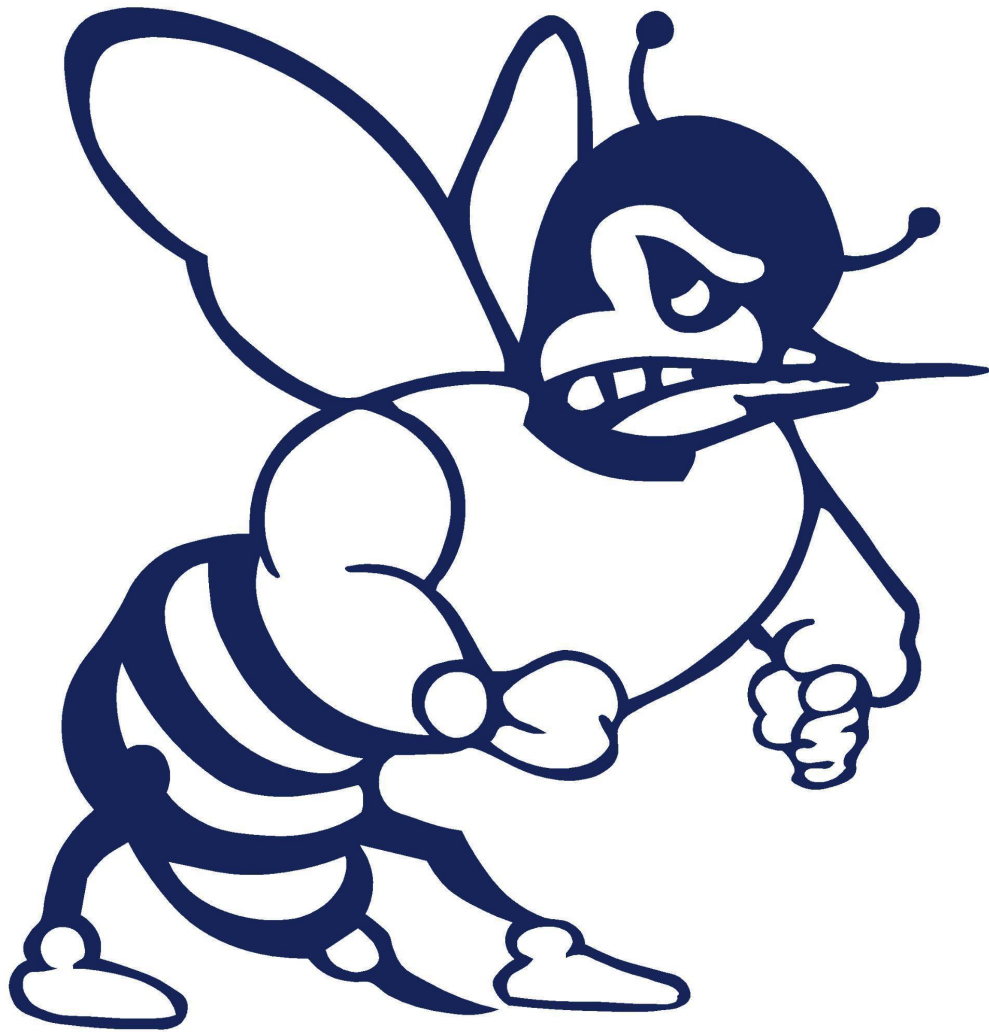


Highland ISD  
District Dyslexia Plan



2023-2024

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## **I. Definition of Dyslexia**

Texas Education Code (TEC) § 38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders in the following way:

*“Dyslexia” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.*

*“Related disorders” includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.*

The International Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia in the following way:

*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).*

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in phonological awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Consequences may include difficulties in phonological awareness that are unexpected for the student’s age and educational level, and are not primarily the result of language difference factors. Additionally, there is often a **family history** of similar difficulties.

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

- Difficulty reading words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored without prosody)
- Difficulty spelling

It is important to note that students demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all the characteristics listed above.

The reading/spelling characteristics are most often associated with the following:

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
- Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory)
- Rapid recalling the name of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming)

Consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written language
- Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences

## **II. State and Federal Law Regarding Early Identification and Intervention Prior to Formal Assessment**

Both state and federal legislation emphasize early identification and intervention for students who may be at risk for reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.

### **State Requirements**

In accordance with TEC §28.006, Reading Diagnosis, Highland 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 seventh grade to any student who did not demonstrate proficiency on the sixth-grade state reading assessment.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003, Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia requires that all kindergarten and first-grade public school students be screened for dyslexia and related disorders. Additionally, the law requires that all students beyond first grade be screened or tested as appropriate. 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.

In response to the screening requirements of HB 1886, the SBOE amended its rule in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.28 requiring evaluations to be conducted by appropriately trained and qualified individuals.

Highland ISD will notify the parent or guardian of each student in kindergarten, first grade, or second grade who is determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties based on the results of the reading instruments. In accordance with TEC §28.006(g), Highland ISD offers an accelerated reading instruction program to these students. Any student may be referred for a full individual and initial evaluation under IDEA at any time, regardless of the results of the screening instrument.

### **Federal Requirements**

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 provision in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that requires the state to have policies and procedures in place to ensure that every student in the state who needs special education and related services is located, identified, and evaluated. The purpose of the IDEA is to ensure that students with disabilities are offered a free and appropriate public education (20 U.S.C. §1400(d); 34 C.F.R. §300.1). Because a student suspected of having dyslexia may be a student with a disability under the IDEA, the Child Find mandate includes these students. Therefore, when referring and evaluating students suspected of having dyslexia, LEAs must follow procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA.

### **III. Procedures for Assessment of Dyslexia**

Students enrolling in Highland ISD shall 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 parents' or guardians' input. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19TAC§74.28).

While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

Because a student suspected of having dyslexia may be a student with a disability under the IDEA, Highland ISD will follow procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA.

Highland ISD will seek parental consent for a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE).

**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
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations or interventions provided
- Academic progress reports (report cards)
- Gifted/Talented assessments
- Samples of schoolwork
- Parent conference notes
- Results of kindergarten-grade 1 universal screening
- K-2 reading instrument results as required in TEC§28.006
- Testing for limited English proficiency (all years available)
- Speech and language assessment
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading instrument results as required in TEC§28.006
- State student assessment program as described in TEC§39.002
- Observations of instruction provided to the student
- Previous evaluations
- Outside evaluations
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures

- Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction
- Screening data
- Parent survey
- Data that support the student received conventional instruction and that the difficulties are not primarily the result of sociocultural factors which include language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background

When formal evaluation is recommended, Highland ISD must complete the evaluation process as outlined in the IDEA. Procedural safeguards under IDEA must be followed.

- If a parent gives consent for the FIIE, HISD will conduct the FIIE within 45 school days (subject to limited exceptions) of the date of receipt of parent consent, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier I) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.
- If a parent does not give consent for a FIIE, HISD will seek parental consent for a Section 504 evaluation, while continuing to provide grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction (Tier I) and providing appropriate tiered interventions.

### **Domains to Assess**

Highland 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 Specific to Dyslexia**

- Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
- Reading words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar words accurately
- Reading fluency (rate, accuracy, and prosody)
- Reading comprehension
- Spelling

## **Cognitive Processes**

- Phonological/phonemic awareness
- Rapid naming

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

- Vocabulary
- Listening comprehension
- Verbal expression
- Written expression
- Handwriting
- Memory for letter or symbol sequences (Orthographic processing)
- Mathematical/calculation reasoning
- Phonological memory
- Verbal working memory
- Processing speed

**English Language 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 Language Learners (ELLs). 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 required.

Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Language Learners:

- 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))



- o Type of language programming provided and language of instruction
- o Linguistic environment and second-language acquisition development
- o Previous schooling in and outside of the United States

Additional assessment when assessing English Language Learners:

- Comprehensive oral language proficiency testing should be completed for a dyslexia evaluation due to the importance of the information for consideration in relation to academic challenges, planning the assessment, and interpreting assessment results.

Test instruments, and other evaluation materials must meet the following criteria:

- Be validated for the specific purpose for which the tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials are used
- Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely materials that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient
- 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
- Be 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 (anecdotal records, district assessments, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)
- Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
- Be used for the purpose for which the assessment or measures are valid or reliable
- 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

### **Interpretation:**

Test results of English Language Learners (ELLs) will be interpreted in light of the student's: language development (in both English and the student's native language), educational history, linguistic background, socioeconomic issues, nature of the writing system and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

### **IV. Interpretation and Identification of Students with Dyslexia**

The admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee will convene to interpret test results.

When considering the condition of dyslexia, in addition to the required ARD committee members, the committee must include members with specific knowledge regarding:

- The reading process
- Dyslexia and related disorders
- Dyslexia instruction

A determination must first be made regarding whether a student's difficulty 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 (both rate and/or accuracy)
- Spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia)

If the committee determines 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** for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities, sociocultural factors, language difference, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate effective classroom instruction.

If, through the evaluation process, it is established that the student has the condition of dyslexia, as described previously, then the student meets the first prong of eligibility under the IDEA (identification of condition). In other words, the identification of dyslexia, using the process outlined previously, meets the criterion for the condition of a specific learning disability in basic reading and/or

reading fluency. However, the presence of a disability condition alone is not sufficient to determine if the student is a student with a disability under the IDEA. Eligibility under the IDEA consists of both identification of the condition and a corresponding need for specially designed instruction as a result of the disability.

In IDEA, dyslexia is considered one of a variety of etiological foundations for specific learning disability (SLD). Section 34 C.F.R. §300.8(c)(10) states the following:

*Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.*

The IDEA evaluation requirement for SLD eligibility in 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.

Once the condition of dyslexia has been identified, a determination must be made regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student. If a student with dyslexia is found eligible for special education (i.e., student requires specially designed instruction), 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 instruction.

If the student requires special education because of the identified IDEA eligible condition, the student is eligible for special education. The ARD committee develops the IEP for the student to receive specially designed instruction which can include any appropriate special education and related services, and general education programs and services, including standard protocol dyslexia instruction. While an IEP is individualized to the student, the IEP should address critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction such as phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. The determination of eligibility and the development of an IEP, if the student is eligible, must be done

within 30 days (subject to limited exceptions) from the date that the written FIIE evaluation report is completed. HISD will obtain parental consent for special education services.

If-based on the data-the student is identified with dyslexia, but is not eligible for special education, the student may receive dyslexia instruction and accommodations under Section 504.

A student who is found not eligible under the IDEA, but who is identified with the condition of dyslexia through the FIIE process will not be referred for a second evaluation under Section 504. Instead, the Section 504 committee will use the FIIE and develop an appropriate plan for the student without delay.

For students eligible for Section 504, a Section 504 committee will develop the student's Section 504 Plan, which must include appropriate reading instruction to meet the individual needs of the student. Revision of the 504 Plan will occur as the student's response to instruction and to the 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).

## **V. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia**

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, HISD 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." SBOE rule in 19 TAC § 74.28 requires that each school must provide an identified student access at his/her campus to an instructional program that meets the requirements in SBOE rule and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. While the components of instruction for students with dyslexia include good teaching principles for all teachers, the explicitness and intensity of the instruction, fidelity to program descriptors, grouping formats, and training and skill of the teachers are wholly different from core classroom instruction and must be considered when making individual placement decisions.

### **Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction**

For the student who has not benefited from the research-based core reading instruction, the components of instruction will include additional focused

intervention as appropriate for the reading needs of the student with dyslexia. 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. It is important to remember that while dyslexia instruction is most successful when provided as early as possible, older children with reading disabilities will also benefit from focused and intensive remedial instruction.

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. As is the case with any instructional program, differentiation that does not compromise the fidelity of a program may be necessary to address different learning styles and ability levels and to promote progress among students receiving dyslexia instruction. While districts and charter schools must implement an evidence-based instructional program for students with dyslexia that meets each of the components described in this chapter, standard protocol dyslexia instruction provided to students may focus on components of the program that best meet the student's needs. For example, this may occur when a student with dyslexia who has participated in standard protocol dyslexia instruction in the past, but continues to need remediation in some, but not all of, the components (e.g. fluency, written expression).

### Specially Designed Instruction

For students with dyslexia who have been determined eligible for and who are receiving special education services, specially designed instruction must also address the critical, evidence-based components described in this chapter. Specially designed instruction differs from standard protocol dyslexia instruction

in that it offers a more individualized program specifically designed to meet a student's unique needs. Note that participation in standard protocol dyslexia instruction must be considered for all students, including those receiving dyslexia instruction under the IDEA. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction could be part of the specially designed instruction and services provided to meet the student's needs.

### 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).

## **Delivery of Dyslexia Instruction**

While it is necessary that students are provided instruction in the above content, 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, HISD ensures those who provide intervention for students

with dyslexia are trained in the program used and that the program is implemented with fidelity.

### **Instructional Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

HISD students with dyslexia who receive dyslexia instruction that contains the components described in this chapter will be better equipped to meet the demands of grade-level or course instruction. In addition to dyslexia instruction, accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom.

*Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodation.* Listed below are examples of reasonable classroom accommodations:

- Copies of notes (e.g., teacher- or peer-provided)
- Note-taking assistance
- Additional time on class assignments and tests
- Reduced/shortened assignments (e.g., chunking assignments into manageable units, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)
- Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions
- Priority seating assignment
- Oral reading of directions or written material
- Word banks
- Audiobooks
- Text to speech
- Speech to text
- Electronic spellers
- Electronic dictionaries
- Formula charts
- Adaptive learning tools and features in software programs.

Accommodations are changes to materials, actions, or techniques, including the use of technology, that enable students with disabilities to participate meaningfully in grade-level or course instruction. The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet the needs of each student. A student may need accommodation throughout the school year and over several years including beyond graduation.



Decisions about which accommodations to use are very individualized and should be made for each student by that student's ARD or Section 504 committee, as appropriate. Students can, and should, play a significant role in choosing and using accommodations. Students need to know what accommodations are possible, and then, based on knowledge of their personal strengths and limitations, they are given the opportunity to select and try accommodations that might be useful for them. The more input students have in their own accommodation choices, the more likely it is that they will use and benefit from the accommodations.

## **VI. Student Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria**

The §504 committee or ARD committee determines dismissal from direct dyslexia services. The committee considers the following factors when recommending exiting or reduction of dyslexic services:

- Completion of the district dyslexia program
- The reevaluation and/or post-testing of the student shows student growth to be closer to grade level proficiency standards (NOTE: Reevaluation does not mean reassessing to establish the identification of dyslexia, but rather viewing data that supports student progress and achievement.)
- The student demonstrates self-monitoring/self-correction behaviors as evidenced through informal observation by teacher and/or dyslexia teacher
- The student passed the reading portion of the state assessment (NOTE: passing the reading portion of the state assessment is never the sole source for exiting dyslexia services)
- Committee recommendation
- Parent request in writing that the student exit the program

If a student has shown substantial progress and the §504 committee or ARD committee determines the student is ready to be dismissed completely from direct dyslexia services, a dismissal form will be completed and placed in the child's cumulative folder. The student will receive monitoring services for one year following dismissal.

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

- Progress reports
- Report cards

- State assessment data
- Teacher reports/checklists
- Parent reports/checklists
- Counselor reports
- Other program reports
- Additional assessment data

The §504 committee or ARD committee will convene annually to monitor student progress and discuss appropriate accommodations to support the student

## **VII. District Contact**

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