

## Dyslexia Program

Students struggling with some or all of the many facets of reading, writing and/or spelling are provided specialized assessment in order to determine if a student may be identified as a student with dyslexia. Those students who are identified are provided with an appropriate instructional program for the student at each campus. The major instructional strategies utilize individualized, intensive, and multi-sensory methods as appropriate.

For any additional information please contact:

Frankie Blue - Special Services Director

### **Dyslexia Coordinators**

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## Questions & Answers About the DISD Dyslexia Program

The purpose of this information area is to answer frequently asked questions concerning how students who may exhibit characteristics of dyslexia are served within the DISD. The guidelines and procedures adopted have been designed to correlate to the identification and instruction of students with dyslexia and related disorders adopted by the State Board of Education in 1992, mandated by the state of Texas, and presented in *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders*. (Revised in 2007, Updated 2010) Commonly referred to as *The Purple Book*, this document is intended to provide districts with guidelines for developing written procedures and has been a consistent resource in the development of the DISD's dyslexia intervention. The handbook introduces legal changes with revisions to TAC § 74.28 (c), (f), and (g). Additions to the handbook include the following: Occupations Code Chapter 403, passed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas legislature related to Licensed Dyslexia Practitioners and licensed Dyslexia Therapists and TEA's 2008-2009 Response to Intervention Guidance document.

*The Purple Book* was developed to satisfy two statutes and one rule addressing dyslexia and related disorders. Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders, mandates testing students for dyslexia, and providing instruction for students with dyslexia. It gives the State Board of Education authority to adopt rules and standards to administer testing and instruction. Furthermore, Chapter 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 74.28 outlines the responsibilities of districts as to delivery of services to students with dyslexia. § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 establishes assessment and evaluation standards and procedures for students. If a student's dyslexia is determined to 'substantially limit' learning, then Section 504 procedures are put into place. .

DISD is committed to supporting *all* students to ensure educational success. Dyslexia support services are provided on all district campuses K-12 and target grades are 3-8.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What are possible difficulties my child is experiencing that might be associated with dyslexia?**

The following difficulties *may* be associated with dyslexia if they are unexpected for the individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities.

- difficulty with the development of phonological awareness and phonological processing skills

(Processing the sounds of speech), including segmenting or breaking spoken words into individual sounds;

- difficulty accurately decoding nonsense or unfamiliar words;
  - difficulty reading single words in isolation;
  - inaccurate and labored oral reading;
    - lack of reading fluency;
  - variable degrees of difficulty with reading comprehension;
- variable degrees of difficulty learning the names of letters and their associated sounds;
  - difficulty learning to spell;
  - difficulty in word finding and rapid naming;
- variable difficulty with aspects of written composition;
- difficulty with learning and reproducing the alphabet in correct sequence (in either oral or written form); and
  - family history of similar problems.

The difficulty of the child identified as having dyslexia is in reading, single-word decoding, reading fluency, reading comprehension, written composition, and spelling. The problems of the child with a learning disorder may include these difficulties and other difficulties that do not necessarily pertain to reading exclusively.

**(Q) Who can recommend a student for dyslexia assessment?**

**(A)** A classroom teacher, administrator, counselor, literacy specialist, or parent may recommend a student for possible dyslexia assessment. Recommendation for dyslexia assessment should be based on the educational need of the student as outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook* published by the Texas Education Agency.

**(Q) When does DISD assess students for possible dyslexia intervention?**

**(A)** Any student who may move into the district after the school year has started and has participated in or been previously assessed for dyslexia may require additional assessment upon entry to school. A student may be assessed for dyslexia after the completion of TIER II of the RTI process if the student has not made adequate progress through intervention. Any decision to assess a student other than at the time decided on by the district is based on individual need. Formal testing for dyslexia intervention is conducted along with initial testing for Special Education and is ongoing throughout the school year. It is possible the student may be participating in another intervention which supports his current needs and progress is being made in a less restrictive environment.

**(Q) What information is used to determine if a child should receive dyslexia services?**

**(A)** Both informal and formal assessments are evaluated in the decision-making process by a committee of knowledgeable people. A Parent Interview, classroom teacher checklist, samples of classroom work, and informal assessments conducted by the campus dyslexia specialist or a 504 designee are all examples of informal pieces of information that are collected. Formal assessments conducted by the campus dyslexia specialist or diagnostician include the areas of phonemic awareness, letter ID, rapid naming of words, decoding words in both real and nonsense, reading comprehension, and fluency/rate of reading and spelling.

**(Q) Who ultimately identifies and makes placement decisions for students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia?**

**(A)** Members of the district's dyslexia team (committee of knowledgeable persons) comprised of the principal, teachers, parents, and the campus dyslexia therapist/specialist review all collected data and

ultimately decide if a student meets the criteria for program entry. Any additional information provided by classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, other special population teachers, and/or parents is taken into account.

**(Q) How long will my child receive direct dyslexia instruction?**

**(A)** The dyslexia curriculum is written for a two-year time frame. Each student's program is delivered through daily, one –to-one or small group instruction for approximately 30 minutes, 4- 5 days a week. Student progress is monitored through RTI probes and data progress monitoring and/or by the dyslexia interventionist/specialist. Possible length of time in the program may fluctuate from child to child depending on individual factors such as extended illness, excessive absences, and progress made within the curriculum.

**(Q) What factors are used to determine when a child EXITS from dyslexia intervention?**

**(A)** The following factors *may* be used and not all inclusive to determine when a child exits from dyslexia intervention: (1) completion of curriculum; (2) student demonstrating success in grade level material; (3) passing STAAR (previously called TAKS); (4) recommendation by the dyslexia interventionist; (5) parent request; (6) moved from DISD; and/or (7) lack of appropriate progress within the dyslexia curriculum.

**(Q) How will my child be supported once he has exited from his daily dyslexia instruction?**

**(A)** The Campus dyslexia interventionist “monitors” students who have exited the dyslexia program for a period of time. This monitoring can look different for each student depending on the students’ needs. Monitoring can take the form of checking student’s grades each six weeks, talking to the classroom teacher(s), meeting with the individual student informally, etc.

**(Q) What kind of support is available for my student at the secondary level?**

**(A)** A dyslexia specialist is available to support students on middle school and high school campuses. Students participate in a dyslexia/intervention class that is scheduled within the regular school day and is different from the regular reading/language arts curriculum. The Dyslexia specialist/trained teachers are encouraged to use their expertise to deliver instruction designed to help students transition their learned skills into regular education classes. A primary goal of dyslexia intervention is to promote independent problem solving behavior. Reinforcement of such behavior during dyslexia/intervention classes helps the student transition this into his other regular education curriculum.

**(Q) What kind of support is available for my child at the elementary level?**

**(A)** For students in grades K-6th who are struggling with reading and writing, there are several interventions that *might* be available outside of the classroom environment in addition to the dyslexia program. Accelerated reading intervention, Reading Recovery at the first grade level, Lexia, Read Naturally and other research based programs, or tutoring are possibilities for students who are experiencing difficulty within the general classroom setting. Decisions to participate in these interventions are made when students demonstrate an educational need.

**(Q) Who delivers instruction for students showing characteristics of dyslexia?**

**(A)** A dyslexia specialist or teacher who has received special training in one of the scientifically research based programs offered will provide the curriculum instruction through an individualized, intensive, and multisensory method as appropriate to meet the instructional needs of the student.

**(Q) Who can I contact at my child's campus concerning the dyslexia program?**

Contact the campus principal or the dyslexia coordinator before/after school or during the conference period for any questions concerning the program.

**(Q) How does DISD address students who have participated in a dyslexia program in another district?**

**(A)** All prior educational history including any previous interventions, assessment results, and past grade level performance information are collected upon a student's enrollment in DISD. That information is reviewed to evaluate what, if any, additional information might be needed in order to make an appropriate decision concerning student placement. The student's *educational* need will determine any program intervention.

**(Q) My child is currently participating in another intervention. Is it possible that he will receive reading support through the district's dyslexia program?**

**(A)** DISD offers several interventions to support student success. Whenever children are placed into these interventions, it is done so with multiple considerations in mind: (1) what will benefit the child, and (2) what intervention is offered that will be delivered in the *least restrictive* environment.

**(Q) How will I be updated on my child's progress in the dyslexia program?**

**(A)** Your child's dyslexia interventionist will arrange for parent conferences as necessary to discuss your child's progress within the dyslexia curriculum. Parents can request a conference as well. Conferences will usually be scheduled before/after the school day or during the teacher's daily planning period. Progress reports are periodically sent throughout the school year to inform the parents of progress in the program.

**(Q) How can I be involved in supporting my child's dyslexia intervention?**

**(A)** Upon entry into the dyslexia program, parents will receive a *Dyslexia Parent Handbook* from the child's therapist. This handbook is designed to offer parents information about dyslexia as well as tips and suggestions for creating a positive home reading environment. In addition, a selected reading list for parents and children as well as a list of web resources is included. There are numerous ways parents may participate in daily support of their child's dyslexia program. Providing a safe, risk-free environment at home can eliminate anxiety that a child might experience when homework is being completed. Consistency in completion of daily homework, building your child's self-esteem by supporting his daily learning, and helping to establish an independent attitude will benefit your child not only during his dyslexia intervention but also throughout his life as he learns how to be a successful learner.

A copy of *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders* can be obtained by writing to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in Austin, Texas, or downloaded from the TEA website. <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>

The DISD Dyslexia program is included as a part of the district's Special Programs Department. The Director of Special Programs is Frankie Blue. Special Programs offices are located at the Central Office Complex, Dumas, Texas, 79029. For further information concerning DISD's Dyslexia Program, contact the campus dyslexia specialist Denia Brinkmann or Melissa Espino (office is located at the Junior High School) at 806-935-4155 or e-mail [denia.brinkmann@dumasisd.org](mailto:denia.brinkmann@dumasisd.org) or [melissa.espino@dumasisd.org](mailto:melissa.espino@dumasisd.org)