Skidmore-Tynan ISD Dyslexia Plan

Dyslexia and Related Disorders Information

The Dyslexia Handbook 2018 Update is available at the link below. The handbook contains guidelines for school districts to follow as they identify and provide services for students with dyslexia. In addition, information regarding the state's dyslexia statutes and their relation to various federal laws is included. https://tea.texas.gov/academics/dyslexia/

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders in the following way:
- "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 imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

Since dyslexia is a neurobiological, language-based disability that persists over time and interferes with an individual's learning, it is critical that identification and intervention occur as early as possible.

Mandated Universal Screening

Districts and charter schools must implement a screening program that includes each of the following:
- Screening of each student in **kindergarten at the end of the school year**
- Screening of each student in the **first grade no later than January 31**

S-TISD utilizes the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) 8th edition as an early reading instrument and dyslexia screener. DIBELS is a highly reliable early reading assessment designed to identify the reading development of students in kindergarten through third grade.

Procedures After Screening

A qualified committee consisting of the classroom teacher, administrator, interventionist, and teacher of dyslexia will determine which students from the screener are at-risk for reading difficulties.

Students identified as at-risk for reading difficulties:
- For students who are identified as at-risk for dyslexia, the school shall provide targeted intervention
- Committee collects and reviews additional qualitative and quantitative data on the student
- Committee analyzes results and data - Is data consistent with characteristics of dyslexia?
    - If yes, begin IDEA/504 formal evaluation process
    - If no, refer the student to RtI and begin or continue interventions or determine if IDEA/504 evaluation is warranted.

NOTE:
- **A referral may be made at any point under Section 504 if a disability is suspected or IDEA if a disability and a corresponding need for special education services are suspected.**
- **Parents/guardians have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.**

Formal Evaluation Process for Dyslexia and Related Disorders

When formal evaluation is recommended, S-TISD will complete the evaluation process through a 504 or IDEA referral. The evaluation process will follow the procedures below:

- Notify parents or guardians of proposal to assess the student for dyslexia/dysgraphia.
- Inform parents/guardians of their rights under Section 504 or IDEA.
- Obtain parent or guardian permission to assess the student for dyslexia/dysgraphia.
- Assess the student. Testing will be conducted by the District Dyslexia Specialist.
- The committee will determine the identification of dyslexia after reviewing all accumulated data obtained from data gathering and formal evaluation.
    - If student is identified with dyslexia/dysgraphia, the district shall provide appropriate instruction and accommodations.
    - If the student is NOT identified with dyslexia/dysgraphia, the student will be referred to the Campus RtI Team. The team will identify appropriate interventions following S-TISD RtI procedures and processes.

Pull-Out Dyslexia Instruction

S-TISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student identified with dyslexia as required in TEC §38.003: *The board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder.*

S-TISD uses the program Reading By Design, which is a standard protocol dyslexia instruction program. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction provides evidence-based, multisensory structured literacy instruction for students with dyslexia. This dyslexia instruction will be provided in a small group setting and taught by an appropriately trained instructor.

Both the regular classroom teacher and the teacher of dyslexia should provide multiple opportunities to support intervention and to strengthen reading skills; therefore, responsibility for teaching reading and writing is shared by classroom teachers, reading specialists, interventionists, and teachers of dyslexia programs.

Common Risk Factors Associated with Dyslexia

The following characteristics identify risk factors associated with dyslexia at different stages or grade levels.

Kindergarten and First Grade
- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts, or syllables (e.g., "baseball" can be pulled apart into "base" "ball" or "napkin" can be pulled apart into "nap" "kin")
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables (e.g., "man" sounded out as /m/ /ă/ /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., "after" spelled "eftr")
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is 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 (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- 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 School and 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 reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Difficulty with written assignments
- Tendency to avoid reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

Instructional Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom. Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodation. Listed below are examples of reasonable classroom accommodations:

- Copies of notes (e.g., teacher- or peer-provided)
- Note-taking assistance
- Additional time on class assignments and tests
- Reduced/shortened assignments (e.g., 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
- Oral reading of directions or written material
- Word banks
- Audiobooks
- Text to speech
- Speech to text
- Electronic spellers
- Electronic dictionaries
- Formula charts
- Adaptive learning tools and features in software programs

For more information about accommodations, see Accommodations for students with Disabilities available at https://dyslexiaida.org/accommodations-for-students-with-dyslexia/.

Characteristics of Dysgraphia

The characteristics of dysgraphia include the following:
- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Excessive erasures and cross-outs
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting (Andrews & Lombardino, 2014)
- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

Supporting Students Struggling with Handwriting

Reading By Design, the district's chosen program for dyslexia, has handwriting components that are used to support students identified with dysgraphia.

Between 10% and 30% of students struggle with handwriting. Early difficulties in this area are significantly correlated with poorer performance on composition tasks. The following are research-based elements of effective handwriting instruction. These elements may be used to support instructional methods with students whose penmanship is illegible or dysfluent.
- Show students how to hold a pencil.
- Model efficient and legible letter formation.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice effective letter formation.
- Use scaffolds, such as letters with numbered arrows showing the order and direction of strokes.
- Have students practice writing letters from memory.
- Provide handwriting fluency practice to build students' automaticity.
- Practice handwriting in short sessions.

—Adapted from Berninger et al., 1997; Berninger et al., 2006; Denton, Cope, & Moser, 2006; Graham et al., 2012; Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000; Graham & Weintrub, 1996.