

# **Dyslexia Handbook**

**Mabank Independent  
School District  
310 East Market Street  
Mabank, Texas 75147**



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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. INTERVENTION ASSISTANCE TEAMS**

Mabank ISD is committed to providing quality education to all students enrolled in MISD. In every effort to provide individually appropriate instruction, Intervention Assistance Teams (IAT) were developed on each campus. These teams were established to review available information and identify appropriate educational interventions for students who are experiencing difficulty. MISD recognizes its responsibility to use all available options to ensure that students receive reasonable benefit from instruction.

The Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) on each campus is composed of professionals including administrators, teachers, and support staff who provide a wide range of experience and expertise together to analyze data and select appropriate instruction to assist students. Parent input is essential in ensuring that the IAT has a complete and balanced profile of the student. Collaborative efforts between parents and professional staff are vital in reaching positive results for students in the educational environment.

## **REFERRAL TO THE INTERVENTION ASSISTANCE TEAM**

A referral or recommendation to the IAT should be made when a student is experiencing significant educational difficulty. Campus personnel, such as a teacher, principal or counselor may make a referral. In addition, sources outside the local campus, such as parents, physicians, and private schools, or other appropriate sources may make a referral. When the decision is made to refer a student to the IAT, the person initiating the referral should complete the IAT referral form. When the referral or recommendation is someone other than campus personnel, it will be necessary for campus personnel to assist in the completion of this form.

## **INTERVENTION ASSISTANCE TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

The IAT should include persons knowledgeable about the student and about programs and educational interventions, which may assist the student in meeting obstacles, experienced in the educational environment. The building administrator or his/her designee and the student's regular education teacher must be in attendance. In cases, where a staff member other than the student's general education teacher makes the recommendation, that staff member must attend. The building principal or designee should serve as the chairperson. The team may include other professionals based on the individual student.

## **III. IDENTIFICATION**

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

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

The §504 committee determines the identification of dyslexia 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

#### **IV. EARLY INTERVENTION**

All Mabank ISD students in kindergarten through second grade will be screened with an instrument from the commissioner's list of approved assessment. Parents will be notified of the results of this screening. Screening results will be combined with other criteria; such as basal reading series assessment and samples of schoolwork to identify students who are at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties. Each campus will design an individualized program to address the needs of the students identified at each grade level. A description of this program and a list of students being served will be maintained at each campus.

First and second grade students will be screened by the end of September, and students will be identified for the Three Tiered Reading Process. Students in this program and others who show signs of needing intervention will be assessed again in January, with any necessary adjustments being made at that time. Kindergarten students will be screened by the end of January and be identified for Three Tiered Process. Through this process, identified students will be provided additional, intensive instruction designed to address their needs and accelerate their learning. Parents will be notified when any program placement change occurs.

Students who continue to struggle, despite this intervention, may be recommended by the classroom teacher for assessment for dyslexia or evaluation for special education consideration.

#### **V. Recommendation for Dyslexia Assessment**

Should a student continue to struggle with one or more components of reading, the Intervention Assistance Team must collect additional information about the student. The IAT will use this information to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. Some of the information that the district collects is in the student's cumulative folder; other information is available from teachers and parents. Information to be considered includes the results from some or all of the following:

- Vision screening (school may conduct)
- Hearing screening (school may conduct)
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Basal reading series assessment
- Accommodations and modifications provided by the classroom teacher(s)
- Academic progress reports (report cards)
- Samples of school work
- Parent conferences

- Testing for Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Speech and language screening through a referral process
- DRAII, or similar assessment results; The K-2 reading instruments described in TEC§ 28.006
- State student assessment program as described in TEC § 39.002

Among the actions that the IAT has available for the student is recommendation to assess the student for dyslexia. The IAT recommends assessment for dyslexia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Poor performance in one or more areas of reading and/or related areas of writing and spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade; and
- S o m e or all of the characteristics of dyslexia.

Data gathering consists of gathering all available information on the student and deliberating about possible solutions to the problems demonstrated by the student. This step is available to all children with learning and behavior problems. Recommendations may be made by anyone, including the parent. The following data is completed **prior** to the meeting:

- IAT packet is completed by referring party
- IAT/504 Committee Meeting Parental Notice is sent to parents
- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) report is completed for students classified as LEP

## **VI. Assessment Procedures**

After the Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) has determined that the student *exhibits characteristics of dyslexia*, the committee must complete the following procedures:

- Provide Parental Notification by letter of the proposal to assess student for dyslexia (Section 504) and obtain parental consent for this assessment;
- Provide Notice of Parent and Student Rights under Section 504.

After receiving written Parental Consent for Dyslexia Assessment, the dyslexia designee will:

- Have the teacher complete the Information From the Classroom Teacher form
- Have the parents or guardian complete the Information from Parent/ Guardian form
- Complete request for records with parent if needed
- Administer additional testing from the recommended test list
- Chart all information on the Dyslexia Assessment Student Profile
- Work with the campus Section 504 Chairperson to schedule a Section 504/Dyslexia meeting to discuss results and determine instructional interventions and/or educational programming

Based on the information gathered and following the TAC 19§74.28 guidelines, the 504/Dyslexia Committee determines whether the student is dyslexic. If the student is given the educational diagnosis of dyslexia, the committee must also determine whether the student has a disability under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, §504 (NOTE: Not all students with dyslexia are necessarily eligible for §504. A student is

considered to have a disability under §504 if the condition substantially limits the student's learning.) Students with additional factors that complicate their dyslexia may require additional support.

If the student requires additional support, the 504/Dyslexia Committee will implement an Individualized Accommodation Plan (IAP) designed to address the needs of the identified student.

The deliberations of the committee should be documented on the 504/Dyslexia Committee form. If the parent does not attend, notification of the decision should be provided to the parent.

## **VII. Referral for Special Education Consideration**

There are some students with severe dyslexia or related disorders who will be unable to make satisfactory progress without the provision of special education services. In these instances, the IAT should follow the usual procedures for referring the student for a complete individual evaluation and consideration of special education services.

Decisions regarding these students should be made by an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee and documented in the Individualized Education Program(IEP). The interventions may vary according to the unique needs of the student, but may also include one of the highly structured multi-sensory approaches.

**Note:** At any time that the student does not make expected progress, after interventions have been implemented, then the Intervention Assistance Committee should consider a referral for special education services. Sequential progression through these steps is not required.

## **VIII. TESTS to ASSESS DOMAINS**

### **Initial Evaluation**

Listening Comprehension;  
Reading Single Words in Isolation (real and nonsense words [decoding]);  
Phonological Awareness  
Letter Knowledge  
Rapid Naming  
Fluency/Rate and Accuracy  
Reading Comprehension  
Written Spelling

## **IX. §504 Committee Decision 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/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
- 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. If the student has dyslexia, 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. 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. If the committee does not identify dyslexia, but the student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student's learning, eligibility for §504 services related to the student's other condition or disability should be considered.

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

## **X. PROGRESS MONITORING**

All identified dyslexia students will be given progress monitoring check points throughout the academic school year. Progress monitoring through programs will be ongoing.

## **XI. COMPONENTS OF INSTRUCTION**

The instructional program should be offered in a small class setting at the student's home campus and include reading, writing and spelling as appropriate. The major instructional strategies should utilize individualized, intensive, and multi-sensory methods as appropriate. (19TAC§ 74.28.)

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

- 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:

- Explicit, direct instruction that is systemic (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 the 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
- 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 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.

## **XII. STUDENT EXIT PROCEDURES**

When the student completes the prescribed dyslexia curriculum, or demonstrates a lack of progress, or when the parent/guardian request an exit, the following procedures should be followed:

- Committee meets to discuss student exit from the prescribed dyslexia curriculum
- Decision from committee to retain student §504 eligibility while releasing student from prescribed dyslexia curriculum if applicable
- Dyslexia Instruction Exit form complete with parent/guardian signature