

# **Elysian Fields ISD**

## **Dyslexia Plan**



**2021 - 2022**

# Elysian Fields Independent School District

## District Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a community of learners; education, empowering, and encouraging all students to reach their full potential.

## District Mission Statement

The mission of the Elysian Fields ISD Dyslexia Program is to provide specialized instruction to meet the individual needs of students with dyslexia and related disorders.

## Dyslexia Mission Statement

Our mission is to instill strategies and build confidence for those students dealing with reading, writing, and spelling difficulties so that they can be successful in school, and in life.

## Definition of 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 auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STATE AND FEDERAL LAW REGARDING EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRIOR TO FORMAL ASSESSMENT</b></p>
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Both state and federal legislation emphasize early identification and intervention for students who may be at risk for reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.

In accordance with TEC §28.006 Reading Diagnosis, Elysian Fields ISD administers early reading instruments in kindergarten, first, and second grades to determine students' reading development and comprehension. Additionally, the law requires a reading instrument from the commissioner's approved list to be administered at the beginning of grade 7 to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency on the reading assessment administered under TEC §39.029 (a). If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, the student's parents and 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. The information from reading instruments administered under TEC §28.006 will be one source of information in deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia.

The provisions offered to students who are reported to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties should align to the requirements of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation, Elysian Fields ISD will implement reading programs using scientifically based reading research as well as evidence proven effective results.

### **Dyslexia Screening**

Students enrolled in Elysian Fields ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times. The appropriate time depends on multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading difficulties, poor responses to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teacher's input, and parent's or guardian's input.

### **Universal Screening**

Screening is defined as a universal measure administered to all students by qualified personnel to determine which students are at risk for dyslexia or reading difficulties and/or a related disorder. Screening is not a formal evaluation.

Texas Education Code §38.003 mandates that kindergarten students be screened at the end of the school year. Grade 1 screening must conclude no later than January 31 of each year.

### **Other Related Disorders**

It is important to note that, while TEC §38.003 requires that all students in kindergarten and grade 1 be screened for dyslexia and related disorders, at the time of *The Dyslexia Handbook* update it was determined there are no grade-level appropriate screening instruments for dysgraphia and the other

identified related disorders. For more information on dysgraphia, refer to Chapter V: Dysgraphia in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

### **Child Find**

In addition to state and local requirements to screen and identify students who may be at risk for dyslexia, there are also overarching federal laws and regulations to identify students with disabilities, commonly referred to as Child Find. Child Find is a set of provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that requires, in part, that states have processes in place for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities who may need special education and related services. The purpose of IDEA is to ensure a free and appropriate public education for children with disabilities (20 U.S.C. §1400(d); 34 C.F.R. §300.1).

For more information on federal Child Find requirements, please refer to the IDEA/Section 504 Side-by-Side Comparison provided in Appendix D of *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

### **Screening Criteria**

Regardless of the primary language of the student, instruments used to screen for dyslexia and other reading difficulties must address the skills in Figure 2.2 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

<b>Figure 2.2 Criteria for English and Spanish Screening Instruments</b>	
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>First Grade</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Phonological Awareness</li> <li>● Phonemic Awareness</li> <li>● Sound-Symbol Recognition</li> <li>● Letter Knowledge</li> <li>● Decoding Skills</li> <li>● Spelling</li> <li>● Listening Comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Phonological Awareness</li> <li>● Phonemic Awareness</li> <li>● Sound-Symbol Recognition</li> <li>● Letter Knowledge</li> <li>● Decoding Skills</li> <li>● Spelling</li> <li>● Reading Rate</li> <li>● Reading Accuracy</li> <li>● Listening Comprehension</li> </ul>

While the selected screening instrument will be expected to measure each of the skills identified above, it is important that individuals who administer the screening instrument document student behaviors observed during the administration of the instrument. A list of behaviors that may be observed during the administration of the screening and which should be documented are included in Figure 2.3 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

<b>Figure 2.3 Student Behaviors Observed During Screening</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of automaticity</li> <li>● Difficulty sounding out words left to right</li> <li>● Guessing</li> <li>● Self-correcting</li> <li>● Inability to focus on reading</li> <li>● Avoidance behavior</li> </ul>

In addition to the measures of the skills identified in Figure 2.2 above, other criteria should be considered when selecting a screening instrument. Approved screening instruments must take only a brief time to administer and be cost effective. They must have established validity and reliability and standards. They must also include distinct indicators identifying students as either not at risk or at risk for dyslexia or reading difficulties. Screening instruments must also provide standardized directions for administration as well as clear guidance for the administrator regarding scoring and interpretation of indicators/results. Additionally, each screening instrument must include adequate training for educators on how to administer the instrument and interpret results.

## Administration of Screening Instruments

### Who May Administer the Dyslexia Screener

Elysian Fields ISD ensures that appropriately trained and qualified individuals administer and interpret the results of the selected screening instrument. **Please note that an educational aide is NOT eligible to administer or interpret the dyslexia screening instrument.** Individuals who administer and interpret the screening instrument **must**, at minimum, meet the following qualifications:

- An individual who is certified/licensed in dyslexia; or
- A classroom teacher who holds a valid certification for kindergarten and grade 1.  
(For current certifications for Kindergarten and grade1, see the State for Educator Certification Teacher Assignment Chart at [https://tea.texas.gov/Texas\\_Educators/Certification/](https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Certification/) ).

### Kindergarten-Grade 1 Universal Screening: Interpretation

The purpose of screening is to help identify, as early as possible, the students at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties so that targeted intervention can be provided. Screening alone will never improve outcomes for students. The screening must lead to effective instruction for it to be useful. Therefore, once the screening has been administered the next steps are to analyze results, identify the level of risk for each student, and make informed decisions. The next steps are broadly categorized as: refer for evaluation, implement targeted intervention, and/or continue with core instruction.

There are several important factors to consider when interpreting screening results. First, it is important to remember that there is no definitive test score that invariably identifies dyslexia. Dyslexia is a neurobiological disorder that exists along a continuum of severity. Second, it is important to keep the definition and goals of screening in mind. The purpose of screening is to differentiate a smaller set of individuals who may be at risk for dyslexia.

As with any evaluation, it is important that schools administer and interpret the screening instrument with fidelity. Screening tools use norm-referenced criteria to establish cut points derived by the publisher of the tool. Cut points are used to group students into categories (e.g., at risk or not at risk) based on the results of the screening tool.

In general, students scoring below the publisher-determined cut point are considered “at risk” for dyslexia, while those who score above the cut point are considered “not at risk” for dyslexia. However, it is important to realize that risk falls on a continuum and there will always be false positives (students who screen at risk when they are not) and false negatives (students who screen not at risk when they are). Consequently, continual progress monitoring and an ongoing review of data is important. **Any student may be referred for an evaluation at any time, regardless of the results of the screening instrument.**

Students falling well below the cut point have a much higher probability of being at risk for dyslexia while students scoring well above the cut point have lower probability of being at risk for dyslexia. The decision for what to do next is easiest for students whose scores fall at the extreme ends of the continuum. Students falling well above the cut point can be considered at low risk for dyslexia and are much less likely to need additional intervention or evaluation. Students scoring far below the cut point should be considered at high risk for dyslexia.

For students who are identified as at risk for dyslexia, Elysian Fields ISD will provide targeted intervention by the appropriate staff. **It is important to note that the use of a tiered intervention process, such as Response to Intervention or RtI, must not be used to delay or deny an evaluation for dyslexia, especially when parent or teacher observations reveal the common characteristics of dyslexia.**

For students who score close to the cut point, more information will be needed to make an informed decision regarding referral for evaluation, implementation of targeted interventions with progress monitoring, or continuation of core instruction only. Data gathering will provide this additional information.

### **Screening Data Gathering**

Both quantitative and qualitative information are critical components of the screening process. Examples of quantitative and qualitative information used in determining next steps are provided in Figure 2.4 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

<b>Figure 2.4 Sources and Examples of Screening Data</b>	
<b>Quantitative Information</b>	<b>Qualitative Information</b>
Results of - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current screening instruments</li> <li>• Previous screening instruments</li> <li>• Formal and informal classroom reading assessments</li> <li>• Additional brief and targeted skill assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of students during screening. (See Figure 2.3, Student Behaviors Observed During Screening)</li> <li>• Other observations of student progress</li> <li>• Teacher observations</li> <li>• Parent/guardian input (e.g., family history, early language skills)</li> <li>• Current student work samples</li> <li>• Work samples from earlier grade(s)</li> <li>• Intervention history</li> </ul>

For students who fall close to the predetermined cut points, implementation of short-term, targeted intervention with regular progress monitoring is one way to determine if additional evaluation is needed. Teachers and administrators should also be mindful that screening for risk is an ongoing process. Decisions made based on a single-point-in-time screening instrument should always be reevaluated and altered as more information is obtained as instruction continues.

Screening data should always be shared with parents. Screening data should also be used by teachers and school administrators to guide instruction at the classroom level. When large percentages of students fall below the cut point (are at risk for dyslexia), it signals a need to review instructional programming and practices and teacher training in effective and explicit reading instruction.

### **Interpretation of Data**

A qualified team is required to review all data to make informed decisions regarding whether a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia. This team **must** consist of individuals who:

- Have knowledge of the student;
- Are appropriately trained in the administration of the screening tool;
- Are trained to interpret the quantitative and qualitative results from the screening process; and recognize characteristics of dyslexia.

The team may consist of the student's classroom teacher, the dyslexia specialist, the individual who administered the screener, a representative of the LPAC (as appropriate), and an administrator. If the process of identification is initiated under IDEA, the **must** also include the parent and all IDEA procedures **must** be followed.

The Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk flowchart found in Figure 2.5 of *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update* on page 17 provides information regarding the decisions schools will make for each student as the school reviews screening results. **It is important to remember that any point in the process a referral for a dyslexia evaluation may be made either under Section 504 if a disability is suspected or under IDEA if a disability and a corresponding need for special education services are suspected.** Regardless of the process in place for screening and data review, a student may be recommended for a dyslexia evaluation whenever accumulated data indicates that the student continues to struggle with one or more of the components of reading. **Parents/guardians have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation under IDEA or Section 504 at any time.**

#### **Best Practices in Ongoing Monitoring**

Ongoing progress monitoring allows educators to assess student academic performance in order to evaluate student response to evidence-based instruction. Progress monitoring is also used to make diagnostic decisions regarding additional targeted instruction that may be necessary for the student.

While some kindergarten and first grade students may not initially appear to be at risk for dyslexia based on screening results, they may actually still be at risk. Students who have learned to compensate for lack of reading ability and twice-exceptional students are two groups who may not initially appear to be at risk for dyslexia based on the results of a screening instrument.

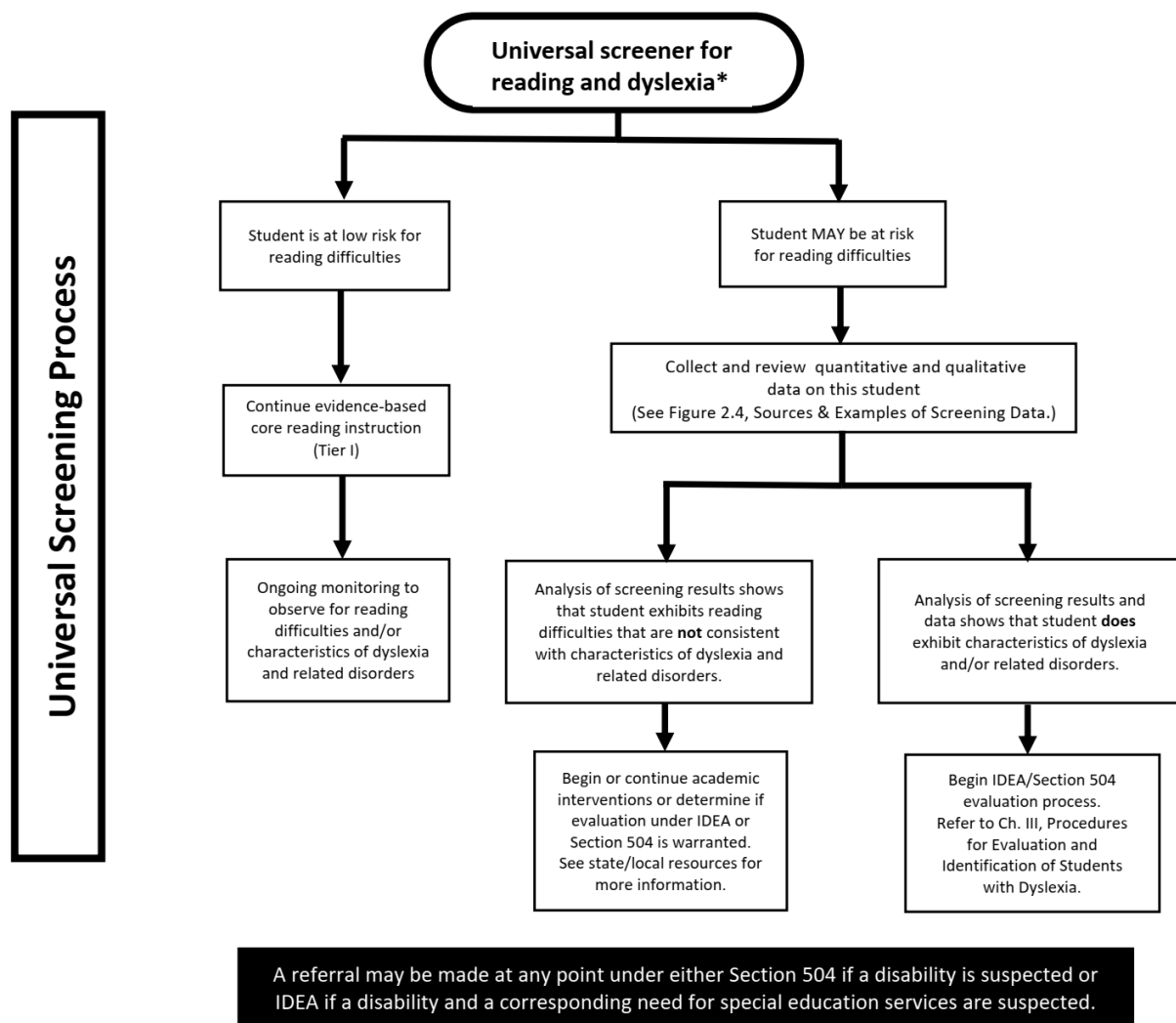
#### **Best Practices in Progress Monitoring**

It is essential that schools continue to monitor students for common risk factors for dyslexia in second grade and beyond. In accordance with TEC §38.003(a), school districts **MUST** evaluate for dyslexia at appropriate times. If regular progress monitoring reflects a difficulty with reading, decoding, and/or reading comprehension, it is appropriate to evaluate for dyslexia. **When a student is not reaching grade-level benchmarks, because of a reading difficulty, a dyslexia screening or evaluation is appropriate and considered best practice.** Schools should be aware that a student may have reached middle school or high school without ever being screened, evaluated, or identified; however, the student may have dyslexia or a related disorder. One goal of ongoing monitoring is to identify these students regardless of their grade level. **Therefore, it is important to remember that a referral for a dyslexia evaluation can be considered at any time kindergarten- high school.**

## PATHWAYS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND PROVISION OF INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLLEXIA

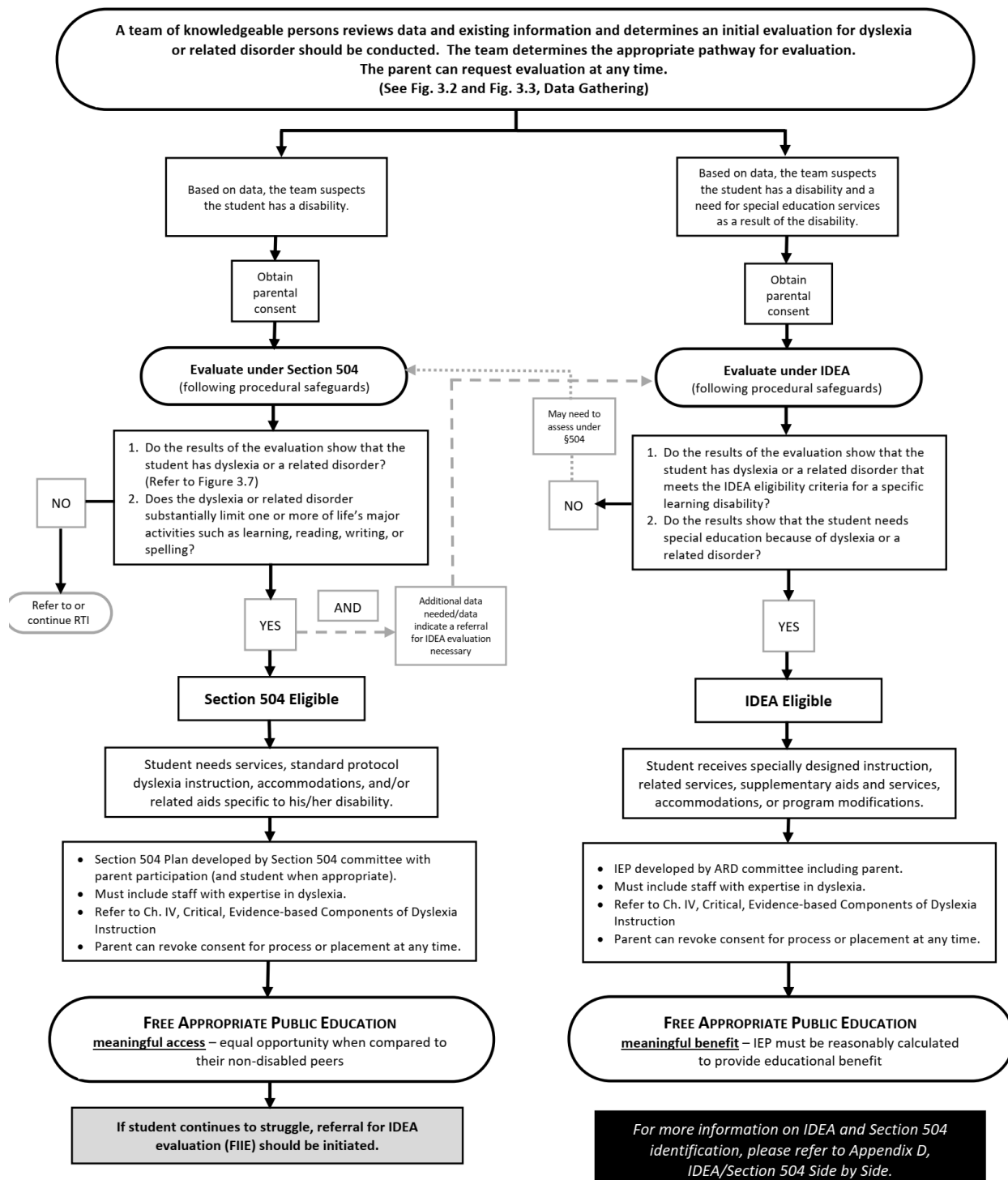
This flowchart illustrates a process for determining the instructional support needed by students with dyslexia. While the diagram begins with an initial screening, screening is NOT required to proceed through the evaluation and identification process. **A special education evaluation should be conducted whenever it appears to be appropriate, including upon request from the parent/guardian.** Some students will not proceed through all the steps before being referred for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) or Section 504 evaluation. A dyslexia evaluation may be incorporated into the FIIE through special education.

At any time, regardless of the process in place, a student may be recommended for dyslexia evaluation as accumulated data support a student's continued struggles with one or more of the components of reading. **Parents/guardians have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.** Districts **must** ensure that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of the screening or RTI process.





## Pathways for the Identification and Provision of Instruction For Students with Dyslexia



## PROCEDURES FOR THE EVALUATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DYSPLEXIA

For the identification of dyslexia in Texas public schools, all procedures and guidelines outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update* must be followed, including data gathering, initial evaluation pathways, notification and permission, tests and other evaluation materials, examiner qualifications, and procedures for English Learners.

### **Procedures Required by State and Federal Law Prior to Formal Evaluation**

In accordance with TEC §28.006, EFISD administers early reading instruments in kindergarten, first, and second grades to determine students' reading development and comprehension. If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at-risk for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, the students' parents/guardians are notified. Pursuant to TEC §38.003(a), all students in kindergarten and first grade are also specifically screened for dyslexia at the end of the school year. In addition, an accelerated (intensive) scientifically, research-based reading program that appropriately addresses students' reading difficulties and enables them to "catch up" with their typically performing peers is implemented. Interventions are provided through the district's response to intervention process; however, **progression through a response to intervention process is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia.** Should students continue to struggle with reading, writing, and/or spelling during the intensive reading instruction, then EFISD will initiate procedures to recommend these students for evaluation 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 evaluation for dyslexia. Other data to be considered may include but is not limited to: performance on state mandated test(s), a student's grades/performance in reading and/or written spelling, and teachers' observations of the characteristics of dyslexia, attendance, frequent moves, and/or other available information. **Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.**

### **The Referral Process for Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

The determination to refer a student for an evaluation must always be made on a case-by-case basis and must be driven by data-based decisions. The referral process itself can be distilled into a basic framework as outlined below.

#### **Data-Driven Meeting Knowledgeable Persons**

A team of persons with knowledge of the student, instructional practices, and possible service options meets to discuss data collected and the implications of that data. These individuals include, but are not limited to, the classroom teacher, administrator, dyslexia specialist, and/or interventionist. This team may also include the parents and/or or a diagnostician familiar with testing and interpreting evaluation results.

#### **When the Data Does Not Lead to a Suspicion of Dyslexia or a Related Disorder**

If the team determines that the data does not give the members reason to suspect that a student has dyslexia, a related disorder, or other disability, the team may decide to provide the student with additional support in the classroom or through the RtI process. However, the student is not referred for an evaluation at this time.

### **When the Data Lead to a Suspicion of Dyslexia or a Related Disorder**

If the team suspects that the student has dyslexia or a related disorder, the team should consider the type of instruction that would best meet the student's needs.

#### **Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction**

Components of this instruction include, among other things, phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. Principles for effective delivery of content must be consistent with research-based practices, including a multisensory, systematic, cumulative, and explicit approach. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction is not specially designed instruction. Rather, it is programmatic instruction delivered to a group of students.

#### **Specially Designed Instruction**

This instruction must address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability and must ensure access to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the state's educational standards (34 C.F.R. §300.39(b)(3)(i-ii)). In some cases, the data may suggest that the unique needs of a student suspected of having dyslexia require a more individualized program than that offered through standard protocol dyslexia instruction. When this is the case, there is reason to suspect that special education services are necessary for that student.

### **When the Data Lead to a Suspicion of Dyslexia of a Related Disorder AND the Need for Special Education Services**

If the team determines that the data lead to the suspicion of a disability and that special education services are necessary to provide specially designed instruction, they must refer the student for an evaluation under IDEA. It is important to note that a student with dyslexia who is served through special education should also receive dyslexia instruction that is individualized to meet the student's unique needs.

### **When the Data Lead ONLY to Suspicion of Dyslexia or a Related Disorder**

If – based on the data – the team suspects that a student has dyslexia or a related disorder but does not believe that special education is necessary to meet the student's needs, they must refer the student for an evaluation under Section 504. If the student qualifies as a student with dyslexia, the student may receive standard protocol dyslexia instruction (in EFISD the program implemented is Reading By Design) and accommodations under Section 504.

#### **Dyslexia Referral Timelines**

When a referral for a dyslexia evaluation is made under IDEA, Texas state law establishes that a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) must be completed within 45-school days from the time a district or charter school receives consent. Section 504, however, does not require specific timelines. Therefore, it is beneficial for districts to consider the timelines Texas has established for special education evaluations through TEC §29.004(a).

#### **Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.**

Once a parent request for dyslexia evaluation has been made, the school district is obligated to review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is reason to suspect the student has a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student needs to be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in Chapter 3 of *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*. IDEA and Section 504 have different requirements that must be followed if the school does not suspect a disability and

determines that evaluation would **not** be warranted. Under IDEA, schools **must** give parents prior written notice of a refusal to evaluate, including an explanation of why the school refuses to conduct an initial evaluation, the information that was used as the basis for the decision, and a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. Section 504 does not require prior written notice; however, best practice is to provide a parent with an explanation of the reasons an evaluation is denied.

### **Procedures for Evaluation**

Elysian Fields ISD may evaluate for dyslexia through either IDEA or Section 504. If a student is suspected of having a disability and the determination is made to evaluate through IDEA, all special education procedures must be followed. Procedural processes require coordination among the teacher, campus administrators, diagnosticians, and other professionals as appropriate when factors such as a student's English language acquisition, previously identified disability, or other special needs are present. Under IDEA, the referral of a student for an evaluation should be made by a committee or team with knowledge of the child and may include other individuals as appropriate. When evaluation occurs under Section 504, it is best practice to include on the committee or in the team making the determination the same members that IDEA requires, including the parent or guardian. The **Pathways for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia** flowchart in Figure 3.8 illustrates the process for determining the appropriate supports needed by students with dyslexia.

Pursuant to TEC §38.003(a), all public-school students are required to be screened for dyslexia while in kindergarten and grade 1. Additionally, students enrolling in public schools in Texas must 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 input from parents/guardians. The appropriate time for assessing is **early** in a student's school (19 TAC §74.28). Texas Education Code §28.006, Reading Diagnosis, requires assessment of reading development and comprehension for students in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and as applicable, seventh grade. While earlier is better, students should be recommended for evaluation for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

Pursuant to federal and state guidelines, in EFISD students are recommended for evaluation for dyslexia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Poor performance in one or more areas of reading and spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade
- Characteristics and risk factors of dyslexia indicated in Chapter I: Definitions & Characteristics of Dyslexia from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

The first step in the evaluation process, *data gathering*, is an integral part of the district's process for all students exhibiting learning difficulties.

### **1. Data Gathering**

EFISD collects data on all students to ensure that instruction is appropriate and scientifically based. Essential components of comprehensive literacy instruction are defined in Section 2221(b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as explicit, systematic, and intentional instruction in the following:

- Phonological awareness
- Phonic coding
- Vocabulary
- Language structure
- Reading fluency
- Reading comprehension

Any time from kindergarten through grade 12 a student continues to struggle with one or more components of reading, the school **must** collect additional information about the student. Schools should use previously collected as well as current information to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. The collection of various data, as indicated in Figure 3.2 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update* and shown below, will provide information regarding factors that may be contributing to or primary to the student's struggles with reading and spelling.

### **Cumulative Data**

The academic history of each student will provide the school with the cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dyslexia is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading. This information should include data that demonstrate that the student was provided appropriate instruction and include data-based documentation of repeated evaluations of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal evaluation of student progress during instruction. These cumulative data also include information from parents/guardians. Sources and examples of cumulative data are provided in Figure 3.2 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

Figure 3.2 Sources and Examples of Cumulative Data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision screening</li> <li>• Hearing screening</li> <li>• Teacher reports of classroom concerns</li> <li>• Classroom reading assessments</li> <li>• Accommodations or interventions provided</li> <li>• Academic progress reports (report cards)</li> <li>• Gifted/talented assessments</li> <li>• Samples of schoolwork</li> <li>• Parent conference notes</li> <li>• Results of kindergarten-grade 1 universal screening as required in TEC §38.003(a)</li> <li>• K-2 reading instrument results as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading instrument results as required in TEC §28.006</li> <li>• State student assessment program results as described in TEC §39.022</li> <li>• Observations of instruction provided to the student</li> <li>• Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE)</li> <li>• Outside evaluations</li> <li>• Speech and language assessment</li> <li>• School attendance</li> <li>• Curriculum-based assessment measures</li> <li>• Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction</li> <li>• Screening</li> <li>• Parent survey</li> </ul>

### **Environmental and Socioeconomic Factors**

Information regarding a child's early literacy experiences, environmental factors, and socioeconomic status must be part of the data collected throughout the data gathering process. 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.

### **Language Proficiency**

Much diversity exists among ELs. 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 with formal schooling, immigration status, community demographics, and ethnic heritage (Bailey, Heritage, Butler, & Walqui, 2000). ELs may be students served in bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) programs as well as students designated

Limited English Proficient (LEP) whose parents have denied services. In addition to the information discussed in the previous section, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) maintains documentation (TAC §89.1220(g)-(i)) that is necessary to consider when identifying ELs with dyslexia. The LPAC is required to meet annually to review student placement and progress and consider instructional accommodations and interventions to address the student's linguistic needs. Since the identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be aligned to the student's linguistic environment and educational background, involvement of the LPAC is required. Additional data sources for ELs are provided below in Figure 3.3 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*:

Figure 3.3 Additional Data Sources for English Learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Language Survey</li> <li>• Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency (oral language proficiency test and norm-referenced tests – all years available)</li> <li>• Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) information for four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)</li> <li>• Instructional interventions provided to address language needs</li> <li>• Information regarding previous schooling inside and/or outside the United States</li> <li>• Type of language program model provided and language of instruction</li> </ul>

## 2. Initial Evaluation Pathway

EFISD **must** make data-informed decisions that reflect the input of staff and parents for every student on an individual basis, every time. Our district **must** consider all resources and services based on student need. If it is suspected or known that the student may need special education because of suspected dyslexia or related disorder, the parent/guardian **must** be given a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards* and sign consent **before** the student is evaluated under IDEA. If the district or school suspects that the student may need interventions and accommodations specific to their suspected dyslexia or related disorder rather than special education services, then the student can be evaluated under Section 504.

A student's reading difficulties alone may warrant evaluation under IDEA. At times, students may display additional, potential learning challenges, such as oral language deficits, written expression difficulties (dysgraphia), or math difficulties (dyscalculia), which may further impact student learning. These challenges may also warrant an evaluation under IDEA.

Students who are currently eligible under IDEA and have an individualized education program (IEP) and who are now suspected of having dyslexia or a related disorder must undergo reevaluation under IDEA.

## 3. Formal Evaluation

After data gathering, the next step in the process is formal evaluation. This is not a screening; rather, it is an individualized evaluation used to gather specific data about the student. Formal evaluation includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence that indicates dyslexia. Information collected from the parents/guardians also provides valuable insight into the student's early years of language development. Professionals conducting evaluations for the identification of dyslexia will need to look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom reading performance, educational history, early

language experiences, and when warranted, academic potential to assist with determining reading, spelling, and writing abilities and difficulties.

### **Notification and Permission**

When formal evaluation is recommended, the school **must** complete the evaluation process as outlined in IDEA or Section 504. Procedural safeguards under IDEA and Section 504 **must** be followed.

The individual needs of the student will determine the appropriate evaluation/identification process to use. The notices and requests for consent **must** be provided in the native language of parents/guardians or other mode of communication used by parents/guardians unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

### **Tests and Other Evaluation Materials**

In compliance with IDEA and Section 504, test instruments and other evaluation materials must meet the following criteria:

- Used for the purpose for which the evaluation or measures are valid or reliable
- Include material(s) tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely material(s) that are designed to provide a single, general intelligence quotient
- Selected and administered 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, achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
- 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 evaluations, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)
- Administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
- 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

A professional involved in the evaluation, interpretation of evaluation results, and identification of ELs with dyslexia must have the following training/knowledge:

- Knowledge of first and second language acquisition theory
- Knowledge of the written system of the first language: transparent (e.g., Spanish, Italian, German); syllabic (e.g., Japanese-kana); Semitic (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew); and morphosyllabic (e.g., Chinese-Kanji)
- Knowledge of the student's literacy skills in native and second languages
- Knowledge of how to interpret results from a cross-linguistic perspective
- Knowledge of how to interpret TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System) results
- 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

Although data from previous formal testing of the student’s oral language proficiency may be available, as required by TEC §29.056, additional assessment of oral language proficiency should be completed for a dyslexia evaluation due to the importance of the information for –

- Consideration in relation to academic challenges,
- Planning the evaluation, and
- Interpreting evaluation results.

**If there is not a test in the native language of the student, informal measures of evaluation such as reading a list of words and listening comprehension in the native language may be used.**

## **Domains to Assess**

### **Academic Skills**

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, accuracy, and prosody) 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.

### **Cognitive Processes**

Difficulties in phonological and phonemic awareness are typically seen in students with dyslexia and impact a student’s ability to learn letters and the sounds associated with letters, learn the alphabetic principle, decode words, and spell accurately. Rapid naming skills may or may not be weak, but if deficient, they are often associated with difficulties in automatically naming letters, reading words fluently, and reading connected text at an appropriate rate. Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words (orthographic processing) may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses. Finally, various language processes, such as morpheme and syntax awareness, memory and retrieval of verbal labels, and the ability to formulate ideas into grammatical sentences, may also be factors affecting reading (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, pp. 134-135).

### **Possible Additional Areas**

Based on the student’s academic difficulties, characteristics, and/or language acquisition, additional areas related to vocabulary, listening comprehension, oral language proficiency, written expression, and other cognitive abilities may need to be assessed. Areas for evaluation are provided below in Figure 3.4 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*:

<b>Figure 3.4 Areas for Evaluation</b>		
<b><u>Academic Skills</u></b>	<b><u>Cognitive Processes</u></b>	<b><u>Possible Additional Areas</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)</li> <li>• Reading words in isolation</li> <li>• Decoding unfamiliar words accurately</li> <li>• Reading fluency (rate, accuracy, and prosody are assessed)</li> <li>• Reading comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonological/phonemic awareness</li> <li>• Rapid naming of symbols or objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Listening comprehension</li> <li>• Verbal expression</li> <li>• Written expression</li> <li>• Handwriting</li> <li>• Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing)</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematical calculation/reasoning</li> <li>• Phonological memory</li> <li>• Verbal working memory</li> <li>• Processing</li> </ul>
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### **Procedures for Identification**

While each law has specific requirements regarding the identification of dyslexia, decisions **must** be made by either a Section 504 committee under Section 504 or an ARD committee under IDEA. In order to make an informed determination, each committee **must** include certain required members. These required members **must** include, but are not limited to, individuals who are knowledgeable about the following:

- Student being evaluated
- Evaluation instruments being used
- Meaning of the data being collected

For ELs, a member of the LPAC **must** be part of either the Section 504 or ARD committee.

Additionally, committee members **must** have knowledge regarding:

- The reading process,
- Dyslexia and related disorders,
- Dyslexia instruction, and
- District or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for evaluation.

### **Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluations**

To appropriately **understand** evaluation data, the committee of knowledgeable persons (Section 504 or ARD committee) must **interpret** test results in light of the student's educational history, linguistic background, environmental or socioeconomic factors, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

The Section 504 or ARD committee must first determine if a student's difficulties in the areas of reading and spelling reflect a **pattern of evidence** for the primary characteristics of dyslexia with unexpectedly low performance for the student's age and educational level in **some or all** of the following areas:

- Reading words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar words accurately and automatically
- Reading fluency for connected text (rate and/or accuracy and/or prosody)
- Spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would **not** be sufficient to identify dyslexia)

The evaluation data collected may also include information on reading comprehension, mathematics, and written expression. Dyslexia often coexists with learning difficulties in these related areas.

Another factor to consider when interpreting test results is the student's linguistic background. Students with dyslexia who have or who are being taught to read and write a transparent language may be able to decode real and nonwords adequately but demonstrate serious difficulties in reading rate with concurrent deficiencies in phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming (RAN).

Figure 3.5 Dyslexia in Transparent and Opaque Orthographies	
Opaque	Transparent
Early and marked difficulty with word-level reading Fluency and comprehension often improve once decoding is mastered	Less difficulty with word-level reading More difficulty with fluency and comprehension

Figure 3.6 Characteristics of Dyslexia in English and Spanish	
English	Spanish
Phonological awareness Rapid naming Regular/irregular decoding Fluency Spelling	Phonological awareness – may be less pronounced Rapid naming Decoding – fewer “irregular words” in Spanish Fluency – often a key indicator Spelling – may show fewer errors than in English, but still more than students that do not have dyslexia
Reading comprehension may be a weakness in <b>both</b> English and Spanish.	

Based on the above information and guidelines, should the Section 504 or ARD committee determine that the student exhibits weaknesses in reading and spelling, the committee will then examine the student’s data to determine whether these difficulties are **unexpected** in relation to the student’s other abilities, sociocultural factors, language difference, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate and effective instruction. **Therefore, it is not one single indicator but a preponderance of data (both informal and formal) that provide the committee with evidence for whether these difficulties are unexpected.**

#### **Dyslexia Identification**

If the student’s difficulties are **unexpected** in relation to other abilities, the Section 504 or ARD committee must then determine if the student has dyslexia. For ELs, an LPAC representative must be included in the Section 504 or ARD committee. The list of questions in Figure 3.7 below from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*, **must** be considered when making a determination regarding dyslexia.

Figure 3.7 Questions to Determine the Identification of Dyslexia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the data show the following characteristics of dyslexia? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading</li> <li>Poor spelling skills</li> <li>Poor decoding ability</li> </ul> </li> <li>Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in the phonological component of language? (Please be mindful that average phonological scores alone do not rule out dyslexia.)</li> <li>Are these difficulties unexpected for the student’s age in relation to the student’s other cognitive abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction?</li> </ul>

#### **Review of Evaluation by Section 504 Committee**

If the student has dyslexia, the Section 504 committee also determines whether the student is eligible under Section 504. A student has a disability under Section 504 if the physical or mental impairment (dyslexia) substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as the specific activity of reading (34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(1)). Additionally, the Section 504 committee, in determining whether a student has a disability that substantially limits the student in a major life activity (reading), must **not** consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using. If the Section 504 committee does not identify dyslexia, but the student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student, eligibility for Section 504 services related to the student's other condition or disability should be considered.

For eligible students, the Section 504 committee will develop the student's Section 504 Plan, which **must** include appropriate reading instruction as appropriate to meet the individual needs of the student. The Section 504 committee will also consider whether the student requires additional accommodations and/or related services for the provision of FAPE.

#### **Review of Evaluation by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee**

Within 30 calendar days of completion of the written evaluation report, the ARD committee will determine whether a student who has dyslexia is eligible under IDEA as a student with a specific learning disability (19 TAC §89.011(d)). A student with dyslexia has a disability under IDEA if the student meets the criteria for a specific learning disability and, because of dyslexia or a related disorder, needs special education.

The IDEA evaluation requirements for eligibility 34 C.F.R. §300.309(a)(1) specifically designates the following areas for a learning disability in reading: basic reading skills (dyslexia), reading fluency skills, and/or reading comprehension.

If a student with dyslexia found eligible for special education, the student's IEP **must** include appropriate reading instruction. If a student has previously met special education eligibility and is later identified with dyslexia, the ARD committee should include in the IEP goals that reflect the need for dyslexia instruction and determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia intervention.

#### **Pathways for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia**

While the process may begin with an initial screening, screening is **NOT** required to proceed through the evaluation and identification process. **A special education evaluation should be conducted whenever it appears to be appropriate, including upon request from the parent/guardian.** Some students will not proceed through all the steps before being referred for an FIE or Section 504 evaluation. A dyslexia evaluation may be incorporated into the FIE through special education.

### **TESTING STUDENTS NOT ATTENDING PUBLIC OR CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Under IDEA, if a student attends private school or is home-schooled and both a disability and the need for special education services are suspected, the student must be referred for an evaluation under the Child Find provisions of IDEA. The school district where the private school is located is responsible for conducting Child Find for parentally-placed private school children.

## **INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA**

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, EFISD will provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in TEC §38.003.

Effective literacy instruction is essential for all students and is especially critical for students identified with dyslexia. High-quality core classroom reading instruction can give students identified with dyslexia a foundation upon which intervention instruction can have a more significant impact.

### **Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction**

Standard protocol dyslexia instruction provides evidence-based, multisensory structured literacy instruction for students with dyslexia. A standard protocol dyslexia instructional program must be explicit, systematic, and intentional in its approach. This instruction is designed for all students with dyslexia and will often take place in a small group setting. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction must be:

- Evidence-based and effective for students with dyslexia;
- Taught by an appropriately trained instructor; and
- Implemented with fidelity.

Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia must be made by a committee (Section 504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia.

In accordance with 19 TAC §74.28(e), districts must purchase or develop an evidence-based reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that incorporates **all** the components of instruction and instructional approaches described in the sections below.

### **Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction**

- **Phonological awareness** – “phonological awareness is the understanding of the internal sound structure of words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds. An important aspect of phonological awareness is the ability to segment spoken words into their component phonemes [phonemic awareness].” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).
- **Sound-symbol association** – Sound-symbol association is 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, 2018, p. 26). “Explicit phonics refers to an organized program in which these sound symbol correspondences are taught systematically” (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 53).

- **Syllabication** – “A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. Instruction must include the six basic types of syllables in the English language; closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, r-controlled, vowel pair (or vowel team), and final stable syllable. Syllable division rules must be directly taught in relation to the word structure” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).
- **Orthography** – Orthography is the written spelling patterns and rules in a given language. Students must be taught the regularity and irregularity of the orthographic patterns of a language in an explicit and systematic manner. The instruction should be integrated with phonology and sound-symbol knowledge.
- **Morphology** – “Morphology is the study of how morphemes are combined to form words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in the language” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).
- **Syntax** – “Syntax is the set of principles that dictate sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar, sentence variation, and the mechanics of language” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).
- **Reading comprehension** – Reading comprehension is 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 (especially vocabulary and listening comprehension), 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, 2018, p. 14; Snow, 2002).
- **Reading fluency** – “Reading fluency is the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension” (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 52). Fluency also includes prosody. Teachers can help promote fluency with several interventions that have proven successful in helping students with fluency (e.g., repeated readings, word lists, and choral reading of passages) Henry, 2010, p. 104).

In addition, other areas of language processing skills, such as written expression, which require integration of skills, are often a struggle for students with dyslexia.

**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 Intervention**

While it is necessary that students are provided intervention in the critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction, it is also critical that the way in which the content is delivered be consistent with research-based practices. Principles of effective intervention for students with dyslexia include **all** of the following:

- **Simultaneous, multisensory (VAKT)**
- **Systematic and cumulative**
- **Explicit instruction**
- **Diagnostic teaching to automaticity**
- **Synthetic instruction**
- **Analytic instruction**

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.

Teachers of students with dyslexia in EFISD shall be prepared to utilize these techniques and strategies. These teachers may also serve as trainers and consultants in the area of dyslexia and related disorders to regular, remedial, and/or special education teachers so long as such duties do not prevent the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with the student's Section 504 plan or special education IEP.

## **Guidelines for Transitioning English Learners in the Dyslexia Program**

Dyslexia is a language-based difference that stems from the inability to fluently unlock the sounds of the written symbols of a language. All languages can be categorized in reference to their orthographic component. Some languages, which are considered to have "transparent orthographies," have almost a perfect one-to-one sound to symbol correlation. Other languages, which are considered to have "opaque orthographies," can have multiple sounds to symbol correlations. The Spanish language is considered to be very transparent. This means that once the student can associate the sound to each symbol (letter of the alphabet), the process of decoding words is mastered quickly. The English language is considered to be opaque because the 26 letters of the English alphabet can produce 44 different sounds. The consonant sounds are usually consistent, but the vowel sounds change depending on the vowel's position in the word and/or what letter(s) proceeds and/or follows. Just as languages can differ in the complexity of their orthographic component, so does the identification of dyslexia in English Learners (ELs).

Due to the transparent orthography of the Spanish language, Spanish readers will usually be successful with grade-level language/reading tasks. While decoding, word recognition, accuracy, and spelling are important dyslexia indicators in English orthography, in more transparent orthographies, such as Spanish, it has less influence. The inability to perform language tasks with automaticity appears to be the more decisive characteristic in the identification process of dyslexia in a language as phonetic as Spanish.

At the time of the writing of this plan, Elysian Fields's ELs are fully immersed in the English speaking/learning environment. Therefore, an EL student who is considered for a dyslexia evaluation will be evaluated with English evaluation assessments.

## **DISTRICT PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS PRESENTING OUTSIDE INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS FOR DYSLLEXIA SERVICES**

For students whose parents present evidence of outside independent evaluations addressing dyslexia, the following must be considered:

The outside independent evaluation must:

- Have been administered by an individual certified to conduct an educational evaluation and knowledgeable about dyslexia;
- Be considered valid and comparable to the evaluation standards that EFISD would conduct; and
- Comply with the requirements set forth in Section 504 and/or the IDEA and the requirements specified in TEA's *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

Additionally, Section 504 and IDEA regulations as well as TEA requirements as outlined in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update have identified certain expectations in regard to the referral process for a dyslexia evaluation and/or eligibility. An outside independent evaluation is considered a single source of data. Section 504 and/or the IDEA both require that data must be provided from a variety of sources in determining a child's eligibility for services. Case law allows the District to maintain the right to conduct their own evaluation.

In addition to the outside independent evaluation, data that must be submitted for review before a decision can be rendered concerning the validity of an outside independent evaluation by the District evaluator includes the following:

- The student has **passed** the hearing screening. This screening **must** be current, and the student must be able to hear, and process sounds normally.
- The student has **passed** the vision screening with or without correction (i.e., glasses, contacts). Screening **must** be current, and the student must be able to see the written word and differentiate between letters.
- The classroom teacher can provide a list of academic concerns for the student and the student exhibits the characteristics of dyslexia.
- Effective classroom instruction and interventions have previously been provided by the classroom teacher. Previous interventions, including the receipt of an accelerated reading program as defined by TEC §28.006 should be documented by the classroom teacher or through a response to intervention process.
- All EL students, depending on their bilingual category, must receive appropriate instruction based on their LEP category. The LPAC Committee determines and documents the student's bilingual category. A current TELPAS, LAS, etc. score is necessary. It is the expectation that the LEP student possesses Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) **before** being dismissed from the bilingual program. If the student does not possess CALP and/or the additional data being submitted indicates language acquisition as a factor for the student's current concerns, the request for dyslexia evaluation may be refused.
- Parents **must** be provided with written information concerning their child's difficulties in reading and **must** have been informed about the accelerated (intensive) reading program and/or interventions that appropriately addresses the student's reading difficulties and enables them to catch up with their typically performing peers (TEC §28.006(g)(h)). In addition, parents **must** provide the school with **written** consent for the dyslexia evaluation to be conducted under either Section 504 or IDEA.
- Frequently due to sociocultural factors such as irregular attendance or lack of experiential backgrounds, students will be referred as being a child with a disability. Both Section 504 and IDEA prohibit referrals for disability based on irregular attendance or lack of experiential background and/or other sociocultural factors.

Failure to present the additional data outlined above, in addition to the outside independent evaluation, **may** result in an inability to consider the validity of the outside evaluation.

Eligibility determinations for dyslexia services can only be determined by a duly constituted Section 504 committee or ARD committee (including the parent/guardian) who are knowledgeable about the student, the evaluation data (including dyslexia) and the placement options.

## **DISTRICT PROCEDURES FOR SERVING IN-STATE OR OUT OF STATE TRANSFERS FOR STUDENTS IDENTIFIED WITH DYSLLEXIA**

### **IN-STATE STUDENT TRANSFERS:**

For students transferring into EFISD who have been diagnosed with dyslexia within the same school year by a public school agency within the state of Texas, the following procedures are to be followed:

1. Receiving campus **must** have **written documentation** from the previous school district that the student has been identified as a student with dyslexia as outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.
2. Receiving campus **must** have **written documentation** from the previous school district that the student has a **current** Section 504 plan.
3. EFISD, upon receipt of the written documentation outlined in items 1 and 2, will provide the student with FAPE (free and appropriate public education) as defined under Section 504 including services **comparable** to those described in the student's Section 504 plan) from the previous school district **UNTIL** the current school district either:
  - a. Formally adopts the student's Section 504 plan by a duly constituted campus Section 504 committee pursuant to district procedures implementing Section 504 ; or
  - b. Develops, adopts and implements a new Section 504 plan that meets the applicable requirements including the determination of whether:
    - i. New or additional testing is required;
    - ii. Previous testing presented to the current school district is not older than one year;
    - iii. Previous testing meets the requirements as outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*; and
    - iv. Previous testing meets the standards and procedures implemented by EFISD.
4. The timeline for completing the procedures outlined above shall be 10 instructional days from the date the student is verified as being a student with dyslexia and eligible for dyslexia and Section 504 services.

### **STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM OUT OF STATE:**

For students transferring into Elysian Fields ISD from a state other than Texas and who have been diagnosed with dyslexia within the same school year by a public school agency, the following procedures are to be followed:

1. Receiving campus **must** have **written documentation** from the previous school district that the student has been identified as a student with dyslexia.
2. Receiving campus **must** have **written documentation** from the previous school district that the student has a **current** Section 504 plan.
3. Elysian Fields ISD, upon receipt of the written documentation outline in items 1 and 2, will provide the student with FAPE (free and appropriate public education as defined under Section



504 including services **comparable** to those described in the student's Section 504 plan) from the previous school district **UNTIL** the current school district either:

- a. Conducts an evaluation pursuant to the procedures outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018*, Section 504, and Elysian Fields ISD procedures for evaluating students with dyslexia; and
  - b. Develops, adopts and implements a new Section 504 plan, if appropriate, that meets the applicable requirements pursuant to the procedures outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*, and Section 504.
4. The timeline for completing the procedures outlined above shall be 10 instructional days from the date the student is verified as being a student with dyslexia.

Should the data indicate that additional testing is indicated or not adequately current, Section 504 regulations and TEA requirements as outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update* have identified certain expectations in regard to the process and data required for a dyslexia evaluation. The data accompanying the request for a dyslexia evaluation should provide the evaluator with complete and accurate documentation to confirm the need for an evaluation or re-evaluation (specific to out of state transfer students). Documentation should include but is not limited to the following:

- The student has **passed** the hearing screening. This screening **must** be current, and the student must be able to hear, and process sounds normally.
- The student has **passed** the vision screening with or without correction (i.e., glasses, contacts). This screening **must** be current, and the student must be able to see the written word and differentiate between letters.
- Data indicating that student's difficulties are not due to LEP issues and/or sociocultural factors such as irregular attendance or lack of experiential backgrounds.

For students who are identified as special education transfer students and have dyslexia, please refer to the procedures under the IDEA.

## DYSLEXIA TEACHER ROLE

In order to provide effective intervention, Elysian Fields ISD will employ highly trained individuals to deliver dyslexia instruction. Teachers, such as reading specialists, master reading teachers, general education classroom teachers, or special education teachers, who provide dyslexia intervention for students are not required to hold a specific license or certification. However, **these educators must at a minimum have additional documented dyslexia training aligned to 19 TAC §74.28(e) and must deliver the instruction with fidelity.** This includes training in critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction such as phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. In addition, they must deliver multisensory instruction that simultaneously uses all learning pathways to the brain, is systematic and cumulative, is explicitly taught, uses diagnostic teaching to automaticity, and includes both analytic and synthetic approaches.

Providers of dyslexia instruction **must** be prepared to use the techniques, tools, and strategies outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*. They may also serve as trainers and consultants in dyslexia and related disorders for regular, remedial, and special education teachers.

### Role of Dyslexia and/or Itinerant Reading Teachers

The dyslexia and/or itinerant reading teacher will:

- Deliver instructional reading programs (standard protocol dyslexia instruction) for identified students with dyslexia only
- Be assigned to specific campus(es) for purposes of accountability but will NOT be available to assist the campuses with campus responsibilities due to itinerant constraints
- Maintain a teacher/student ratio NOT to exceed the recommended of 1:6 per group
- Administer and gather pre/post instructional data to monitor program effectiveness and student growth in the area of reading
- Communicate with teachers, administrators and parents as needed
- Support and attend the district annual Parent Awareness Meeting
- Conduct parent training sessions

- Stay abreast of current research and development in dyslexia and research-based reading programs
- Assist in organizing and/or conducting in-services at their assigned campuses to facilitate the implementation of the dyslexia program and to ensure general classroom teacher knowledge on dyslexia
- Maintain all necessary student records required by the dyslexia program
- Comply with all state and federal laws as well as district policies
- Review dyslexia folders
- Attend all district dyslexia trainings and/or meetings
- Maintain student progress monitoring portfolios
- Review dyslexia referrals/folder for completion of required documentation **prior** to the folder being sent to the Dyslexia office. This review must be conducted in a timely manner and may only be conducted during your planning period. **Time taken to review dyslexia referral folders shall not under any circumstance prevent standard protocol dyslexia intervention services teachers from providing their assigned dyslexia programs. This is a compliance/FAPE issue.**

## DYSLEXIA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REQUIRED TRAINING

### Texas Administrative Code 19 TAC §74.28(e)

... “Teachers who screen and treat these students must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components described in the ‘*Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders.*’

### Texas Administrative Code 19 TAC §74.28(i)

“Each school or open-enrollment charter school must provide each identified student access at his or her campus to instructional programs required in subsection (e) of this section and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. ...”

### Texas Education Code TEC §21.044

... “(b) Any minimum academic qualifications for a certificate specified under Subsection (a) that require a person to possess a bachelor’s degree must also require that the person receive, as part of the curriculum for that degree, instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia.”

“(c) The instruction under Subsection (b) **must**: ... (2) include information: (A) characteristics of dyslexia; (B) identification of dyslexia; and (C) effective, multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia.”

### Texas Education Code TEC §21.054(b)(c)

“(b) Continuing education requirements for an educator who teaches students with dyslexia **must** include training regarding new research and practices in educating students with dyslexia.”

“(c) The training required under Subsection (b) may be offered in an online course.”

Teachers **need** to undergo extensive preparation in the disciplines inherent in literacy, which include the following:

- |                                    |                 |                               |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| ● Language development             | ● Fluency       | ● Behavior management         |
| ● Phonology and phonemic awareness | ● Vocabulary    | ● Study skills                |
|                                    | ● Comprehension | ● History of English language |

- Alphabetic knowledge
- Handwriting
- Decoding (reading)
- Spelling (encoding)
- Composition
- Testing and assessment
- Lesson planning
- Technology
- Needs of older struggling students

## DYSLEXIA PARENT AWARENESS LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

***The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders 2018 Update, (pg. 98).***  
**School districts MUST:**

- Inform parents of all services and options available to students eligible under IDEA or Section 504 [TAC §74.28(h)].
- Provide parents of children suspected to have dyslexia or a related disorder a copy or link to The Dyslexia Handbook [TAC §74.28(j)].
- **Provide a parent education program** [TAC §74.28(k)].

### **Texas Administrative Code 19 TAC §74.28 (h)(k)(l)**

“(h) Parents/guardians of a student with dyslexia or a related disorder **must** be informed of all services and options available to the student, including general education interventions under response to intervention and multi-tiered systems of support models as required by TEC, §26.0081(d), and options under federal law, including IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, §504.”

“(k) Each school district and open-enrollment charter school **shall provide a parent education program** for parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program **must** include:

- (1) Awareness and characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders;
- (2) Information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia and related disorders;
- (3) Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia and related disorders;
- (4) Information on qualifications of those delivering services to students with dyslexia and related disorders;
- (5) Awareness of information on accommodations and modifications, especially those allowed for standardized testing;
- (6) Information on eligibility, evaluation requests, and services available under IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, §504, and information on the response to intervention process; and
- (7) Contact information for the relevant regional and/or school district or open-enrollment charter school specialists.”

“(l) School districts and open-enrollment charter schools **shall** provide to parents of children suspected to have dyslexia or a related disorder a copy or a link to the electronic version of the ‘*Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders.*’”

## DYSLEXIA PARENT AWARENESS

### **RECOGNIZING 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.
- Language-based. There is a weak sensitivity to the sounds of language (insufficient phonological processing ability).
- Characterized 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 conspicuously impaired, particularly writing and spelling.
- A specific learning disability that is neurobiological 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.

## DYSGRAPHIA

### **Dysgraphia**

Texas state law requires districts and charter schools to identify students who have dyslexia and related disorders. Texas Education Code §38.003 identifies the following examples of related disorders: developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

### **Definition and Characteristics of Dysgraphia**

Difficulty with handwriting frequently occurs in children with dyslexia. 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 **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

Additional consequences of dysgraphia may also include:

- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

Dysgraphia is not:

- Evidence of a damaged motor nervous system
- Part of a developmental disability that has fine motor deficits
- Secondary to a medical condition
- Association with generalized developmental motor or coordination difficulties
- Impaired spelling or written expression with typical handwriting

Dysgraphia can be due to:

- Impaired feedback the brain is receiving from the fingers
- Weaknesses using visual processing to coordinate hand movement and organize the use of space
- Problems with motor planning and sequencing
- Difficulty with storage and retrieval of letter form





	From: <i>Understanding Dysgraphia, Just the Facts...</i> , IDA, 2012.			
DEVELOPMENTAL SPELLING DISORDER	<p><b>TEA:</b> <i>Significant difficulty learning to spell. This occurs in the absence of reading or other written-language difficulties.</i></p> <p><u>Additional Information:</u> Most resources use the term Specific Spelling Disorder. A specific developmental disorder characterized by a significant impairment in the development of spelling skills without any history of a reading disorder, the deficit <b>NOT</b> being attributable to neurological or sensory impairment, mental retardation, or environmental deprivation.</p> <p>From: <i>A Dictionary of Psychology – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition</i> by Andrew M. Colman, Oxford University Press, 2008.</p>		Someone who is trained in dyslexia and the reading process. Subject to testing protocols used by district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice segmenting words into sounds and linking them to symbols</li> <li>• Work on acquiring the rules for conventional spelling and understanding word structure</li> <li>• Dictation should begin at sound level, continue words and end with words in sentences</li> <li>• Provide immediate feedback and link back to sound patterns and rules</li> <li>• Introduce irregular words only one or two at a time</li> <li>• Homophones should <b>NOT</b> be taught together – allow student to master one before introducing the second or third</li> <li>• Teach atypical spellings by using VAKT techniques</li> <li>• Have student develop spelling notebooks to provide an organized system for reviewing spelling patterns and irregular words</li> <li>• Do <b>NOT</b> use word walls or lists of words posted in the classroom that are based on letter symbols</li> </ul> <p>From: <i>Reading Assessment – Linking Language, Literacy, and Cognition</i> by Melissa Lee Farrall, 2012, pgs. 302-303.</p>

**Questions to determine the identification of dysgraphia** (from Figure 5.3 – *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*, pg. 65):

- Do the data show a pattern of low writing and spelling ability that is **unexpected** for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction?
- Does the pattern indicate the student has dysgraphia?
- Does the student meet eligibility as a student with a disability under Section 504 or IDEA?

**Questions that should be considered in addressing other related disorders are:**

- Is the related disorder language-based at the level of phonology, word reading and/or spelling?
- If the related disorder is language-based at the level of phonology, word reading and/or spelling, does the related disorder manifest in "**unexpectedness**" when compared to the student's other cognitive abilities, age and grade? If yes...
- Does the student **need** instruction/intervention as a direct result of their related disorder?

**Related disorders** are **not** the same as associated academic difficulties and other conditions (co-occurring disorders). Students can have two different disorders, but they may not be related to each other. The most common co-occurring disorders with dyslexia are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and specific developmental language disorders. *"Besides academic struggles, some students with dyslexia may exhibit other complex conditions and/or behaviors. Some, though not all, students with dyslexia **may** also experience symptoms such as anxiety, anger, depression, lack of motivation, or low self-esteem. In such instances, appropriate instructional/referral services need to be provided. These additional conditions can have significant impact on the effectiveness of instruction provided to students with dyslexia."*<sup>1</sup> In other words, while a student may also have ADHD, Tourette's, specific developmental language disorders, etc., they are **NOT** considered to be related to dyslexia but may co-occur with dyslexia.

*"Besides academic struggles, some students with dyslexia may exhibit other complex conditions and/or behaviors."*<sup>1</sup>

*"It is not unusual for students to be diagnosed with dyslexia and another condition. There are also conditions that can look like dyslexia because they have some of the same symptoms. Here are some conditions that can coincide with or be mistaken for dyslexia: "*<sup>2</sup>

- ADHD<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>
- Specific Developmental Language Disorders<sup>1</sup>
- Executive Functioning Disorders<sup>2</sup>
- Auditory Processing Disorders<sup>2</sup>

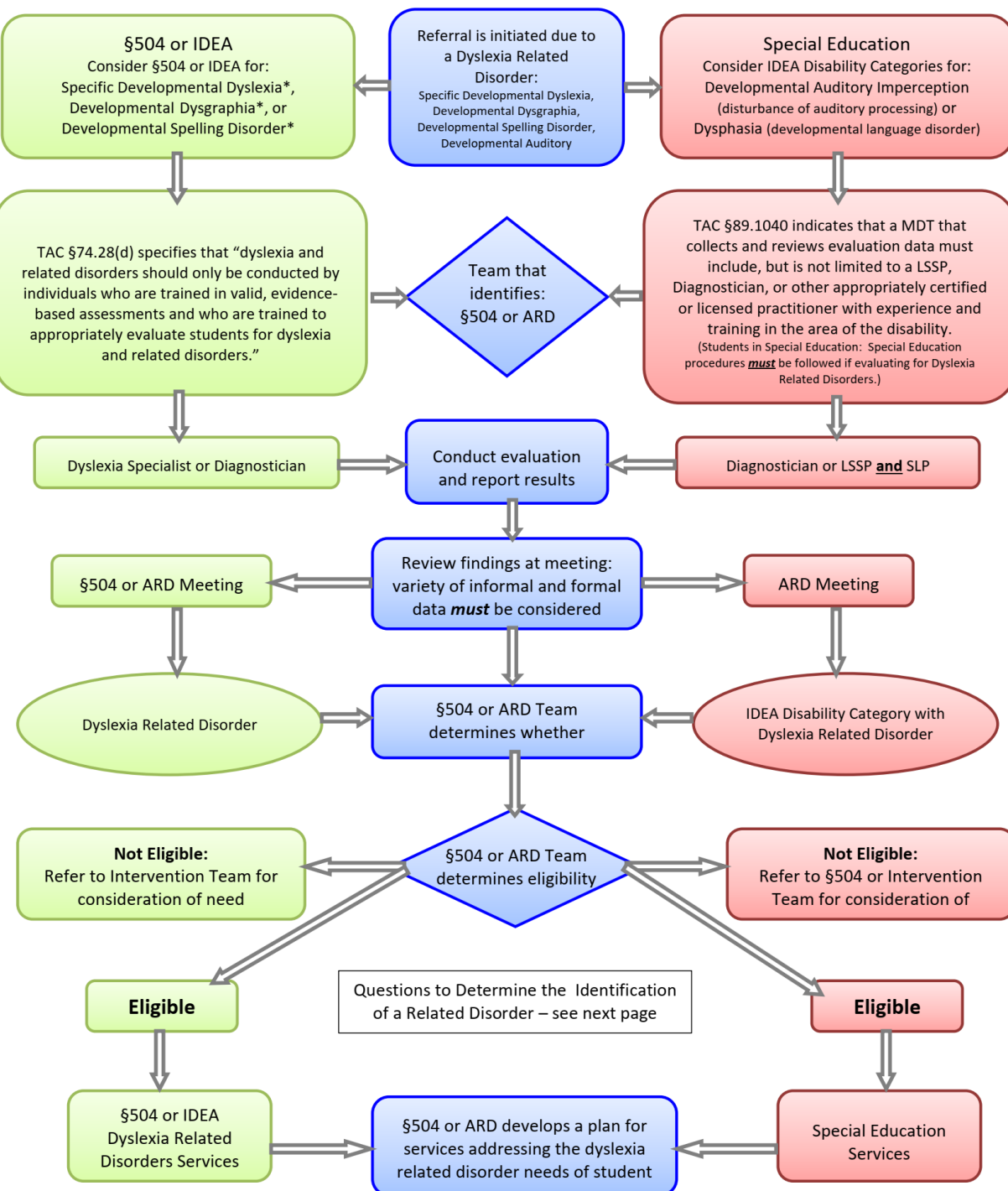
<sup>1</sup>*The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update*, pg. 4.

<sup>2</sup>LD Online -Understood – *Understanding Dyslexia: What conditions are related to dyslexia?*, by Emily Lapkin.

[www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/dslexia/understanding-dyslexia](http://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/dslexia/understanding-dyslexia)

<sup>3</sup>*Just the Facts...*, *Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) and Dyslexia*, International Dyslexia Association – References by K.E. Kakin & G. Erenberg (2005); and E.Q. Tridas, (2007). <https://dyslexiaida.org/attention-deficithyperactivity-disorder-adhd-and-dyslexia/>

## DYSLEXIA RELATED DISORDERS IDENTIFICATION PROCESS FLOWCHART



## **Procedures for Evaluation**

The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow one of two procedures. School districts and charter schools may evaluate for dysgraphia through either IDEA or Section 504. If a student is suspected of having a disability within the scope of IDEA and a corresponding need for special education services is suspected, all special education procedures must be followed. These procedural processes require coordination among the teacher, campus administrators, diagnosticians, and other professionals as appropriate when factors such as a student's English language acquisition, previously identified disability, or other special needs are present.

The first step in the evaluation process, data gathering, should be an integral part of the district's or charter school's process for any student exhibiting learning difficulties. Documentation of the following characteristics of dysgraphia could be collected during the data gathering phase:

- Slow or labored written work
- Poor formation of letters
- Improper letter slant
- Poor pencil grip
- Inadequate pressure during handwriting (too hard or too soft)
- Excessive erasures
- Poor spacing between words
- Poor spacing inside words
- Inability to recall accurate orthographic patterns for words
- "b" and "d" reversals beyond developmentally appropriate time
- Inability to copy words accurately
- Inability of student to read what was previously written
- Overuse of short familiar words such as "big"
- Avoidance of written tasks
- Difficulty with visual-motor integrated sports or activities

While schools must follow federal and state guidelines, they must also develop procedures that address the needs of their student populations. Schools shall recommend evaluation for dysgraphia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Impaired or illegible handwriting that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade
- Impaired handwriting that interferes with spelling, written expression, or both that is unexpected for the student’s age/grade

## 1. Data Gathering

Schools collect data on all students to ensure that instruction is appropriate and scientifically based. Essential components of comprehensive literacy instruction, including writing, are defined in Section 2221(b) of ESSA as explicit instruction in writing, including opportunities for children to write with clear purposes, with critical reasoning appropriate to the topic and purpose, and with specific instruction and feedback from instructional staff.

Any time from kindergarten through grade 12 a student continues to struggle with one or more components of writing, schools must collect additional information about the student. Schools should use previously collected as well as current information to evaluate the student’s academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student’s improved academic performance. The collection of various data, as indicated in Figure 5.1 below, will provide information regarding factors that may be contributing to or primary to the student’s struggles with handwriting, spelling, and written expression.

### *Cumulative Data*

The academic history of each student will provide the school with the cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dysgraphia is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in handwriting, spelling, and written expression. This information should include data that demonstrate that the student was provided appropriate instruction and include data-based documentation of repeated evaluations of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal evaluation of student progress during instruction. This cumulative data also includes information from parents/guardians. Sources and examples of cumulative data are provided in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Sources and Examples of Cumulative Data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vision screening</li> <li>-Teacher reports of classroom concerns</li> <li>-Parent reports of concerns about student handwriting, spelling, or written expression</li> <li>-Classroom handwriting assessments</li> <li>-Classroom spelling assessments</li> <li>-Samples of written work (e.g., journal, story responses, writing samples, etc.)</li> <li>-Accommodations or interventions provided</li> <li>-Academic progress reports (report cards)</li> <li>-Gifted/Talented assessments</li> <li>-Samples of written schoolwork (both timed and untimed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-State student assessment program results as described in TEC §39.022</li> <li>-Observations of instruction provided</li> <li>-Full Individual and Initial Evaluation</li> <li>-Outside evaluations</li> <li>-Speech and language assessments</li> <li>-School attendance</li> <li>-Curriculum-based assessment measures</li> <li>-Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction</li> <li>-Universal screening</li> <li>-Parent survey</li> </ul>

## 2. Initial Evaluation Pathways

The district or charter school must make data-informed decisions that reflect the input of staff and parents for every student on an individual basis, every time. They must consider all resources and services based on student need. The district or charter school should carefully consider all of the relevant student data to gauge the level of impact that a student's specific presentation of dysgraphia will have on his or her ability to access and make progress in the general curriculum. If it is suspected that the student may have dysgraphia and may need special education services because of dysgraphia, the student should be evaluated under IDEA. If the district or school suspects that the student may need interventions and accommodations specific to dysgraphia rather than special education services, then the student should be evaluated under Section 504. Students who are currently eligible under IDEA and have an IEP and who are now suspected of having dysgraphia must undergo a reevaluation under IDEA.

### **3. Formal Evaluation**

After data gathering, the next step in the process is formal evaluation. This is not a screening; rather, it is an individualized evaluation used to gather evaluation data. Formal evaluation includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dysgraphia. Information collected from the parents/guardians also provides valuable insight into the student's early years of written language development. This history may help to explain why students come to the evaluation with many different strengths and weaknesses; therefore, findings from the formal evaluation will be different for each child. Professionals conducting evaluations for the identification of dysgraphia will need to look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom writing performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining handwriting, spelling, and written expression abilities and difficulties.

#### ***Notification and Permission***

When formal evaluation is recommended, the school completes the evaluation process as outlined in IDEA or Section 504. Procedural safeguards under IDEA and Section 504 must be followed.

The individual needs of the student will determine the appropriate evaluation/identification process to use. The notices and requests for consent must be provided in the native language of parents/guardians or other mode of communication used by parents/guardians unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

#### ***Tests and Other Evaluation Materials***

In compliance with IDEA and Section 504, test instruments and other evaluation materials must meet the following criteria:

- Be used for the purpose for which the evaluation or measures are valid or reliable
- Be selected and administered 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, 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 writing abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion-referenced

- evaluations, samples of written work, classroom observations)
- Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
- 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**

### ***Academic Skills***

The school administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Difficulties in the areas of letter formation, orthographic awareness, and general handwriting skills may be evident dependent on the student's age and writing development. Additionally, many students with dysgraphia may have difficulty with spelling and written expression.

### ***Cognitive Processes***

The process of handwriting requires the student to rely on memory for letters or symbol sequences, also known as orthographic processing. Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses. When spelling, a student must not only process both phonological and orthographic information, but also apply their knowledge of morphology and syntax

**Figure 5.2. Areas for Evaluation of Dysgraphia**

<b><u>Academic Skills</u></b>	<b><u>Cognitive Processes</u></b>	<b><u>Possible Additional Areas</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Letter Formation</li> <li>-Handwriting</li> <li>-Word/sentence dictation (timed and untimed)</li> <li>-Copying of text</li> <li>-Written expression</li> <li>-Writing fluency (both accuracy and fluency)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Phonological awareness</li> <li>-Phonological memory</li> <li>-Working memory</li> <li>-Letter retrieval</li> <li>-Letter matching</li> </ul>

## **Procedures for Identification**

The identification of dysgraphia is made by either the ARD committee under IDEA or Section 504 committee under Section 504. To make an informed determination, either committee must include members who are knowledgeable about the following:

- Student being assessed
- Evaluation instruments being used
- Interpretation of the data being collected

Additionally, the committee members should have knowledge regarding

- the handwriting process;
- dysgraphia and related disorders;
- dysgraphia instruction, and;
- district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for evaluation.

## **Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluation**

To appropriately understand evaluation data, the committee of knowledgeable persons (ARD or Section 504) must interpret tests' results in light of the student's educational history, linguistic background, environmental or socioeconomic factors, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

The ARD or Section 504 committee must first determine if a student's difficulties in the areas of writing and spelling reflect a pattern of evidence for the primary characteristics of dysgraphia with unexpectedly low performance for the student's age and educational level in some or all of the following areas:

- Handwriting
- Writing fluency (accuracy and rate)
- Written Expression
- Spelling

Based on the above information and guidelines, should the committee (Section 504 or ARD) determine that the student exhibits weakness in writing and spelling, the committee will then examine the student's data to determine whether these difficulties are unexpected in relation to the student's other abilities, sociocultural factors, language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate and effective instruction. For example, the student may exhibit strengths in areas such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, oral verbal ability, or math reasoning yet still have difficulty with writing and spelling.

**Therefore, it is not one single indicator, but a preponderance of informal and formal data that provide the committee with evidence for whether these difficulties are unexpected.**



## Dysgraphia Identification

If the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, the Section 504 or ARD committee must then determine if the student has dysgraphia. The list of questions in Figure 5.3 below must be considered when making a determination regarding dysgraphia.

Figure 5.3. Questions to Determine the Identification of Dysgraphia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the data show a pattern of low writing and spelling ability that is unexpected for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction?</li><li>• Does the pattern indicate the student has dysgraphia?</li><li>• Does the student meet eligibility as a student with a disability under Section 504 or IDEA?</li></ul>

Once dysgraphia has been identified, there are further eligibility questions the Section 504 or ARD committee must still consider. These considerations are discussed in greater detail below.

### **Review of Evaluation by Section 504 Committee**

If the Section 504 committee determines the student has dysgraphia, the committee must also determine whether the student has a disability under Section 504. A student has a disability under Section 504 if the physical or mental impairment (dysgraphia) substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as the specific activity of writing. Additionally, the Section 504 committee, in determining whether a student has a disability that substantially limits the student in a major life activity (writing), must not consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using. If the Section 504 committee does not identify dysgraphia, but the student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student, eligibility for Section 504 services related to the student's other condition or disability should be considered.

The Section 504 committee will also consider whether the student requires additional accommodations and/or related services for the provision of FAPE. Revision of the Section 504 Plan will occur as the student's response to instruction and use of accommodations, if any, is observed. Changes in instruction and/or accommodations must be supported by current data (e.g., classroom performance and dyslexia program monitoring).

### ***Review of Evaluation by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee***

Within 30 calendar days of completion of the written evaluation report, the ARD committee will determine whether the student who has dysgraphia is eligible under IDEA as a student with a specific learning disability. The student is eligible for services under IDEA if he/she has dysgraphia and, because of the dysgraphia needs special education services. If the student with dysgraphia is found eligible for special education, the student's IEP must include appropriate writing instruction, which might include instruction from a related services provider.

## Supporting Students Struggling with Handwriting

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, which apply to both manuscript and cursive handwriting, may not necessarily apply to an entire class but instead may be used to support instructional methods delivered in small groups with students whose penmanship is illegible or dysfluent.

1. Show students how to hold a pencil.
2. Model efficient and legible letter formation.
3. Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice effective letter formation.
4. Use scaffolds, such as letters with numbered arrows showing the order and direction of strokes.
5. Have students practice writing letters from memory.
6. Provide handwriting fluency practice to build students' automaticity.
7. Practice handwriting in short sessions.

Some students who struggle with handwriting may actually have dysgraphia. Dysgraphia may occur alone, or with dyslexia. An assessment for dysgraphia, as it relates to dyslexia, is important in order to determine whether children need additional explicit, systematic instruction in handwriting only; handwriting and spelling; or handwriting, spelling, and written expression along with word reading and decoding.

## Delivery of Intervention

The way the content is delivered should be consistent with the principles of effective intervention for students with dysgraphia including the following:

- **Simultaneous, multisensory (VAKT)**
- **Systematic and cumulative**
- **Explicit instruction**
- **Diagnostic teaching to automaticity**

## Instructional Accommodations for the Student with Dysgraphia

By receiving instruction based on the elements described in this chapter, a student with dysgraphia is better equipped to meet the demands of grade-level or course instruction. In addition to targeted instruction, accommodations provide the student with dysgraphia 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 dysgraphia on each individual student determines the accommodation. When considering accommodations for the student with dysgraphia, consider the following:

- The rate of producing written work
- The volume of the work to be produced
- The complexity of the writing task
- The tools used to produce the written product

- The format of the product (Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, 2018, p. 5).

Listed below are examples of reasonable classroom accommodations for a student with dysgraphia based on the above considerations:

- Allow more time for written tasks including note taking, copying, and tests
- Reduce the length requirements of written assignments
- Provide copies of notes or assign a note taking buddy to assist with filling in missing information
- Allow the student to audio record important assignments and/or take oral tests
- Assist student with developing logical steps to complete a writing assignment instead of all at once
- Allow the use of technology (e.g., speech to text software, etc.)
- Allow the student to use cursive or manuscript, whichever is most legible and efficient
- Allow the student to use graph paper for math, or to turn lined paper sideways, to help with lining up columns of numbers
- Offer an alternative to a written project such as an oral report, dramatic presentation, or visual media project

**To learn more about dyslexia and service agencies, contact:**

The International Dyslexia Association  
40 York Road, 4th Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21204  
(410) 296-0232  
<https://dyslexiaida.org>

Learning Disabilities Association of Texas  
(LDAT)  
P.O. Box 831392  
Richardson, TX 75083-1392  
[www.ldatx.org](http://www.ldatx.org)

**For additional information regarding the  
Elysian Fields Independent School District Dyslexia Program, contact:**

Kara Roos  
Elysian Fields Elementary School, Counselor  
903-633-2420

LeAnn Beavers  
Elysian Fields Elementary School, Dyslexia Specialist  
903-633-1562

Linda Lewis  
Elysian Fields Middle School, Counselor  
903-633-2420

Jodi Morgan  
Elysian Fields Middle School, Dyslexia Specialist  
903-633-1542

Katilyn Woodley  
Elysian Fields High School, Counselor  
903-633-1510

Toni Midgley  
Special Education Diagnostician  
903-633-2420