



# **Dyslexia Handbook**

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## **I. Definition & Characteristics of Dyslexia**

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

### **AS DEFINED IN THE TEXAS EDUCATION CODE, SECTION §38.003**

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. Related disorders include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

### **The current definition from the International Dyslexia Association states:**

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

The primary difficulties of a student identified as having dyslexia occur in phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word decoding, reading fluency and spelling. Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression. These difficulties are **unexpected** for the student's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities. Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

The following are the primary reading/spelling characteristics of dyslexia:

1. Difficulty reading real words in isolation;
2. Difficulty accurately decoding nonsense words;
3. Slow, inaccurate, or labored oral reading (lack of reading fluency);
4. Difficulty with learning to spell.

The reading/spelling characteristics are the result of difficulty with the following:

- The development of phonological awareness, including segmenting, blending, and manipulation
- Sounds in words;
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds;

- Phonological memory (holding information about sounds and words in memory);
- Rapid naming of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet.

Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension;
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written expression;
- A limited amount of time spent in reading activities.

The problems of the child with a learning disorder may include other difficulties that do not pertain to reading exclusively. As with other learning disabilities:

- The student is an underachiever academically as a result of the characteristics of dyslexia;
- There is an unexpected difference between the student’s intellectual potential and actual achievement level primarily in language skills; and
- It has been determined that the student’s lack of academic progress is not due to chronic absenteeism, illness, or problems in the home.

Certain students with dyslexia or other specific learning disabilities qualify as handicapped under federal and state law and may receive special education and related services appropriate for treating their handicapping condition. Other students with less severe learning disabilities or dyslexia may not require special education services and should benefit from specific assistance within regular or remedial programs.

## **II. Procedures Required by State Law Prior to Formal Assessment**

In accordance with TEC §28.006, Athens ISD administers early reading instruments in kindergarten, first, and second grades to determine students’ reading development and comprehension. Additionally, a reading instrument from the Commissioner’s approved list will be administered at the beginning of grade 7 to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency on the reading assessment administered under TEC §39.023(a). If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties, the students’ parents/guardians are notified. In addition, an accelerated (intensive) reading program that appropriately addresses students’ reading difficulties and enables them to “catch up” with their typically performing peers is implemented. Should students continue to struggle with reading, writing, and spelling during the intensive reading instruction, then Athens ISD will initiate procedures to recommend these students for assessment for dyslexia. The information from the early reading instruments will be one source of information in deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia. Other sources may include, but are not limited to: performance on state mandated test(s), a

student's grades/performance in reading and written spelling, and teachers' observations of the characteristics of dyslexia

### **Kindergarten & 1st Grade Dyslexia Screeners**

Texas Education Code §38.003 mandates that kindergarten students be screened at the end of the school year. In scheduling the kindergarten screener, districts and charter schools should consider the questions

#### **Considerations for Local Scheduling of Dyslexia Screening**

- Has adequate time for instruction been provided during the school year?
- Has adequate time been provided to compile data prior to the end of the school year?
- How will the timing of the administration of the screener fit in with the timing of other required assessments?
- Has sufficient time been provided to inform parents in writing of the results of the reading instrument and whether the student is at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties?
- Has adequate time been provided for educators to offer appropriate interventions to the student?
- Has sufficient time been provided for decision making regarding next steps in the screening process?

Texas Education Code §38.003 does not explicitly state when first grade students must be screened. The SBOE, through approval of the rule which requires adherence to this handbook (TAC §74.28), has determined that students in first grade must be screened no later than the middle of the school year. Screening of first-grade students can begin anytime in the fall as the teacher deems appropriate. Grade 1 screening must conclude no later than January 31 of each year. The timing of the grade 1 screening is designed to ensure that students are appropriately screened, and if necessary, evaluated further so that reading difficulties can be addressed in a timely manner.

Because kindergarten is not mandatory in the State of Texas, some students will not have been enrolled in kindergarten and will therefore not have been screened prior to the first grade. Waiting too long in the first grade year would delay critical early intervention for students at risk for dyslexia or reading difficulties. Screening of first grade students by the middle of the school year will ensure that sufficient time is provided for data gathering, evaluation, early intervention, etc., to meet the needs of students. Conducting the grade 1 screening no later than the middle of the school year will allow districts and charter schools to complete the evaluation process with enough time for interventions to be provided to the student prior to the end of first grade.

### III. Referral Process

At any time that a student demonstrates poor performance in one or more areas of reading and spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade, or demonstrates characteristics and risk factors of dyslexia indicated in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018, Athens ISD will collect additional information about the student. Progression through tiered intervention is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia. Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia assessment at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia assessment has been made, Athens ISD will review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is a reason to believe the student has a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student will be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in this Handbook and the State Dyslexia Handbook.

If Athens ISD does not suspect a disability and determines that an evaluation would not be warranted, the parents/guardians will be notified of the reasons an evaluation is denied including documentation that the denial is based on data and given a copy of their due process rights.

**Data Gathering:** Information will be used to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. This information should include data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction and data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. This cumulative data also includes information from parents/guardians. Sources and examples of cumulative data are:

- Vision screening
- Hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations or interventions provided
- Academic progress reports and/or report cards
- Gifted and Talented assessments
- Samples of school work
- Parent conference notes
- Speech and language assessment
- The K-2 reading instrument as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)

- Information from kindergarten and 1st grade Dyslexia Screener
- State student assessment program results as described in TEC §39.002
- 7 th -grade reading instruments results as required in TEC §28.006
- Observations of instruction provided to the students
- Full Individual Evaluation (FIE)
- Outside evaluations
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Instructional strategies provided and student’s response to the instruction
- Universal screening

Data that support that the difficulties are not due to cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantage. Having data related to these factors may help in determining whether the student’s struggles with reading are due to a lack of opportunity or a reading disability, including dyslexia.

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

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

**Primary Reading/Spelling Characteristics of Dyslexia:**

- Difficulty reading words in isolation • Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored)
- Difficulty spelling It is important to note that individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment.

The reading/spelling characteristics are most often associated with the following:

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
- Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory)

- Rapidly recalling the names of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming)

Consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written composition
- Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences

Athens ISD conducts all Dyslexia evaluations as Full and Individual Evaluations under IDEA.

## **DYSLEXIA AND RELATED DISORDERS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

Authority: Texas Education Code, Section §38.003

As stated in Texas Education Code §38.003 (a) and (b):

- a) “Students enrolling in public schools in this state shall be tested for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times in accordance with a program approved by the State Board of Education.” The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student’s reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to additional reading instruction (if placed in additional reading instruction), teachers’ input, and parents’ input.
- b) “In accordance with the program approved by the State Board of Education, the board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder.”

### District Committee

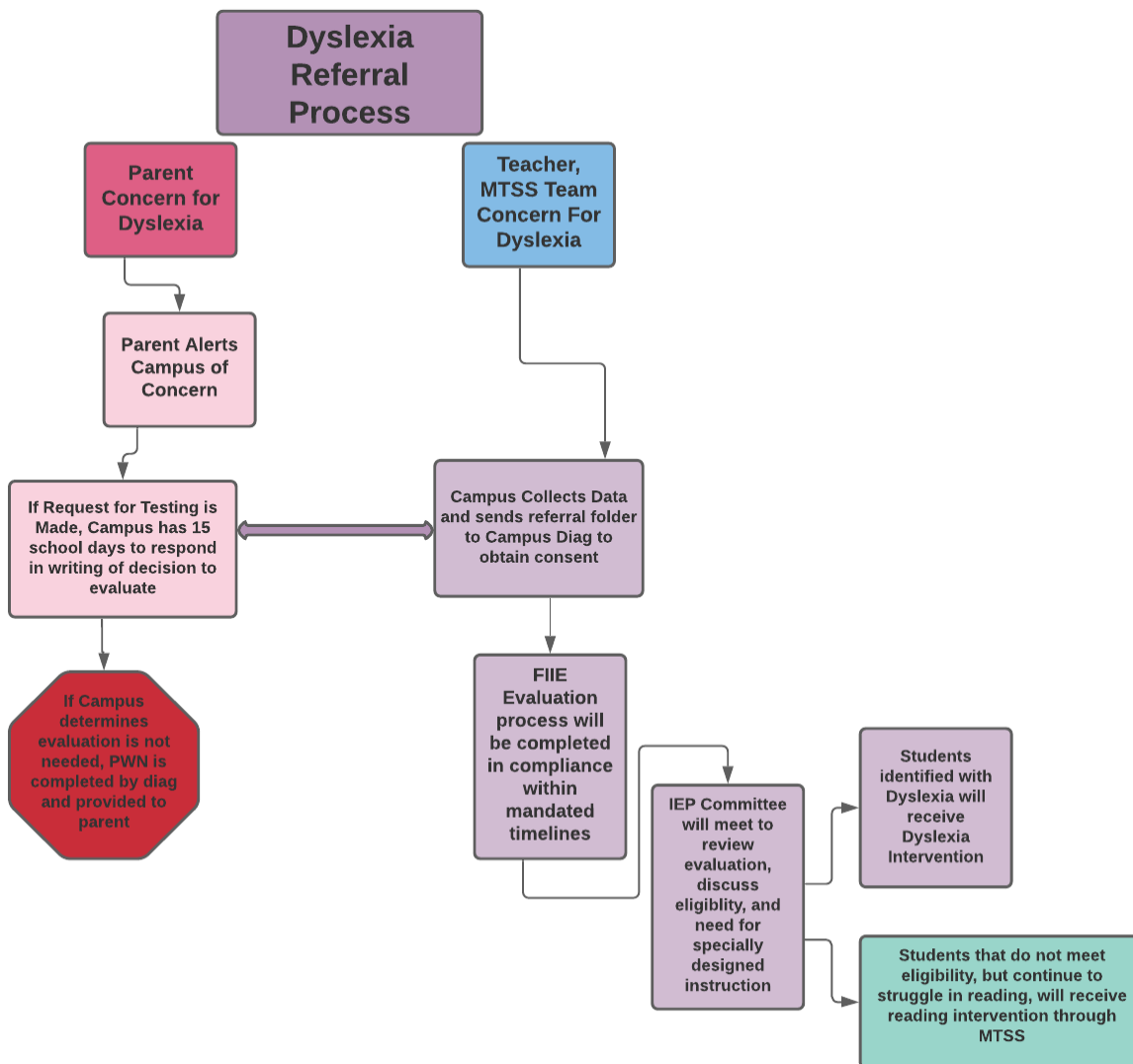
The District Dyslexia Committee will develop written guidelines for the implementation of state rules related to the evaluation and instruction of students with dyslexia and related disorders. The committee will meet periodically to update the guidelines and the district’s implementation plan and disseminate such revisions to all campuses.

### Campus Committees

At each Athens Independent School District campus, the MTSS Team and/or the campus 504 committee, along with the campus dyslexia specialist, will work in accordance with the Athens Independent School District Dyslexia Flowchart in this manual.

The committee members, other than those specified, will consist of different professional personnel depending upon the students referred, the type of concern, the teachers having direct contact with the referred student, and the teachers of the various programs into which students may be referred and placed for services. **The trained dyslexia program instructional specialist shall be included at any campus MTSS Team meeting or IEP committee meeting that concerns a student who may have dyslexic tendencies.**





#### **IV. Assessment for Dyslexia**

Students enrolling in Athens ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teachers' input, and parents' or guardians' input. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28), the earlier the better. While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career. Formal assessment includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dyslexia. Findings from the formal assessment will be different for each child. Professionals conducting assessment for the identification of dyslexia will look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom reading performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining reading and spelling abilities and difficulties. Athens ISD will complete the evaluation process as outlined in §504 or IDEA 2004.

Tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials will meet the following criteria in compliance with §504 and IDEA 2004:

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

## **Domains to Assess**

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

## **Academic Skills**

- Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
- Reading words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar words accurately
- Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy are assessed)
- Reading comprehension
- Spelling
- Processes
- Phonological/phonemic awareness
- Rapid naming of symbols or objects
- Vocabulary
- Listening comprehension
- Verbal expression
- Written expression
- Handwriting
- Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing)
- Mathematical calculation/reasoning
- Phonological memory
- Verbal working memory
- Processing speed

## **English Language Learners**

(This refers 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 English Language Learners (ELLs). 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 Athens ISD, the LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee) will be involved in the decision-making process. Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Language Learners:

### **● Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) documentation which includes the following:**

- Home language survey
- Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency (oral language proficiency tests and norm-referenced tests - all years available)

- o Texas English Language Proficiency System (TELPAS) information for four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- o Type of language program model provided and language of instruction
- o Instructional interventions provided to address language needs
- o Previous schooling inside and/or outside of the United States.

**A professional involved in the assessment, interpretation of assessment results, and identification of ELLs with dyslexia needs to have the following training/knowledge:**

- Knowledge of first and second language acquisition theory
- Knowledge of the written system of the first language – transparent (Spanish, Italian, German), syllabic (Japanese-kana), Semitic (Arabic, Hebrew) and morpho syllabic (Chinese-Kanji)
- Knowledge of student’s literacy skills in native and second language
- Knowledge of how to interpret results from a cross-linguistic perspective
- Knowledge of how to interpret the TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System)
- Knowledge of how to interpret the results of the student’s oral language proficiency in two or more languages in relation to the results of the tests measuring academic achievement and cognitive processes as well as academic data gathered and economic and socioeconomic factors. If there is not a test in the native language of the student, information measures of evaluation such as reading a list of words or listening comprehension in the native language may be used.

**V. Identification of Students with Dyslexia**

The Dyslexia evaluation will be completed under IDEA as a Full and Individual Evaluation. The evaluation will be comprehensive and a Dyslexia Diagnostician and/or Dyslexia Therapist will be consulted in the final determination of Dyslexia identification.

**Evaluators apply the following differential identification questions in sequence.**

1. Does the student demonstrate one or more of the primary reading characteristics of dyslexia in addition to a spelling deficit?
2. Are the reading and spelling difficulties the result of a phonological processing deficit?
3. Are the reading, spelling, and phonological processing deficits unexpected? Does the student demonstrate cognitive ability to support age level academic learning?
4. Are there secondary characteristics evident in reading comprehension and written expression?
5. Are there coexisting deficits that may complicate identification and the response to intervention and may deserve further assessment and intervention? Does the student have above average strengths that could be assets?

Upon completion of the Full & Individual Evaluation under IDEA, an IEP meeting will be held to review the evaluation information. The IEP committee will review the student’s eligibility and determine if the student requires specially designed instruction under IDEA or if it is determined that sufficient progress can be made under §504.

**Factors to Consider when Determining Need for Specially Designed Instruction:**

- Cognitive Profile

- Co-Existing Conditions/Complications
- Current Academic Progress

### **Assessment of Students Identified Outside the District**

Students identified as having dyslexia or related disorders from an outside source will be reviewed for placement in the district's program. After Athens ISD's evaluation of the information obtained from the previous testing of the student, Athens ISD may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student.

### **VI. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia**

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, the school district shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in TEC §38.003(b):

In accordance with the program approved by the State Board of Education, the board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder. Each school must provide an identified student access at his/her campus to an instructional program that meets the requirements in 19 TAC §74.28(c) and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. While the components of instruction for students with dyslexia include good teaching principles for all teachers, the explicitness and intensity of the instruction, fidelity to program descriptors, grouping formats, and training and skill of the teachers are wholly different from core classroom instruction. Instruction decisions for a student with dyslexia must be made by a committee (§504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia. In accordance with 19 TAC §74.28 (c), districts shall purchase or develop a reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that incorporates all the components of instruction and instructional approaches in the following sections.

#### **Components of Instruction**

The instructional program should be offered in a small group arrangement (e.g., 1:3 – 1:6) and include reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate. The major instructional strategies should utilize individualized, intensive, and multisensory methods 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 – 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 follow 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).

As appropriate intervention is provided, students with dyslexia make significant gains in reading. Effective instruction is highly-structured, systematic, and explicit, and it lasts for sufficient duration. In addition, because effective intervention requires highly structured and systematic delivery, it is critical that those who provide intervention for students with dyslexia be trained in the program used and that the program is implemented with fidelity. Instructional Intervention

Consideration for English Language Learners (ELLs) 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 ELLs. 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 and graphemes then can be presented. In addition to all the components of effective instruction previously mentioned, intervention for ELLs 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 ELLs must incorporate the ELPS. A few strategies to consider include:**

- Establish routines so that ELLs 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 ELL to process the English language. This is especially necessary during the early stages of second language development.
- Provide extra time for the ELL 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 By receiving specialized instruction that contains the components described in this chapter, the student with dyslexia is better equipped to meet the demands of grade-level or course instruction.

In addition to specialized instruction, accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom. Accommodations are not a one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the accommodation. When making decisions about accommodations, instruction is always the foremost priority. Not all accommodations used in the classroom are allowed during a state assessment. However, an educator's ability to meet the individual needs of a student with dyslexia should not be limited by whether an accommodation is allowable on a state assessment. 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. The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet the needs

of each student. A student may need accommodation only temporarily while learning a new skill, or a student might require accommodation throughout the school year or over several years. In order to make accommodation decisions for students, educators should have knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and how a student performs in relation to them. Educators should also collect and analyze data pertaining to the use and effectiveness of accommodations (e.g., assignment/test scores with and without the accommodation, observational reports) so that informed educational decisions can be made for each student. By analyzing data, an educator can determine if the accommodation becomes inappropriate or unnecessary over time due to the student's changing needs. Likewise, data can confirm for the educator that the student still struggles in certain areas and should continue to use the accommodation.

### **Virtual Dyslexia Instruction**

Athens ISD will ensure that students with disabilities have access to free and appropriate public education (FAPE). We will ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided services identified in the student's individualized 504 plan or IEP. Distribution of Dyslexia Program Materials: For students who choose at-home virtual learning, program materials will be distributed as follows:

- The student's assigned dyslexia teacher will plan with the student's parent for pick-up of program materials, such as student book, flashcards, program manipulatives, etc. from the student's home campus.
- Once a student completes the lessons included in their current program book, in accordance with the teacher's lesson plans, the dyslexia teacher will plan for the student's parent to return the materials to the child's campus.
- Upon return of completed program materials, the dyslexia teacher will provide the student's parent with program materials for the next program book.

Provisions:

- Dyslexia teachers will follow complete lesson plans for each class whether virtual or face-to-face.
- Special and general education teachers will collaborate to ensure lessons are designed to meet the needs of all students.
- Athens ISD will ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each dyslexic student will be provided the related services identified in the student's 504 plan.

For students who choose at-home virtual learning, teachers will provide the following as appropriate:

- Individualized lessons
- Direct instruction through scheduled synchronous sessions (If a student is unable to participate during synchronous sessions and access lessons at another time, the committee should convene to document how the student's service plan will be implemented.)
- Links to virtual platforms for lesson participation

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- Weekly lesson materials to the district-designated virtual platforms (e.g., Google classroom, etc.)

Teachers are required to:

- Document student participation and attendance on the student's log
- Collect data and monitor progress
- Request a 504 meeting to address any concerns with progress of their service plan or in the general education curriculum



## VII. Common Characteristics & Risk Factors Associated with Dyslexia

### Preschool

- Delay in learning to talk
- Difficulty with rhyming
- Difficulty pronouncing words (e.g. “pusgetti” for “spaghetti”, “mawn lower” for “lawn mower”)
- Poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
- Difficulty in adding new vocabulary words
- Inability to recall the right word (word retrieval)
- Trouble learning and naming letters and numbers and remembering the letters in his/her name
- Aversion to print (e.g., doesn’t enjoy following along if book is read aloud)

### Kindergarten and First Grade

- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts (syllables) (e.g., “baseball” can be pulled apart into “base” and “ball” or “napkin” can be pulled apart into “nap” “kin”)
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables (e.g., “man” sounded out as /m/ /a/ /n/)
- Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling their corresponding sounds
- Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- Difficulty spelling words the way they sound (phonetically or remembering letter sequences in very common words seen often in print (e.g., “sed” for “said”)

### Second Grade and Third Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty recognizing common sight words( e.g., “to”, “said,” “been”)
- Difficulty decoding single words
- Difficulty recalling the correct sounds for letters and letter patterns in reading
- Difficulty connecting speech sounds with appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Difficulty with written expression

### Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty reading aloud (e.g., fear of reading aloud in front of classmates)
- Avoidance of reading (e.g., particularly for pleasure)
- Acquisition of less vocabulary due to reduced independent reading
- Use of less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell than more appropriate words (e.g., “big” instead of “enormous”)
- Reliance on listening rather than reading for comprehension

## **Middle & High School**

Many of the Previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty with the volume of reading and written work
- Frustration with the amount of time required and energy expended for reading
- Difficulty with written assignments
- Tendency to avoid reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

## **Postsecondary**

Some students will not be identified prior to entering college as having dyslexia. The early years of reading difficulties evolve into slow, labored reading fluency. Many students will experience extreme frustration and fatigue due to the increasing demands of reading as the result of dyslexia. In making a diagnosis for dyslexia, a student's reading history, familial/genetic predisposition, and assessment history are critical. Many of the previously described behaviors may remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty pronouncing names of people and places or parts of words
- Difficulty remembering names of people and places
- Difficulty with word retrieval
- Difficulty with spoken vocabulary
- Difficulty completing the reading demands for multiple course requirements
- Difficulty with note-taking
- Difficulty with written production
- Difficulty remember sequences (e.g., mathematical and/or scientific formulas).

## **Sources for Common Characteristics and Risk Factors of Dyslexia**

Carreker, S. (2008, September). Is my child dyslexic? The International Dyslexia Association. Retrieved from [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)

Mather, N., & Wendling, B. J. (2012). *Essentials of dyslexia assessment and intervention*. Hoboken, NJ:

John Wiley & Sons. Moats, L. C., & Dakin, K. E. (2008). *Basic facts about dyslexia and other reading problems*. Baltimore, MD: The International Dyslexia Association.

Olson, R. K., Keenan, J. M., Byrne, B., & Samuelsson, S. (2014). Why do children differ in their development of reading and related skills? *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 18(1), 38–54.

Shaywitz, S. (2003). *Overcoming dyslexia: A new and complete science-based program for reading problems at any level*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

## VIII. What Parents can do for Students with Dyslexia?

### **Dyslexia is:**

- One of several distinct learning disabilities.
- Of constitutional origin and is NOT the result of a generalized developmental delay or sensory impairment
- Is language-based. There is a weak sensitivity to sounds of language (insufficient phonological processing ability).
- Characteristic by having difficulty reading or decoding single words. This difficulty is unexpected for the age and in comparison to other cognitive and academic abilities. Other language skills are often variably and consciously impaired, particularly writing and spelling.
- A specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties usually 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 include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board of Directors, November 12, 2002).
- Manifested by difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and socio-cultural opportunity.

### **Characteristics of Dyslexia**

- Difficulty saying the alphabet correctly in sequence
- Difficulty forming the shapes of the letters
- Difficulty writing the alphabet correctly in sequence
- Errors in naming letters
- Difficulty in learning and remembering printed words
- Repeated spelling errors
- Difficulty in handwriting
- Slow rate of writing
- Difficulty with reading comprehension

### *Characteristics, which may be associated with dyslexia:*

- Delay in spoken language
- Difficulty pronouncing words with sounds in the right order
- Difficulty finding the "right" word
- Late establishing preferred writing handedness
- Late learning right, left, and other directionality components

- Problems learning concept of time and temporal sequencing
- Family history of similar problems

### **OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

Trends and Tendencies:

- Grades slip downward year-to-year
- Inconsistent grades from day-to-day
- Inconsistent performance on standardized tests
- Confusion with math symbols, but not computation
- Math computation is better than word problems
- Memorized spelling is better than spontaneous spelling
- Homework is better quality than classwork
- Inordinate time spent on homework
- Deteriorated organization and study habits
- Deteriorating motivation and self-esteem
- Good grades but too much struggle is evident
- Chooses oral performance over written when given chance
- Compensation by use of pictures, prompt from teacher, etc.
- Stress reflected by irregular writing and uneven pencil pressure

### **Frequent, Common or Typical Behaviors:**

- Short attention span
- Posture indicative of poor self-esteem
- Anxiety results in inappropriate behaviors
- Withdrawal • Inordinate stress during performance time
- Cheating
- Overcompensation through pseudo-confidence
- Poor motivation resulting from lack of success
- Situational behaviors manifested in specific situation (child/teacher conflict) though not characteristic of student's general behavior

These students may exhibit intellectual ability, mechanical ability, and talent in non-academic areas, social skills, and other strengths.

### **WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO HELP A CHILD WITH DYSLEXIA?**

#### **Help your child understand the nature of his/her difficulty:**

- Read books or view videos about dyslexia
- Emphasize the child's abilities instead of "disabilities"

#### **Help other members of the family:**

Help others recognize and understand your child's learning disability.

Family members often ask "who, what, where, and when" questions to get the necessary information.

Help your child locate and develop other talents

- Sports, art, music, mechanics, hobbies, etc.
- Help improve your child's self-image by giving your child tasks he/she can master
- Give the child chores to do (e.g., setting the table for supper, clearing the dishes, and making the beds).
- Make short lists of tasks to help the child remember. A list is impersonal and reduces irritations. The child will gain satisfaction as he checks off tasks completed.
- Often children do not process multiple requests quickly or accurately. State your ideas in simple, clear, one-concept commands and ask the child to repeat what was said. Speaking at a slower rate of speed to the child is often helpful.

### **Structure the child's life at home:**

- Stick to a regular routine for meals, play, TV, chores, homework, etc.
- Keep belongings in the same place. Help the child remember where to put them.
- Keep instructions simple - one at a time.
- Break tasks into small parts or steps.
- Relieve stress in weak areas.
- Guard against negative remarks, especially those referring to laziness or lack of effort.
- Avoid threats of punishment for such things as low grades, their need for repetition of directions, ineptness at simple tasks, etc.
- Set standards, goals, and expectations of achievement within reach of your child's abilities.

### **How Can Parents Build Self-Esteem?**

- Praise your child often and sincerely
- Don't constantly nag or criticize
- Catch your child doing well
- Give your child opportunities to succeed
- Tell your child you believe in him or her
- Give your child lots of hugs and kisses
- Praise efforts that are working towards a goal
- Don't compare your child with anyone else
- Look for ways to make your child feel capable
- Encourage your child to make age appropriate decisions
- Give your child a chance to solve problems before jumping in
- Listen to your child's thoughts, feelings, and ideas without judging or criticizing

## What Strengths Are We Likely to See in Individuals with Dyslexia?

- Highly creative
- Finds new ways to do old things
- Inventor
- Diplomat
- Likes and enjoys helping people
- Excels at individual sports
- Understands animals, plants, living things
- Wants to know how things work
- Enjoys working with hands
- Scientific thinker
- A good motivator
- Enthusiastic
- Links previously unrelated ideas, processes
- Problem solver
- Builder
- Good sense of humor
- May anticipate people's emotions
- Works better alone than with team
- Mechanically inclined
- Likes to repair or make things better
- Likes building things
- Very curious and observant
- Has high energy
- Is open-minded

### Parent Suggestions for Student Success:

- Parent(s) establish good study habits for the child. Consider a regular study schedule and a quiet study environment to address possible attention interference. Monitor nightly study to verify work is progressing or is completed.
- Work closely with your child's teacher. Regular communication between parent and teacher is necessary.
- Parent(s) consider reading to a child 15 minutes a day or acquiring audiotapes of books for read along.
- Help children develop a positive attitude and understanding of self-worth.
- Read Chapters 15, 16, and 17 in *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz for additional reading support.

### RESOURCES

1. *Parenting a Struggling Reader* by Hall, S. & Moats, L. (2002) Broadway Books
2. *Learning Outside the Lines* by Mooney, J. & Cole, D.: Simon & Schuster
3. *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Shaywitz, Sally
4. The International Dyslexia Association -[www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)
5. LD-Online -[www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)
6. Texas Scottish Rite Hospital -[www.tsrhc.org/p\\_child\\_development.cfm](http://www.tsrhc.org/p_child_development.cfm)
7. Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic -[www.rfbd.org](http://www.rfbd.org)
8. Talking Book Program, State of Texas -[www.tsl.state.tx.us/tbp/](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/tbp/)
9. Learning Ally: <https://learningally.org/>