on class assignments and tests
- Reduced/shortened assignments (chunking assignments into manageable units, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)
- Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions
- Priority seating assignment (in-person learning)
- Oral reading of directions or written material
- Word Banks

### Student Assessment Program Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Educators

The state assessment (e.g., STAAR) is a standardized tool for measuring every student's learning in a reliable, valid, and secure manner. An accommodation used in the classroom for learning may invalidate or compromise the security and integrity of the state assessment; therefore, not all accommodations suitable for instruction are allowed during the state assessments. It is important to keep in mind that the policies for accommodation use on state assessments should not limit an educator's ability to develop individualized materials and techniques to facilitate student learning. Instruction comes first and can be customized to meet the needs of each student. For students who receive special education or §504 services the decisions for student use of accommodations during the statewide assessments is made by the ARD committee or §504 committee.

## Access to Instructional Materials for Students with Disabilities

Accessible instructional materials (AIM) are textbooks and related core instructional materials that have been converted into specialized formats (e.g., Braille, audio, digital text, or large print) for students who are blind or have low vision, have a physical disability, or have a reading disability such as dyslexia. Digital books or text-to-speech functions on computers and mobile devices provide access to general education curriculum for students with dyslexia. TEA provides helpful links and resources regarding accessible instructional materials for students with disabilities at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147487109>. Learning Ally, The Texas Talking Book Program (TBP), and Bookshare are audible book programs free of charge to qualifying children. Families can contact the student's campus for student account information.

## Enrollment in Gifted/Talented and Advanced Academic Programs

A student who has been identified with dyslexia can also be a gifted learner, or a twice exceptional learner. A twice-exceptional learner is a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high-performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or excels in a specific academic field (TEC §29.121) and who also gives evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility (IDEA 2004) (300.8) (§504) criteria such as learning disabilities, speech and language disorders, emotional/behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, sensory disabilities (hearing impaired, visually impaired, blind/deaf), traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorder, or other health impairments such as ADHD.

### Assessment and Identification

Assessment and identification of twice-exceptional learners can be challenging and requires those vested in the education of these learners to be knowledgeable of the unique characteristics and behaviors demonstrated by these learners. Often the disability masks the giftedness, which places emphasis on barriers to learning instead of the potential that the learner has as a result of the gifted attributes. Conversely, giftedness may mask the disability, which may result in the learner's experiencing gaps in learning compounded by the disability, thus affecting how the learner perceives his or her abilities. Twice-exceptional students must be provided access to all service and course options available to other students. The US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights offers information for addressing students with disabilities seeking enrollment in advanced academic programs (e.g., Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate). For more information, see <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20071226.pdf>.

### Resources

The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, available at [www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6420](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6420), mandates that once any student is identified as gifted, he/she must be provided gifted/talented services that are commensurate with his/her abilities (1.4C, 1.6C, 2.1C, and 3.3C).

## Technology Integration for Students with Dyslexia (TEC §38.0031)

The research is definitive regarding technology and instruction for students with dyslexia. When students have access to effective technology, their overall educational performance improves. One of the best ways to use technology is in combination with instruction in reading strategies and processes (Pisha & O'Neill, 2003). Technology is not intended to take the place of quality reading instruction. It should be used in combination with teacher-directed instruction and intervention. Technology should never be used as a substitute for quality instruction; it is intended to supplement,

not supplant. The Technology Integration for Students with Dyslexia [online tool](#) (TEC §38.0031) is a resource developed to support instructional decisions regarding technology that benefits students with dyslexia.

### Progress Monitoring

Students identified with dyslexia will be monitored for progress. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to, the collection/evaluation of: progress reports, report cards, state assessment data, teacher reports/checklists, parent reports/checklists, counselor reports, other program reports, and additional assessment data.

### Student Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria

Upon successful completion of the district dyslexia program(s), as measured by program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals, students will be exited from the district dyslexia program(s) as determined by the ARD or Section 504 committee. Additional criteria for exit may include but is not limited to: grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessment data, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, teacher and/or parent observations/checklists, and individual dyslexia program requirements.

### Communications

TISD provides parent education opportunities for families through guidance documents (including this document), the external website, family newsletters, family meetings, and opportunities to attend the annual free Dyslexia Awareness Event in October hosted by TISD.

### Linked Resources

- Texas Education Agency's [The Dyslexia Handbook 2024 Update](#) (English & Spanish) and other dyslexia-related resources.
- [TEA Dyslexia Fact Sheet for Families English](#) and [TEA Dyslexia Fact Sheet for Families Spanish](#)