



**Hallsville ISD**

# **Dyslexia & Dysgraphia**

Program Guidelines

2018-2019

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## I. 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 imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

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

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

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

## II. Definition of Dysgraphia

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

*Dysgraphia is related to dyslexia as both are language-based disorders. In dyslexia, the impairment is with word-level skills (decoding, word identification, spelling). 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 impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling and/or composing, but individuals with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading*

### **III. Procedures Required by State and Federal Law Prior to Formal Assessment**

In accordance with TEC §28.006, Hallsville ISD 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. In addition, an accelerated (intensive) reading program (as per NCLB legislation) that appropriately addresses students' reading difficulties and enables them to "catch up" with their typically performing peers is implemented. Should students continue to struggle with reading, writing, and spelling during the intensive reading instruction, then Hallsville ISD will initiate procedures to recommend these students for assessment for dyslexia. The information from the early reading instruments will be one source of information in deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia. Other sources may include, but are not limited to: performance on state mandated test(s), a student's grades/performance in reading and written spelling, and teachers' observations of the characteristics of dyslexia.

### **III. Referral Process (Dyslexia)**

At any time that a student continues to struggle with one or more components of reading, Hallsville ISD will collect additional information about the student.

#### **Data Gathering:**

Information will be used to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. This information **should** include data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction and data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. Additional information to be considered includes the results from some or all of the following:

- Vision screening
- Hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Basal reading series assessment
- Accommodations provided by classroom teachers
- Academic progress reports (report cards)
- Gifted/Talented assessments
- Samples of school work
- Parent conferences
- Testing for limited English proficiency (all years available)

- Speech and language screening through a referral process (English and native language, if possible)
- The K-2 reading instrument as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)
- Universal screening for all grade levels available (English and native language, if possible)
- State student assessment program as described in TEC §39.002

Data that support the student received conventional (appropriate) instruction and that the difficulties are not primarily the result of sociocultural factors which include language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background.

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

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

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

- Difficulty reading real words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding nonsense words
- Slow, inaccurate, or labored oral reading (lack of reading fluency)
- Difficulty with learning to spell

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

- The development of phonological awareness, including segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
- Phonological memory (holding information about sounds and words in memory)
- Rapid naming of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet

**Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include the following:**

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

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

#### **IV. Referral Process (Dysgraphia)**

##### **Data Gathering:**

See section III. Referral Process (Dyslexia)

##### **Characteristics of Dysgraphia:**

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

#### **V. Procedures for Assessment of Dyslexia/Dysgraphia**

Students enrolling in Hallsville ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time for testing depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading/writing performance, reading/writing difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading/writing instruction, teachers' input, and parents' or guardians' input. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28), the earlier the better. While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia/dysgraphia even if the reading/writing difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

##### **The procedures followed for assessment include:**

1. Notify parents or guardians of proposal to assess student for dyslexia/dysgraphia (§504)
2. Inform parents or guardians of their rights under §504
3. Obtain parent or guardian permission to assess the student for dyslexia/dysgraphia

4. Assess student, being sure that individuals/professionals who administer assessments have training in the evaluation of students for dyslexia and related disorders (19 TAC §74.28)

**Tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials (§504):**

- Will be validated for the specific purpose for which the tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials are used
- Will include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely materials that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient
- Will be selected and administered so as to ensure that, when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
- Will be selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory
- Will include multiple measures of a student's reading/writing abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion referenced assessments, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)
- Will be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials

**Domains to Assess (Dyslexia)**

Hallsville ISD administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Depending upon the student's age and stage of reading development, the following are the areas related to reading that should be assessed:

**Academic Skills**

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

### **Cognitive processes that underlie the reading difficulties (Dyslexia)**

- **Phonological/phonemic awareness** (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 and letter combinations, learn the alphabetic principle, use the sounds of the letters and letter combinations to decode words and to accurately spell.)
- **Rapid naming** (Difficulties in rapid naming may or may not be weak, but if deficient, will impact a student's ability to automatically name letters and read words and to read connected text at an appropriate rate.)

### **Domains to Assess (Dysgraphia):**

If dysgraphia is suspected, HISD will administer a dysgraphia screener that will assess the following areas:

- Handwriting
- Spelling
- Written expression

If the student exhibits risk factors for dysgraphia, a formal dysgraphia assessment will be requested through a §504 referral. The formal dysgraphia assessment instrument will be the KTEA-3 Brief.

### **Based on the student's academic difficulties and characteristics, additional areas that may be assessed include the following (Dyslexia/Dysgraphia):**

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

**English Learners: This refers to students served in Bilingual and ESL programs as well as students designated Limited English Proficient (LEP) whose parents have denied services.**

Much diversity exists among English Learners (ELs). The identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be in step with the student's linguistic environment and educational



background. Involvement of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) in the decision making process is recommended.

**Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Learners (Dyslexia/Dysgraphia):**

- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) documentation which includes the following:
  - Home language survey
  - Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency (oral language proficiency tests and norm-referenced tests)
  - State student assessment data results when available
  - Texas English Language Proficiency system (TELPAS) information (Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE))
  - Type of language programming provided and language of instruction
  - Linguistic environment and second-language acquisition development
  - Previous schooling in and outside of the United States

**Additional assessment when assessing English Language Learners (Dyslexia/Dysgraphia):**

- Comprehensive oral language proficiency testing should be completed in English and the student’s native language whenever possible.
- If the student has received academic instruction in his/her native language, as well as English, then the “Domains to Assess” need to be completed in both languages to the appropriate extent.

**Interpretation:**

Test results of English Learners (EL) will be interpreted in light of the student’s: language development (in both English and the student’s native language [when possible]), educational history, linguistic background, socioeconomic issues, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

**VI. Identification of Students with Dyslexia/Dysgraphia**

The §504 Committee determines whether the student has dyslexia/dysgraphia. The members must be knowledgeable about:

- The student being assessed
- The reading process
- Dyslexia and related disorders

- Dyslexia/Dysgraphia instruction
- District or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for assessment The assessments used
- The meaning of the collected data

The §504 committee determines the identification of dyslexia/dysgraphia after reviewing all accumulated data including the following areas:

- The observations of the teacher, district or charter school staff, and/or parent/guardian
- Data gathered from the classroom (including student work and the results of classroom measures) and information found in the student’s cumulative folder (including the developmental and academic history of the student)
- Data-based documentation of student progress during instruction/intervention
- The results of administered assessments
- Language Assessment Proficiency Committee (LPAC) documentation, when applicable
- All other accumulated data regarding the development of the student’s learning and his/her educational needs

**§504 Committee Decision Focal Points for Dyslexia Identification:**

- A. The pattern of weaknesses in a student with dyslexia will reflect one or more difficulties with low performance for the student’s age and educational level in the following academic skills:
  - Reading real words in isolation
  - Decoding nonsense words
  - Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy)
  - Written spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia)
- B. Based on the data, if the committee determines weaknesses are indicated in the listed academic skills, then the committee will look next at the underlying cognitive processes for the difficulties seen in the student’s word reading and written spelling. These academic difficulties in reading and written spelling will typically be the result of a deficit in phonological or phonemic awareness. The student may also demonstrate difficulties in other areas of cognitive processing, including one or more of the following:
  - Rapid naming
  - Orthographic processing

If the student exhibits reading and written spelling difficulties and currently has appropriate phonological/phonemic processing, it is important to examine the student's history to determine if there is evidence of previous difficulty with phonological/phonemic awareness.

**NOTE:** Because previous effective instruction in phonological/phonemic awareness may remediate phonological awareness skills in isolation, average phonological awareness scores alone do not rule out dyslexia. Ongoing phonological processing deficits can be exhibited in word reading and/or written spelling.

- C. If the committee determines the student exhibits weaknesses in reading and written spelling that are the result of a deficit in phonological/phonemic awareness, the committee will then examine the student's data to determine whether these difficulties are unexpected for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities (the ability to learn in the absence of print) and unexpected in relation to the provision of effective classroom instruction.

Many students with dyslexia will have difficulty with the secondary characteristics of dyslexia, including reading comprehension and written composition.

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

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

Based on the above information and guidelines, the §504 committee first determines whether the student has dyslexia/dysgraphia. If the student has dyslexia/dysgraphia, the committee also determines whether the student has a disability under §504. Whether a student is eligible for §504 accommodations is a separate determination from the determination that the student has dyslexia/dysgraphia. A student is considered to have a disability under §504 if the condition substantially limits the student's learning, including the specific activity of reading. Additionally, the §504 committee, in determining whether a student has a disability that substantially limits the student in a major life activity, must **not** consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using. If the committee does not identify dyslexia/dysgraphia, but the

student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student's learning, eligibility for §504 services related to the student's other condition or disability should be considered.

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

### **Assessment of Special Education Students**

At any time during the assessment for dyslexia/dysgraphia, identification process, or instruction related to dyslexia/dysgraphia, students may be referred for evaluation for special education. At times, students will display additional factors/areas complicating their dyslexia/dysgraphia and requiring more support than what is available through dyslexia/dysgraphia instruction. At other times, students with severe dyslexia or related disorders will be unable to make adequate academic progress within any of the programs for dyslexia or related disorders. In such cases, a referral to special education for evaluation and possible identification as a child with a disability within the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) will be made as needed.

Students with additional factors that complicate their dyslexia/dysgraphia may require additional support or referral to special education. (See Appendix A of The Dyslexia Handbook ~ Revised 2007, Updated 2010)

### **Assessment of Special Education Students**

If a student is already in special education, but exhibits the characteristics of dyslexia or related disorders and is referred for assessment, assessment procedures for students under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004) will be followed. Assessment data from prior special education assessments may be utilized, and/or additional assessment may be conducted by personnel trained in assessment to evaluate students for dyslexia and related disorders. In this case, the ARD committee will make determinations for those students.

If the student with dyslexia/dysgraphia is found eligible for special education in the area of reading/writing, and the ARD committee determines the student's instructional needs for reading are most appropriately met in a special education placement, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) must include appropriate reading/writing instruction.

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

Students identified as having dyslexia or related disorders from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the district's program. Hallsville ISD may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student. In either situation, the §504 committee will determine the identification status of a student enrolled in Hallsville ISD, and the placement of the student in the dyslexia/dysgraphia program(s).

## **VII. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia/Dysgraphia**

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

*In accordance with the program approved by the State Board of Education, the board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder.*

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003>

### **The following procedures must be followed:**

- Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia/dysgraphia are made by a team that is knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation information, and instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia/dysgraphia.
- Hallsville ISD shall purchase or develop a reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that is aligned with the descriptors found in this handbook. The descriptors include the components of phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, language structure, linguistic patterns, and processes. Instructional approaches include explicit, individualized, and multi-sensory instruction (19 TAC §74.28). The components of instruction and instructional approaches are described in the next section of this handbook.
- Hallsville ISD must provide each identified student access at his/her campus to an instructional program that meets the requirements in 19 TAC §74.28(c) and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. The school district may, with the approval of each student's parents or guardians, offer additional services at a centralized location. Such centralized services shall not preclude each student from receiving services at his or her campus (19 TAC §74.28).
- Parents/guardians of students eligible under §504 must be informed of all services and options available to the student under that federal statute.

- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia/dysgraphia must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components specified in the next section of this handbook (19 TAC §74.28).
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia/dysgraphia must be trained in the professional development activities specified by Hallsville ISD, and/or campus planning and decision making committee which shall include the instructional strategies indicated above (19 TAC §74.28).

Hallsville ISD shall provide a parent education program for the parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. The program should include the following:

- Characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders
- Information on assessment and diagnosis of dyslexia/dysgraphia
- Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia/dysgraphia
- Awareness of information on classroom modifications and especially of modifications allowed on standardized testing (19 TAC §74.28)

### **Components of Instruction**

The instructional program should be offered in a small group arrangement and include reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate. The major instructional strategies should utilize individualized, intensive, and multisensory methods as appropriate.

**Components of instruction, as appropriate for the reading needs of the student, include the following:**

- Phonemic awareness instruction that enables students to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language
- Graphophonemic knowledge (phonics) instruction that takes advantage of the letter-sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds, and sounds are written with letters in the right order (Students with this understanding can blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing.)
- Language structure instruction that encompasses morphology (the study of meaningful units of language such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots), semantics (ways that language conveys meaning), syntax (sentence structure), and pragmatics (how to use language in a particular context)

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

**Instructional approaches, as appropriate to meet the instructional needs of the student, include the following:**

- Explicit, direct instruction that is systematic (structured), sequential, and cumulative (Instruction is organized and presented in a way that follows a logical, sequential plan, fits the nature of language [alphabetic principle] with no assumption of prior skills or language knowledge, and maximizes student engagement. This instruction proceeds at a rate commensurate with students' needs, ability levels, and demonstration of progress.)
- Individualized instruction that meets the specific learning needs of each individual student in a small group setting
- A reading curriculum that matches each student's individual ability level and contains all of the Components of Instruction mandated in 19 TAC §74.28
- Intensive, highly concentrated instruction that maximizes student engagement, uses specialized methods and materials, produces results, and contains all the Components of Instruction mandated in 19 TAC §74.28 (e.g., homogeneous small-group instruction, in addition to core instruction, weekly progress monitoring to ensure adequate progress and learning, appropriate setting outside the class designated by the school.) (See Appendix A of The Dyslexia Handbook ~ Updated 2018)
- Meaning-based instruction that is directed toward purposeful reading and writing, with an emphasis on comprehension and composition
- Multisensory instruction that incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile) during teacher presentations and student practice

Teachers of students with dyslexia/dysgraphia shall be prepared to utilize these techniques and strategies. They may also serve as trainers and consultants in the area of dyslexia and related disorders to regular, remedial, and special education teachers.

### **VIII. Student Monitoring and Dyslexia/Dysgraphia Program Exit Criteria**

Upon successful completion of Hallsville ISD program, as measured by program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals, students will be exited from the district

dyslexia/dysgraphia program. Additional criteria for exit may include but is not limited to: grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessment data, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, and individual dyslexia/dysgraphia program requirements.

Students that have completed the Hallsville ISD dyslexia/dysgraphia program will receive regular monitoring during the first year.

**Monitoring may include, but is not limited to the collection/evaluation of:**

- Progress reports
- Report cards
- State assessment data
- Teacher reports
- Parent reports
- Counselor reports
- Other program reports
- Additional assessment data

Students qualifying for dyslexia/dysgraphia services that are identified as §504 or special education will follow monitoring/re-evaluation requirements outlined in federal law.

No one factor is sufficient to warrant exiting a student from district dyslexia/dysgraphia services. The committee may consider the following factors when recommending exiting or reduction of dyslexic services:

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

If a student has shown substantial progress and the §504 committee determines the student is ready to be dismissed completely from the program, the committee may recommend monitoring services instead of direct services.



**Please don't hesitate to contact the 504 campus coordinator or the 504 office if you have any questions or concerns.**

**If you would like copies of your student's 504 accommodations or services plan, please contact the 504 office at (903) 668-5990 x5045.**

**To access the "The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorder" go to the following website:**

**<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/dyslexia/>**