Dyslexia and the Special Education Evaluation Process

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Table of Contents

01 Steps in the Special Education Process

02 Evaluation and identification of dyslexia & related disorders

03 Key Differences between 504 and Special Education

04 College Board Accommodations & Transition to College

01

Steps in the Special Education Process

From Parent's guide to the Special Education Process linked here.

The Special Education Process

1 REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION IS MADE.

A referral is:

- Required by law when a public school feels that your child may have a disability that requires special education services to be successful.
- Called a *request* for a special education evaluation when a parent makes it. A request should be made in writing to the proper staff member. The school will respond with information on whether it will proceed with an evaluation.

The school must respond in writing within 15 school days.

The Special Education Process

2

YOU WILL BE ASKED WHETHER YOU **CONSENT** FOR THE SCHOOL TO EVALUATE YOUR CHILD.

Consent to evaluate is:

- Permission you choose to give for specially trained personnel to evaluate and assess your child in specific areas.
- Used by the school to start the timeline by which the school must complete your child's evaluation.

With some exceptions, an evaluation must be completed within 45 school days.

The Special Education Process

3 EVALUATION IS DONE BY A GROUP OF TRAINED PROFESSIONALS.

An evaluation is:

- Called a *Full Individual and Initial Evaluation* (FIIE), which includes a written report of education recommendations and information about your child's strengths, interests, and challenges. Professionals with training in the suspected disability must participate, e.g., someone like a licensed dyslexia therapist if dyslexia is suspected.
- Done at no cost to you. If you do not agree with the school's evaluation, you may ask for an *Independent Educational Evaluation* (IEE). This would be done by someone who is not employed by the school.

The Special Education Process

4 ADMISSION, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE MEETS TO DETERMINE IF YOUR CHILD IS ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES.

The ARD committee is:

- A team, including you, teachers, school administrators, those with special expertise about your child, and professionals with special training about the suspected disability.
- In this meeting, discussing your child's evaluation report, identifying your child's strengths and areas of need, and then determining whether your child has a disability and the need for special education services.

Once the evaluation report is done, an ARD committee typically has 30 calendar days to determine eligibility and develop the IEP.

The Special Education Process

5 IF YOUR CHILD IS ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, THEN THE ARD COMMITTEE WILL ALSO DEVELOP AN **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**.

An IEP is:

- A collection of information that identifies your child's disability, shows your child's current strengths and areas of need, identifies goals to be worked on, and shows the special education and related services that are required for your child to be successful.
- A document that a school must follow once the process for developing it is complete, and you consent to your child receiving services. Services would begin as soon as possible.

You have the right to participate in the development of the IEP and agree or disagree to your child getting special education services.

The Special Education Process

MOVING FORWARD: RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Once an IEP has been developed, it is the school's responsibility to implement the IEP. Schools must offer the services, accommodations, and supports described in the IEP, and school staff will monitor your child's progress toward the goals in the IEP.

- You will receive progress reports on your child's IEP goals at least once each grading period.
- The ARD committee will meet and review your child's IEP at least annually.
- As a member of the ARD committee, you will discuss the need for an updated evaluation at least every three years.
- You can ask for an ARD committee meeting at any time.
- You can revoke your consent to special education services. In other words, you can tell the school in writing that you want your child's special education services to stop being provided.
- Special rules are in place for school discipline. If your child's disability is found to be the reason why the misbehavior occurred, then the ARD committee may, in certain situations, change the disciplinary consequence.

02

Evaluation and identification of dyslexia & related disorders

From the Texas Dyslexia Handbook linked here.

Evaluation and identification of dyslexia & related disorders

First: Referral process

- Essential components of comprehensive literacy instruction required by as explicit, systematic, and intentional instruction in the following:
  - Phonological awareness
  - Phonic decoding
  - Vocabulary
  - Language structure
  - Reading fluency
  - Reading comprehension
- Data-Driven Meeting of Knowledgeable Persons
- Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.

Evaluation and identification of dyslexia & related disorders

Next: Evaluation

Data Gathering

- Cumulative Data
- Environmental & Socioeconomic Factors
- Language Proficiency

Formal Evaluation

- Notification and Permission
- Tests and Other Evaluation Materials
- Additional Considerations for EB students
- Domains to Assess Specific to Dyslexia
  - Academic Skills
  - Cognitive Processes

Evaluation and identification of dyslexia & related disorders

Last: Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluations

- The Multi disciplinary team (MDT), using input from the parent/guardian, completes the FIIE, which determines if the student meets the criteria for dyslexia, and, if so, explains the impact of dyslexia on the student's access and progress in the enrolled grade-level general curriculum.
- Then the ARD committee, which includes the parent/guardian as a committee member, meets to determine prong 1 and prong 2, which means the student has both the identification of a qualifying disability and the need for special education and related services.
- Eligibility is determined by the ARD committee in accordance with federal and state law and regulations.

State assessment accommodations

Some accommodations an ARD committee can consider for a student with dyslexia:

- **Oral administration**
- **Spelling assistance**
- **Supplemental aids**
- **See all available accommodations here in the District Campus Coordinator Resources(DCCR).**

Note: State testing accommodations are determined by the ARD committee; recommendations dependent on individual student data.

03

Key Differences between 504 and Special Education

Get to know the federal laws that protect students with disabilities

Keys Differences between 504 and SPED

Section 504

- Accommodations to provide equal access to instruction
- Disability that interferes with access to learning
- Evaluation process considers medical information, social/behavioral information and how that impacts the academics
- 504 Meetings held periodically

Special Education

- Individualized and provides specially designed instruction
- Must meet disability criteria set by IDEA
- Full Individualized Evaluation
- Annual ARD meetings with individual education plan (IEP)

Both programs are protected by federal law

03

College Board Accommodations & Bridging Support to College

Let’s talk about services available at college and university for your student & what your family can do now in preparation for college.

Bridging Support Between High School & College

Determining services:

Evaluation

- Determines area of need

ARD/ 504 Committee meets

- Classroom & Assessment Accommodations are put in place

Classroom vs. Assessment Accommodations

Classroom

- Access to Instruction
  - Presentation changes
- Environment for Instruction
  - Setting changes
- Responses to Instruction
  - Production changes
- Schedule for Instruction
  - Timing changes

Assessment

- Access to Materials
- Environment for Assessment
- Response to Demonstrate Knowledge
- Allotted Time

College Board/ACT Accommodations

- Students MUST use their accommodations independently & routinely on state assessments to apply for College Board (PSAT, SAT, & AP) and ACT assessments.
- Parental Consent is required for students under 18 to share confidential information (FIE, IEP, or SSP)
- Campus Testing Coordinator will apply on your behalf after consent is granted.
- College Board/ACT will decide which accommodations are approved/denied. **BISD cannot guarantee the accommodations requested.**
- Once approved, accommodations are valid through high school.
- Students are required to be offered accommodations oncel granted.

College Board Accommodations

Students that wish to have accommodations on College Board exams (PSAT, SAT, AP) must request them from College Board directly. Accommodations that are approved will remain with the student until they graduate.

The most common accommodations are:

- 50% extra time (a section that is normally 60 minutes would be 60 minutes + 30 minutes).
- Human reader
- Prerecorded audio
- Use of a four function calculator

Available Accommodations

College Board Accommodations

Parents and students may make the accommodations request themselves or ask the school to do it on their behalf (most common). If the student is under 18, the school must have a signed consent form to make the accommodation request. Requests must be made months in advance of a test in order to be approved in time.

Note: BISD cannot guarantee accommodations requests

Consent Forms

ACT Accommodations

Students that want accommodations on the ACT complete a request during the exam registration. The school that is linked to your account will be notified of the request once it is submitted. Follow up with your campus to ensure they received the accommodations request. The person in charge of validating these accommodations may have additional questions for you.

ACT Accommodations

TSIA Accommodations

- Many students take the TSIA at their high school campus. Accommodations are requested through the counselor's office.
- Some student's opt to take the TSIA through a local college, like Central Texas College; In this case, the student applies for an accommodation through the college's student services office.
- Contact your campus counselor for support.

The TSIA

High School & College Accommodations Legal Shift

Legal Shift

- Special Education entitlements end upon Graduation. There is no Specially Designed Instruction in college.
- Accommodations and entitlements are served under ADA/ADAAA - Section 504
- Documented disability and current need
- “Reasonable” and “appropriate”
- FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children’s educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

The student becomes the driver.

Students entering college MUST be prepared to be their own advocates, request accommodations and handle college business.

Legal Shift: Disclosing the Disability

High School

- High School identifies student with disability
- May conduct assessment to identify disability
- Decisions are made by committee including parents

College

- Student must self disclose and request services
- Safeguards protest student confidentiality
- Provides access to programs and services
- Inform students of process

Legal Shift: Communications

High School

- School staff and parents communicate about ARD/504 meetings and plans
- Special Education staff and parents finalize and approve accommodations
- School staff distribute plans

College

- Student provides accommodation notice (letter) to instructor
- Student schedules exams, communicates any concerns
- Faculty and staff communicate with student only.

Legal Shift: Disclosing the Disability

High School

- Goal is success
- Special Education can choose to modify curriculum
- May provide certain non-academic services such as behavioral supports

College

- Goal is access
- No alteration of admission criteria, curriculum, or course objectives
- No modified code of conduct
- Provides access to academic programs and services

Colleges are NOT required to:

- Reduce or waive admission standards or the essential requirements of a course or program
- Conduct testing of learning, psychological or medical disabilities
- Provide personal attendants, devices or services
- Modify code of conduct or accommodate for behavior
- Prepare IEPs or 504 plans for students