

Gary Independent School District



Dyslexia and Related Disorders Plan

Table of Contents

I.	Definition of Dyslexia and Dysgraphia	3
II.	Procedures Required by State and Federal Law	
	Prior to Formal Assessment	6
III.	Referral Process	8
IV.	Assessment of Dyslexia	10
V.	Identification of Students with Dyslexia	13
VI.	Instruction for Students with Dyslexia	17
VII.	Student Monitoring and Program Exit Criteria	19

I. Definition of Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

Dyslexia

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 dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The current definition from the International Dyslexia Association states the following:

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 of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Students identified as having dyslexia struggle with phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, 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, education level, and cognitive ability. Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

The following characteristics identify risk factors associated with dyslexia at different grade levels:

Kindergarten-Third grade

- Difficulty learning the letter names and their corresponding sounds
- Difficulty reading words in isolation
- Difficulty reading fluently (reading is slow, labored, inaccurate, choppy, etc.)
- Difficulty spelling phonetically
- Difficulty decoding and understanding that words are made up of parts/individual sounds
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Reliance on listening rather than reading for comprehension

Fourth grade-High School

- Avoids reading aloud
- Avoids reading for pleasure
- Difficulty reading fluently
- History of reading and spelling difficulties
- Tendency to use less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics

Dysgraphia

Dyslexia and dysgraphia are now recognized to be distinct disorders that can exist concurrently or separately. Dysgraphia and dyslexia are both language-based disorders; however, students with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading. Dysgraphia is best defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder manifested by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. Dysgraphia is a written language disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter. This involves not only motor skills but also language skills, finding, retrieving and producing letters, which is a subword-level language skill.

The following characteristics identify risk factors associated with dysgraphia:

- 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
- Slow writing
- Illegible handwriting

II. Procedures Required by State and Federal Law Prior to Formal Assessment

The evaluation, identification, and provision of services for students with dyslexia are guided by both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Further information about these laws and how they apply are discussed throughout the TEA Dyslexia Handbook.

In accordance with TEC § 28.006, Gary ISD administers early reading instruments in kindergarten, first, and second grades to identify each

student's reading development and comprehension ability. Using this data, parents of students determined to be at risk for dyslexia, or other reading difficulties, are contacted. These students are also admitted into an intervention reading program to address their reading difficulties in an effort to remediate, so they can be on level with their peers. Should students continue to struggle with reading, writing, and spelling during this intervention, then the intervention team - composed of the dyslexia teacher, counselor, reading interventionist, and the general education teacher- will refer the student for formal assessment for dyslexia. The information from the early reading instruments are one source of data used to determine needs for dyslexia evaluation. Other sources may include, but are not limited to: performance on state assessments, grades within the classroom for reading and language arts, performance on district assessments, benchmarks, intervention programs, and teacher observations of the characteristics of dyslexia.

On page 35 of the TEA Dyslexia Handbook, the Pathways for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia Flowchart can be found.

III. Referral Process

A student that shows a steady struggle with one or more components of reading are referred for further intensive instructional intervention and data gathering.

Data Gathering:

Gary ISD collects data on all students to ensure that instruction is appropriate and ensures the student's improved academic performance. This information may include:

- Parent/Teacher survey
- Vision/hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations provided and their outcome
- Academic progress reports (report cards)
- Samples of schoolwork
- Parent conference notes
- Basal reading series assessment
- Observations of instruction provided to student
- Full Individual and Initial Evaluation

- Outside evaluations
- Speech and language assessment
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Instructional strategies provided and student's response to that instruction
- State student assessment program as described in TEC §39.002
- K-2 reading instrument as required by TEC §28.006
- Universal screening for all grade levels
- Data that supports the student received conventional instruction
- Data that indicates difficulties are not the result of sociocultural factors, irregular attendance, language, or lack of experiential background

Once this data is gathered, Gary ISD may recommend the student be assessed for dyslexia. Students are recommended for formal dyslexia evaluation if the student demonstrates the following:

- poor performance in one or more areas of reading and/or the related area of spelling that is **unexpected** for the student's age/grade, **and**
- characteristics of dyslexia as previously identified.

If a student continues to struggle with reading, has participated in an accelerated reading program, has been monitored for reading progress on a regular basis, has good attendance, and exhibits the characteristics of dyslexia, the Response to Intervention committee determines the need to initiate a referral to the Section 504 Committee for formal dyslexia evaluation.

IV. Procedures for Assessment of Dyslexia

Students enrolled in Gary ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at times dependent upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teachers' input, and parents' input. Gary ISD believes in early assessment as the earlier the better to help introduce the student to strategies and a targeted evidence based program for their disability. While earlier is better, students are recommended for dyslexia evaluation across all years in their academic career.

The procedures followed for assessment include:

1. Notify parents of proposal to assess students for dyslexia assessment through a §504 Initial Evaluation.

2. Inform parents of their rights under §504.
3. Obtain parent consent to assess the student for dyslexia assessment through a §504 Initial Evaluation.
4. Have trained professionals administer assessments for dyslexia and related disorders. (19 TAC §74.28)

a. Domains to Assess

The following areas related to reading will be assessed:

i) Academic skills

- Letter knowledge (name and sound)
- Reading real and nonsense words in isolation
(decoding)
- Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy)
- Reading comprehension
- Written spelling

ii) Cognitive process that underlie the reading difficulties

- phonological/phonemic awareness
- Rapid naming

Based on the student's academic difficulties and characteristics, additional areas that may be assessed include:

- Vocabulary
- Listening comprehension
- Oral expression
- Written expression
- Handwriting
- Orthographic processing
- Mathematical reasoning
- Intelligence

b. Requirements for assessment instruments

- Be validated for the specific purpose
- Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient
- Be selected to ensure that it accurately reflects the student's aptitude or achievement level rather than reflecting any impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skill
- Be given in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory
- Include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities such as informal assessment information

- Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials

Once assessments have been administered, the §504 Committee is called to interpret data and determine whether a student has dyslexia

V. Identification of Students with Dyslexia

The §504 Committee determines if a student has dyslexia. The §504 Committee must be comprised of members that are knowledgeable about:

- The student being assessed
- The reading process
- Dyslexia and related disorders
- Dyslexia instruction
- District or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for assessment
- The assessment used
- The meaning of the collected data

The §504 Committee reviews all accumulated data previously mentioned as it relates to the development of the student's learning and educational needs to determine if the student is dyslexic based on:

1. The pattern of weaknesses in one or more difficulties with low performance for the student's age and educational level in the following skills:

- Reading real words in isolation
- Decoding nonsense words
- Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy)
- Written spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient for identification of dyslexia)

2. If there are weaknesses indicated in the above academic skills, the committee will look at the underlying cognitive processes for the difficulties seen in the student's word reading and written spelling. These difficulties will typically be the result of a deficit in phonological or phonemic awareness.

Average phonological awareness scores alone do not rule out dyslexia as the students may have received previous effective instruction for remediation of phonological awareness skills in isolation. Therefore, it is important for the committee to consider the student's history to see if there was a previous difficulty with this skill. Students with dyslexia may also demonstrate difficulties in other cognitive processing including:

- Rapid naming
- Orthographic processing

3. If the committee determines the student demonstrates weakness in reading and written spelling that are due to a deficit in phonological/phonemic awareness, the committee will examine the student's data to determine whether these difficulties are unexpected for the student in relation the student's cognitive abilities and effective classroom instruction.

The §504 Committee will also incorporate the following guidelines from TEC §38.003 and 19 TAC §74.28:

- The student has received conventional (appropriate) instruction
- The student has an unexpected lack of appropriate academic progress (specifically in the areas of reading and spelling)
- The student has adequate intelligence (an average ability to learn in the absence of print or in other academic areas)
- The student exhibits characteristics associated with dyslexia
- The student's lack of progress is not due to socio-cultural factors such as language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background.

Based on the above criteria, the §504 committee first determines if the student has dyslexia and then determines whether the student has a disability under §504 and if he/she needs any accommodations to learn. A student is

considered to have a disability under §504 if the condition substantially limits the student in a major life activity. The determination must NOT consider the effects of any mitigating measures the student is using. If the committee does not identify dyslexia, but the student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student's learning, eligibility for §504 services related to that condition will be considered at that time.

Students with additional factors that complicate their dyslexia may require additional support or referral to special education. If a student is already qualified as a student with a disability under special education, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee will determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia intervention.

At any time during the assessment for dyslexia, students may be referred for evaluation for special education. The referral will take place if the student displays additional factors/areas that complicate their dyslexia and require more support than that available through dyslexia instruction. If a student with severe dyslexia or related disorders does not make adequate progress within the program for dyslexia, a referral to special education for evaluation

and possible identification as a child with a disability within the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) will be made as needed.

VI. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, Gary ISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in TEC §38.003:

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.

The following procedures must be followed:

- Instructional decisions will be made by a team that is knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation information, and instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia.
- The reading program will be aligned with the descriptors found in this handbook. The descriptors include the components of phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, language structure, linguistic patterns, and processes. Instructional approaches include explicit, individualized, and multi-sensory instruction (19 TAC §74.28).

- Gary ISD must provide each 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.
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods, and a variety of writing and spelling components (19 TAC §74.28).

The instructional program will be offered in a small group setting and include reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate. The instructional strategies will be individualized, intensive, and include multisensory methods as appropriate.

Components of Instruction

- Phonemic awareness instruction that enables students to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language
- Graphophonemic knowledge (phonics) instruction that takes advantage of the letter-sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds, and sounds are written with letters in the right order.

- Language structure instruction that encompasses morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics
- Linguistic instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that words and sentences are the carriers of meaning
- Strategy-oriented instruction in the strategies students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension that students need to become independent readers.

Currently, Gary ISD uses Multisensory Teaching Approach (MTA) with their dyslexia identified students in a small group pull-out from the classroom at 45 minutes daily until the student exits.

VII. Student Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria

Students are monitored to ensure dyslexia instruction is appropriate with adequate academic progress shown. Monitoring data may include, but is not limited to the collection/evaluation of:

- Progress reports
- Report cards
- State assessment data

- Teacher report/checklists
- Parent reports/checklists
- Counselor Reports
- Program Mastery Checks (assessments)
- Developmental Reading Assessment
- Running Records
- Online academic program reports (Star Renaissance/Istation/IXL)
- Additional assessment data (unit assessments, six weeks assessments, benchmark, etc.)

Students will exit from the district dyslexia program after successful completion of all program instruction and a mastery score on the final summative assessment. Additional criteria for exit may include but is not limited to grades, state assessment data, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, teacher observations, parent observations, and individual dyslexia program requirements.

Students that exit the dyslexia program will continue to be monitored during their first year after exiting to ensure student academic progress is still being met.

Students qualifying for dyslexia services that are identified as §504 or special education will follow monitoring/re-evaluation requirements outlined in federal law. Dismissal from receiving dyslexia services will be determined by the §504 committee or ARD committee. The committee considers the following factors when recommending exiting or reduction of dyslexic services:

- Completion of the district dyslexia program
- The re-evaluation and/or post-testing of the student that shows student growth to be closer to grade level proficiency standards
- The student demonstrates self-monitoring/self-correction behaviors as evidenced through informal observation by teachers
- The student passed the reading portion of the state assessment
- Parents request in writing that the student exit the program
- Committee recommendation

If a student has shown progress and the §504 committee or ARD committee determines the student is ready to be dismissed completely from the program, the committee may recommend monitoring services instead of direct services. When a child is exited from the dyslexia program, a dismissal form will be completed and placed in the child's cumulative folder.