

McGregor I.S.D.

Dyslexia Program Procedures



Fall 2023

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I. Definition of Dyslexia

The student who struggles with reading and spelling often puzzles teachers and parents.

The student displays the ability to learn in the absence of print and receives the same classroom instruction that benefits most children; however, the student continues to struggle with some or all of the many facets of reading and spelling. This student may be a student with 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” include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)

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

The International Dyslexia Association defines “dyslexia” in the following way:

Dyslexia is 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 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 Association Board of Directors, November 12, 2002

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Consequences may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression. These difficulties in phonological awareness 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.

II. Primary Characteristics of Dyslexia

The following are the 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 individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all the characteristics listed above.

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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)
- Rapidly recalling the names 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

III. Common Risk Factors Associated with Dyslexia

If the following behaviors are unexpected for an individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities, they may be risk factors associated with dyslexia. A student with dyslexia usually exhibits several of these behaviors that persist over time and interfere with his/her learning. A family history of dyslexia may be present; in fact, recent studies reveal that the whole spectrum of reading disabilities is strongly determined by genetic predispositions (inherited aptitudes) (Olson, Keenan, Byrne, & Samuelsson, 2014).

The following characteristics identify risk factors associated with dyslexia at different stages or grade levels.

Pre-school

- Delay in learning to talk
- Difficulty with rhyming
- Difficulty pronouncing words (e.g., "pusgetti" for "spaghetti," "mawn lower" for "lawnmower")
- Poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
- Difficulty adding new vocabulary words
- Inability to recall the right word (word retrieval)
- Trouble learning and naming letters and numbers and remembering the letters in his/ her name
- Aversion to print (e.g., doesn't enjoy following along if a book is read aloud)

Kindergarten and First Grade

- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts, or syllables (e.g., "baseball" can be pulled apart into "base" "ball" or "napkin" can be pulled apart into "nap" "kin")
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables (e.g., "man" sounded out as /m/ /ă//n/)
- Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling their corresponding sounds •

Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)

- Difficulty spelling words the way they sound (phonetically) or remembering letter sequences in very common words seen often in print (e.g., "sed" for "said")

Second Grade and Third Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty recognizing common sight words (e.g., "to," "said," "been")
- Difficulty decoding single words
- Difficulty recalling the correct sounds for letters and letter patterns in reading
- Difficulty connecting speech sounds with appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., "after" spelled "eftr")
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)

- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Difficulty with written expression

Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty reading aloud (e.g., fear of reading aloud in front of classmates)
- Avoidance of reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Acquisition of less vocabulary due to reduced independent reading
- Use of less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell than more appropriate words (e.g., “big” instead of “enormous”)
- Reliance on listening rather than reading for comprehension

Middle School and High School

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty with the volume of reading and written work
- Frustration with the amount of time required and energy expended for reading
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Difficulty with written assignments
- Tendency to avoid reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

Postsecondary

Some students will not be identified as having dyslexia prior to entering college. The early years of reading difficulties evolve into slow, labored reading fluency. Many students will experience extreme frustration and fatigue due to the increasing demands of reading as the result of dyslexia. In making a diagnosis for dyslexia, a student’s reading history, familial/genetic predisposition, and assessment history are critical. Many of the previously described behaviors may remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty pronouncing names of people and places or parts of words
- Difficulty remembering names of people and places
- Difficulty with word retrieval
- Difficulty with spoken vocabulary
- Difficulty completing the reading demands for multiple course requirements
- Difficulty with note taking
- Difficulty with written production
- Difficulty remembering sequences (e.g., mathematical and/or scientific formulas)

Since dyslexia is a neurobiological, language-based disability that persists over time and interferes with an individual’s learning, it is critical that identification and intervention occur as early as possible.

IV. Identification

In accordance with TEC 28.006 and TEC 39.023, MISD administers Universal Screening to assess all students, Kindergarten through 7th, to identify students potentially at risk for reading difficulties and/or related disorders. Furthermore, Kindergarten and First Grades are screened for reading difficulties and/or dyslexia and related disorder tendencies in accordance with HB 1886 and TEC 38.003.

- Screening is completed for Kindergarten at the end of the school year and focuses on measuring letter sound knowledge or letter naming fluency AND phonological awareness.
- Screening for First Grade is completed by January 31st of each year and focuses on measuring word reading accuracy and fluency AND phonological awareness
- Screening for 2nd Grade through Fifth Grade is measured with a beginning of the year assessment and focuses on measuring oral reading fluency.
- Screening for 6th and 7th Grade is measured with a beginning of the year assessment and focuses on reading comprehension. This screener is given to all incoming 6th and 7th grade students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the fifth or sixth-grade state reading assessment, respectfully.

When determining which screening instruments to use, MISD follows the guidelines set forth in TEC 28.006. MISD always considers the primary language of the student when determining which language to screen. All screenings are administered by trained, qualified personnel at the campus level. Screening is not a formal evaluation. It is a way to identify students that struggle to learn when provided appropriate instruction.

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 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 McGregor ISD will initiate procedures to recommend these students for assessment for dyslexia.

Figure 2.3. Student Behaviors Observed During Screening

- Lack of automaticity
- Difficulty sounding out words left to right
- Guessing
- Self-correcting
- Inability to focus on reading
- Avoidance behavior

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V. Referral Process

Any time that a student continues to struggle with one or more components of reading, McGregor 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
- Reading unit assessments
- Accommodations provided by classroom teachers
- Academic progress reports and/or report cards
- Samples of school work
- Parent conferences
- Testing for Limited English Proficiency
- Speech and language screening through a referral process
- The K-2 reading instrument as described in TEC §28.006
- State student assessment program as described in TEC §39.002

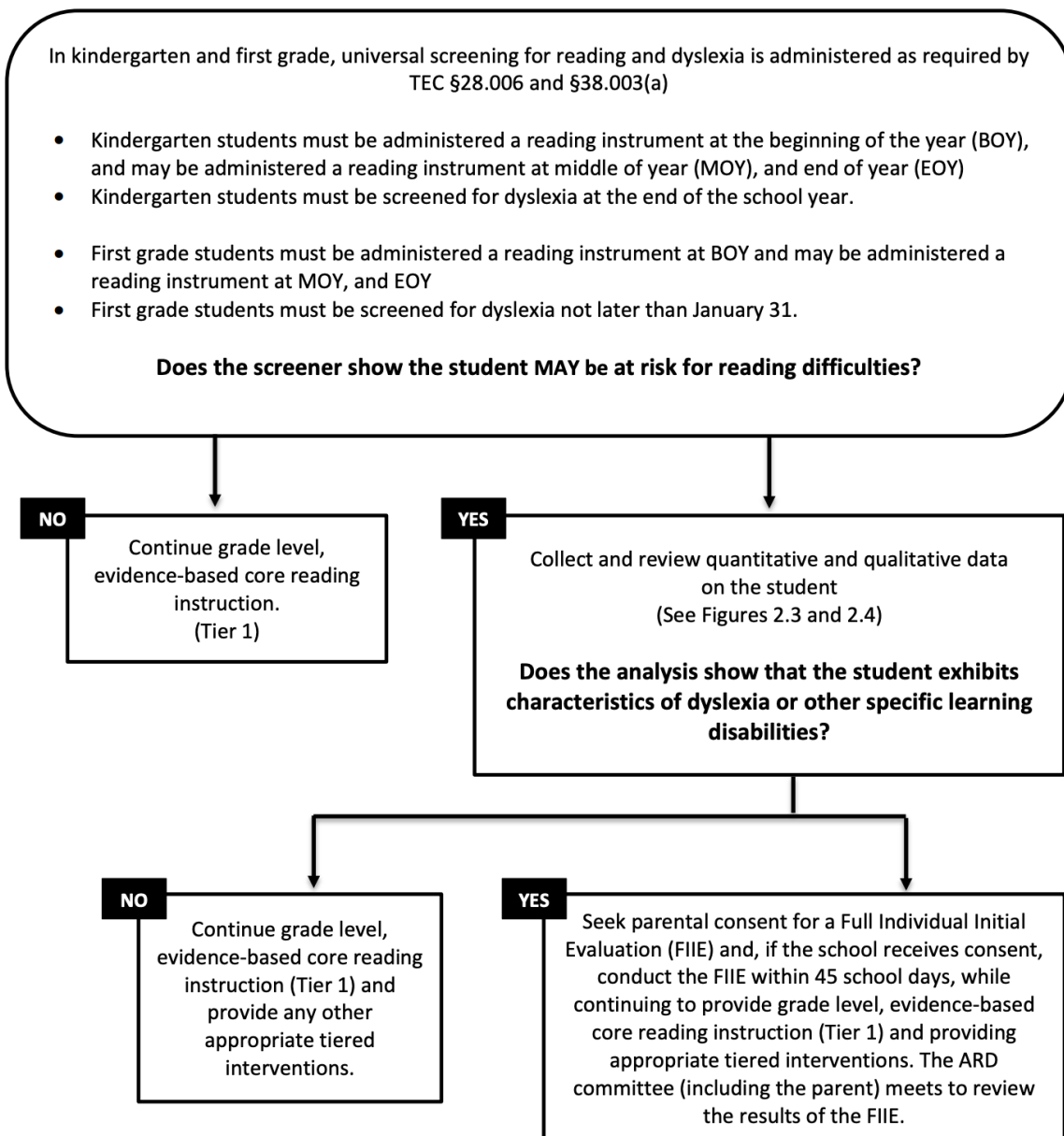
Figure 2.4. Sources and Examples of Screening Data	
Quantitative Information	Qualitative Information
<p>Results of—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current screening instruments ● Previous screening instruments ● Formal and informal classroom reading assessments ● Additional brief and targeted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

Data must support that the student has 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 McGregor ISD has available for the student is a recommendation that the student be assessed for dyslexia. McGregor ISD may recommend 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.

Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk



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VI. Evaluation Procedures

The following procedures for formal evaluation include:

1. Consideration for English Learners
2. Notification and permission from parents or guardians outlined in the IDEA Procedural Safeguards.
3. Assessing the 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).
4. Review and Interpretation of the Data and Evaluations
5. Identification of Dyslexia

Areas for Evaluation

Academic Skills

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

Cognitive Processes

- Phonological/phonemic awareness
- Rapid naming of symbols or objects

Possible Additional Areas:

- 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

Timeline for Assessment

The following timeline applies to students referred through the special education program:

- Upon receipt of parent permission to assess until assessment is completed shall be within 45 school days.

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- From the completion of the assessment to the ARD committee meeting for determination of dyslexia and program placement shall be within 30 calendar days.

VII. Components of Instruction

McGregor ISD utilizes the Reading by Design Program for all students identified with dyslexia. The instructional program will be offered in a small class setting and include reading, writing, and spelling. The major instructional strategies will utilize individualized, intensive, and multisensory methods. Components of instruction 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 patterns of language so that words and sentences are 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 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
- 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

VIII. Student Monitoring and Program Exit Criteria

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

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program(s). 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, teacher and/or parent observations/checklists, and individual dyslexia program requirements.

Students that have completed the McGregor ISD dyslexia program will receive ongoing monitoring throughout their MISD enrollment.

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

No one factor is sufficient to warrant exiting a student from direct Dyslexia services. Dismissal is determined by consensus of the committee of knowledgeable persons. 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 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 teacher;
- The student passed the reading portion of the state assessment (suggested two consecutive years);
- Committee recommendation;
- A parent requests in writing that the student exit the program.

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

IX. Dysgraphia

Definitions and Characteristics

Dysgraphia is best defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder manifested by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. This difficulty is the result of deficits in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms) (Berninger, 2015). Secondary consequences may include problems with spelling and written expression. The difficulty is not solely due to lack of instruction and is not associated with other

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developmental or neurological conditions that involve motor impairment.

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 (IDA, 2012). (*The Dyslexia Handbook, 2021 Update, p. 60*)

Characteristics of Dysgraphia

- Problems with motor planning and sequencing and low volume of written work.
- 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
- Difficulty recalling the starting and stopping points of letter strokes
- Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting

Additional Consequences of Dysgraphia

- 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 (e.g. intellectual disability, autism, cerebral palsy)
- Secondary to a medical condition (e.g. meningitis, significant head trauma, brain trauma)
- Association with generalized developmental motor or coordination difficulties (Developmental Coordination Disorder)
- Impaired spelling or written expression with typical handwriting (legibility and rate)

Process for Identification and Evaluation

Some students who struggle with handwriting may actually have dysgraphia. Dysgraphia may occur alone, or with dyslexia. TEC §38.003(b) states that the board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder, which includes dysgraphia.

The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow a similar pathway as identifying dyslexia (See Sections IV-VI). At any time a parent may request a Special Education referral.

Questions to guide the Identification of Dysgraphia

- 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?
- Does the pattern indicate the student has dysgraphia?
- Does the student meet eligibility as a student with a disability under IDEA?

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Instruction for Students with Dysgraphia

Students with dysgraphia will need to be explicitly taught handwriting. Instruction will need to include both manuscript and cursive handwriting delivered in small groups. An effective dysgraphia intervention will include

- Showing students how to hold a pencil.
- Modeling efficient and legible letter formation.
- Providing multiple opportunities for students to practice effective letter formation.
- Using scaffolds, such as letters with numbered arrows showing the order and direction of strokes.
- Having students practice writing letters from memory.
- Providing handwriting fluency practice to build students' automaticity.
- Practicing handwriting in short sessions.

Contact Information

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