

West Rusk CCISD

DYSLEXIA HANDBOOK



Revised 2019

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West Rusk CCISD

MISSION STATEMENT

The West Rusk CCISD public education system is devoted to ensuring that all its children, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap, have access to quality education by providing a well-balanced curricula in a safe environment free of drugs, violence, and fire arms, designed to equip students with the tools and understanding necessary to successfully negotiate the challenges to work and life as presented by an ever changing society.

West Rusk CCISD

DISTRICT GOALS

- **GOAL 1** – Improve student academic achievement
- **GOAL 2** – Improve student progress in Reading and Math
- **GOAL 3** – Close the student achievement gap among all populations
- **GOAL 4** – Prepare all students for postsecondary education through a rigorous curriculum and instructional programs
- **GOAL 5** – Family and community engagement
- **GOAL 6** – The district will implement and update a comprehensive plan for meeting student learning needs through technology
- **GOAL 7** – Create a safe school culture and climate
- **GOAL 8** – Staff quality, recruitment, and retention

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Dyslexia Mission Statement

The mission of West Rusk Dyslexia Department is to:
Provide all eligible students with dyslexia with the multi-sensory and phonological awareness skills necessary to compensate for deficiencies in the areas of reading, writing, and spelling, in order to nurture a strong self-esteem and to provide opportunities for them to develop their talents.

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DYSLEXIA PROGRAM GOALS

West Rusk CCISD strives to have an exemplary dyslexia program for students enrolled in grades K – 12. Through a responsiveness to intervention process, WRCCISD monitors students on a regular basis utilizing formal and informal observations, student data and other assessments including but not limited to the TPRI, Tejas Lee, benchmarks, etc., and/or written evidence of curriculum-based monitoring (CBM).

Pursuant to the TEA's The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, students being referred for consideration of dyslexia should have demonstrated age appropriate developmental progress and have received appropriate instruction in reading, including but not limited to accelerated reading programs as required by the state. Schools must recommend evaluation for dyslexia if the student demonstrates poor performance in one or more areas of reading and spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade and if the student exhibits the characteristics and risk factors of dyslexia as outlined in Ch. 1 of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update. All students in kindergarten and 1st grade are specifically screened for dyslexia at the end of the school year pursuant to TEC §38.003(a). Progression through Rtl is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia. Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time.

West Rusk ISD is committed to the development and implementation of a dyslexia program that addresses both the Texas Education Code at §38.003 and the Texas Administrative Code at §74.28.

Addressing West Rusk CCISD's commitment, the following reflect the goals of the district dyslexia program:

- Screen, refer and evaluate students in K – 12 who may be at-risk of dyslexia and related disorders;
- Provide instructional treatment options for students identified with dyslexia and related

Disorders:

- Provide staff development that includes:
 - o Understanding the characteristics of dyslexia;
 - o Evaluation process for the identification of dyslexia;
 - o Instruction of students with dyslexia; and
 - o Intervention strategies and accommodations.
- Provide a parent education program pursuant to 19 TAC §74.28(k) that includes:
 - o Awareness and characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders;
 - o Information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia and related disorders;
 - o Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia

- o and related disorders;
- o Information on qualifications of those delivering services to students with dyslexia and related disorders;
- o Awareness of information on accommodations and modifications, including those allowed for standardized testing;
- o Information on eligibility, evaluation requests, and services available under IDEA, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and information on the RtI process;
- o Contact information for the relevant regional and/or school district specialist.
- Provide parents with additional information on the following:
 - o Copy of or a link to The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update;
 - o Information of effective strategies and options for parents to use at home to effectively communicate and help their child with dyslexia and related disorders; and
 - o Information on accommodations allowed for post-secondary testing (PSAT/ACT/SAT).

Objective: All campuses, through an individualized referral process, will identify students with dyslexia and related disorders and provide appropriate, individualized services based on the results of a comprehensive evaluation conducted according to the guidelines outlined in TEA's The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, and according to state and federal laws implementing Section 504 and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

PATHWAYS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND PROVISION OF INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENT WITH DYSLEXIA

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

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

Universal Screening Process Universal screener for reading and dyslexia*

A referral may be made at any point under either Section 504 if a disability is suspected or IDEA if a disability and a corresponding need for special education services are suspected.

*Testing and screening in accordance with TEC §28.006 and §38.003(a)

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

For more information: The Dyslexia Handbook 2018 Update, TEA

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SCREENING

The early identification of students with dyslexia along with corresponding early intervention programs for these students will have significant implications for their future academic success. In the book *Straight Talk about Reading*, Hall and Moats (1999) state the following:

- Early identification is critical because the earlier the intervention, the easier it is to Remediate.
- Inexpensive screening measures identify at-risk children in mid-kindergarten with 85 percent accuracy.
- If intervention is not provided before the age of eight, the probability of reading Difficulties continuing into high school is 75 percent (pp. 279-280).

Research continues to support the need for early identification and assessment (Birsh, 2018; Sousa, 2005; Nevills & Wolfe, 2009). The rapid growth of the brain and its responsiveness to instruction in the primary years make the time from birth to age eight a critical period for literacy development (Nevills & Wolfe, 2009). Characteristics associated with reading difficulties are connected to spoken language. Difficulties in young children can be assessed through screenings of phonemic awareness and other phonological skills (Sousa, 2005). Additionally, Eden (2015) points out that “when appropriate intervention is applied early, it is not only more effective in younger children, but also increases the chances of sparing a child from the negative secondary consequences associated with reading failure, such as decline in self-confidence and depression.”

Dyslexia Screening

Universal Screening

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

Texas Education Code §38.003 mandates that kindergarten students be screened at the end of the school year. In scheduling the kindergarten screener, districts and charter schools should consider the questions in Figure 2.1 from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update* below:

Figure 2.1 Considerations for Local Scheduling of Dyslexia Screening

- Has adequate time for instruction provided during the school year?
- Has adequate time been provided to compile data prior to the end of the school year?
- How will the timing of the administration of the screener fit in with the timing of other required assessments?
- Has sufficient time been provided to inform parents in writing of the results of the Reading instrument and whether the student is at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties?
- Has adequate time been provided for educators to offer appropriate interventions to the

Student?

- Has sufficient time been provided for decision making regarding next steps in the screening process? (For information regarding next steps, refer to Figure 2.5, Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk Flowchart.)

Texas Education Code §38.003 does not explicitly state when first grade students must be screened. The SBOE, through approval of the rule which requires adherence to The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update (§74.28), has determined that students in first grade must be screened no later than the middle of the school year. Screening of first-grade students can begin anytime in the fall as the teacher deems appropriate. Grade 1 screening must conclude no later than January 31 of each year.

The timing of the grade 1 screening is designed to ensure that students are appropriately screened, and if necessary, evaluated further so that reading difficulties can be addressed in a timely manner. Because kindergarten is not mandatory in the State of Texas, some students will not have been enrolled in kindergarten and will therefore not have been screened prior to the first grade. Waiting too long in the first-grade year would delay critical early intervention for students at risk for dyslexia or reading difficulties. Screening of first grade students by the middle of the school year will ensure that sufficient time is provided for data gathering, evaluation, early intervention, etc. to meet the needs of students. Conducting the grade 1 screening no later than the middle of the school year will allow districts and charter schools to complete the evaluation process with enough time for interventions to be provided to the student prior to the end of first grade.

Other Related Disorders

It is important to note that, while TEC §38.003 requires that all students in kindergarten and grade 1 be screened for dyslexia and related disorders, at the time of The Dyslexia Handbook update it was determined there are no grade-level appropriate screening instruments for dysgraphia and the other identified related disorders. For more information on dysgraphia, refer to Chapter V: Dysgraphia in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update.

Local District Requirements

Each district may have additional policies and procedures in place regarding screening and evaluating students for dyslexia and related disorders. This handbook reflects the procedures used in WRCCISD for the screening, evaluation and identification of students with dyslexia and related disorders.

Child Find

In addition to state and local requirements to screen and identify students who may be at risk for dyslexia, there are also overarching federal laws and regulations to identify students with disabilities, commonly referred to as Child Find. Child Find is a set of provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that requires, in part, that states

have processes in place for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities who may need special education and related services. The purpose of IDEA is to ensure a free and appropriate public education for children with disabilities (20 U.S.C. §1400(d); 34 C.F.R. §300.1).

Another federal law that affects children with disabilities in public school is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as Section 504. Under Section 504, public school must annually attempt to identify and locate every qualified person with a disability residing in its jurisdiction and to notify persons with disabilities and/or their parents of the requirements of Section 504.

It is important to note that IDEA and Section 504 separately define what it means to be a “child with a disability” and a “qualified disabled person.” As these are different definitions and different laws, questions regarding this information should be directed to campus or district special education personnel and Section 504 coordinators. For more information on federal Child Find requirements, please refer to the IDEA/Section 504 Side-by-Side Comparison provided in Appendix D of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update.

Kindergarten-Grade 1 Universal Screening: Administration

The importance of early interventions for students with reading difficulties cannot be overstated. In order for early interventions to be provided, a student must first be identified as at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties. While educators once delayed identification of reading difficulties until the middle elementary grades, recent research has encouraged the identification of children at risk for dyslexia and reading difficulties “prior to, or at the very least, the beginning of formal reading instruction” (Catts, 2017).

The requirement in TEC §38.003 that all kindergarten and first grade students be screened for dyslexia and related disorders is aligned with this shift to identify students at risk for dyslexia and reading difficulties when they are just beginning their formal education. Universal screeners generally measure reading or literacy-related skills such as sound-symbol recognition, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and other skills. The International Dyslexia Association (2017) describes screening instruments as follows:

Screening measures, by definition, are typically brief assessments of a skill or ability that is highly predictive of a later outcome. Screening measures are designed to quickly differentiate students into one of two groups: 1) those who require intervention and 2) those who do not. A screening measure needs to focus on specific skills that are highly correlated with broader measures of reading achievement resulting in a highly accurate sorting of students.

International Dyslexia Association, Universal Screening: K-2 Reading, 2017

Screening Instruments

While screening instruments can measure the skills and abilities of students at different grade levels, this section is dedicated to a discussion of instruments that may meet the dyslexia

screening requirement for kindergarten and first grade students. As previously mentioned, at the time of the update to The Dyslexia Handbook, November 2018, it was determined there are no grade-level appropriate screening instruments for dysgraphia and the other identified related disorders. As a result, the focus of this section is on screening instruments for dyslexia and reading difficulties.

It is important that screening instruments be accurate and comprehensive; however, they need not be as comprehensive as an extensive individualized evaluation. With this in mind, various types of instruments that meet the criteria in Figure 2.2 from The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update could be used to screen for dyslexia.

In developing the criteria for the kindergarten and grade 1 screening instruments for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, it was important to differentiate between the skills and behaviors appropriate at each grade level. Additionally, with a sizeable English Learner (EL) population in Texas, it was essential that Spanish language screening instruments be addressed. Therefore, criteria for both English and Spanish speakers are included.

Screener Criteria

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

Figure 2.2 Criteria for English and Spanish Screening Instruments

Kindergarten

- Phonological Awareness
- Phonemic Awareness
- Sound-Symbol Recognition
- Letter Knowledge
- Decoding Skills
- Spelling
- Listening Comprehension

First Grade

- Phonological Awareness
- Phonemic Awareness
- Sound-Symbol Recognition
- Letter Knowledge
- Decoding Skills
- Spelling
- Reading Rate
- Reading Accuracy
- Listening Comprehension

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

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

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

Selecting an Appropriate Screening Instrument

Screening instruments must include a measure for each of the skills noted above. Instruments that meet each of the criteria will be included on the Commissioner's List of Reading instruments. A district or charter school must select for use an instrument from the commissioner's list. In determining which screening instrument to use, a district or charter school must consider the primary language of the student and other factors as determined by the local district or school.

Administration of Screening Instruments

Who May Administer the Dyslexia Screener

A district or charter school must ensure that appropriately trained and qualified individuals administer and interpret the results of the selected screening instrument. Please note that an educational aide is NOT eligible to administer or interpret the dyslexia screening instrument. Individuals who administer and interpret the screening instrument must, at a minimum, meet the following qualifications:

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

BEST PRACTICE: Whenever possible, the student's current classroom teacher should administer the screening instrument for dyslexia and reading difficulties.

Training

The individual who administers and interprets the screening instrument must receive training designed specifically for the selected instrument in the following:

- Characteristics of dyslexia and other reading difficulties
- Interpretation of screening results and at-risk indicators and decisions regarding placement/services

When to Administer the Dyslexia/Reading Screener

Districts and charter schools must implement a screening program that includes each of the following:

- Screening of each student in kindergarten at the end of the school year
- Screening of each student in the first grade no later than January 31

For more information on considerations regarding the scheduling of the mandated dyslexia screening, please refer to Part A, Dyslexia Screening on p. 10 of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update.

Kindergarten-Grade 1 Universal Screening: Interpretation

The importance of early intervention cannot be overstated. Intervening early, before difficulties become intractable, offers the best hope for successful outcomes and prevention of long-term deficits. The purpose of screening is to help identify, as early as possible, the students at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties so that targeted intervention can be provided. Screening alone will never improve outcomes for students. The screening must lead to effective instruction for it to be useful. Therefore, once the screening has been administered the next steps are to analyze results, identify level of risk for each student, and make informed decisions. The next steps are broadly categorized as: refer for evaluation, implement targeted intervention, and/or continue with core instruction.

There are several important factors to consider when interpreting screening results. First, it is important to remember that there is no definitive test score that invariably identifies dyslexia. Dyslexia is a neurobiological disorder that exists along a continuum of severity. Similar to diabetes or hypertension, dyslexia is identified based on how far an individual's condition departs from the average range. This makes the identification of dyslexia more challenging than identifying other forms of disability.

Second, it is important to keep the definition and goals of screening in mind. The purpose of screening is to differentiate a smaller set of individuals who may be at risk for dyslexia. Screening, by definition, should never be the final determination of whether a student has dyslexia. Therefore, screening tools must be brief, efficient, and cost effective. Subsequent

consideration of other data and information with the smaller group is then used to determine next steps. However, it is key to remember that “screening” represents the initial step in the process. Dyslexia identification, as addressed in Chapter III of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, should be individualized and based on multiple pieces of information, including results of the screening.

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

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

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

For students who are identified as at risk for dyslexia, the school should provide targeted intervention provided by the appropriate staff as determined by the district or charter school. The district or school should also continue the data collection and evaluation process outlined in Chapter III, Procedures for the Evaluation and Identification of Students with Dyslexia of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update. It is important to note that the use of a tiered intervention process, such as Response to Intervention or RtI, must not be used to delay or deny an evaluation for dyslexia, especially when parent or teacher observations reveal the common characteristics of dyslexia.

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

Screening Data Gathering

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

Figure 2.4 Sources and Examples of Screening Data

Quantitative Information	Qualitative Information
Results of -	• Observations of students during screening.
• Current screening instruments	(See Figure 2.3, Student Behaviors Observed During Screening)
• Previous screening instruments	• Other observations of student progress
• Formal and informal classroom reading Assessments	• Teacher observations
• Additional brief and targeted skill Assessments	• Parent/guardian input (e.g., family history, early language skills)
	• Current student work samples
	• Work samples from earlier grade(s)
	• Intervention history

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

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

Interpretation of Data

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

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

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

The Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk flowchart found in Figure 2.5 of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update on page 17 provides information regarding the decisions schools will make for each student as the school reviews screening results. It is important to remember that any point in the process a referral for a dyslexia evaluation may be made either under Section 504 if a disability is suspected or under IDEA if a disability and a corresponding need for special education services are suspected. Regardless of the process in place for screening and data review, a student may be recommended for a dyslexia evaluation whenever accumulated data indicates that the student continues to struggle with one or more of the components of reading. Parents/guardians have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation under IDEA or Section 504 at any time. Districts must ensure that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of tiered interventions or RtI.

Best Practices in Ongoing Monitoring

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

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

Compensation

Some older students may not appear at first to exhibit the characteristics of dyslexia. They may demonstrate relatively accurate, but not fluent, reading. Awareness of this developmental pattern is critically important for the diagnosis in older children, young adults, and beyond. According to Sally Shaywitz, examining reading fluency and reading rate would provide more accurate information for these students.

Twice Exceptionality

Twice-exceptional students may not initially appear to be at risk for dyslexia. Twice exceptional, or 2e, is a term used to describe students who are both intellectually gifted and learning disabled, which may include students with dyslexia. Parents and teachers may fall to notice either giftedness or dyslexia in a student as the dyslexia may mask giftedness or the giftedness may mask the dyslexia.

The International Dyslexia Association's Gifted and Dyslexic: Identifying and Instructing the Twice Exceptional Student Fact Sheet (2013), identifies the following common characteristics of twice-exceptional students:

- Superior oral vocabulary
- Advanced ideas and opinions
- High levels of creativity and problem-solving ability
- Extremely curious, imaginative, and questioning
- Discrepant verbal and performance skills
- Clear peaks and valleys in cognitive test profile
- Wide range of interests not related to school
- Specific talent or consuming interest area
- Sophisticated sense of humor

For additional information twice-exceptional students, see Chapter IV: Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*

For a description of common risk factors of dyslexia that may be seen in older students refer to Chapter I:

Definitions & Characteristics of Dyslexia in *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update*.

Best Practices in Progress Monitoring

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

West Rusk CCISD

PROCEDURES FOR THE EVALUATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

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

Procedures Required by State and Federal Law Prior to Formal Evaluation

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

The Referral Process for Dyslexia and Related Disorders

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

Data-Driven Meeting Knowledgeable Persons

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

districts and/or campuses. For example, the team may be called a student success team, student support team, student intervention team, or even something else. This team of knowledgeable persons is not an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee or a Section 504 committee, although many of these individuals may be on a future committee if the student is referred for an evaluation and qualifies for services and/or accommodations.

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

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

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

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

Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction includes the critical, evidence-based components of and delivery methods for dyslexia instruction addressed in detail in Chapter IV of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update. Components of this instruction include, among other things, phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. Principles for effective delivery of content must be consistent with research-based practices, including a multisensory, systematic, cumulative, and explicit approach. Standard protocol dyslexia instruction is not specially designed instruction. Rather, it is programmatic instruction delivered to a group of students. Refer to Chapter IV of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update for more information on Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction.

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

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

If the team determines that the data lead to the suspicion of a disability and that special education services are necessary to provide specially designed instruction, they must refer the student for an evaluation under IDEA. It is important to note that a student with dyslexia who is

served through special education should also receive dyslexia instruction (as described in Chapter IV, Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update) that is individualized to meet the student's unique needs.

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

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

Dyslexia Referral Timelines

When a referral for a dyslexia evaluation is made under IDEA, Texas state law establishes that a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) must be completed within 45-school days from the time a district or charter school receives consent. Section 504, however, does not require specific timelines. Therefore, it is beneficial for districts to consider the timelines Texas has established for special education evaluations through TEC §29.004(a). The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) looks to state timelines as a guideline when defining a “reasonable amount of time” should a complaint be filed regarding evaluation procedures.

As referenced in the 2011 letter from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to the State Directors of Special Education, states have an obligation to ensure that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of the RtI process (Musgrove, 2011). For more information, please visit www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/osep11-07rtimemo.pdf.

It is important to note that progression through a response to intervention process is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia. The use of tiered intervention may be part of the identification and data collection process, but it is not required and must not delay or deny an evaluation for dyslexia, especially when parent or teacher observations reveal the common characteristics of dyslexia. A district or charter school must move straight to evaluation under either Section 504 if they suspect a student has a disability or under IDEA if they suspect a disability and a corresponding need for special education services. Tiered interventions and initiation or continuation of evaluation can occur simultaneously. The needs of the student must be the foremost priority. Frequently, a child with dyslexia may be making what appears to be progress in the general education classroom based on report card grades or minor gains on progress measures. While various interventions may prove to be helpful in understanding the curriculum, a child with dyslexia also requires intervention to address the child's specific reading disability. If using a tiered intervention process, RtI should include dyslexia intervention once dyslexia is identified.

Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia evaluation has been made, the school district is obligated to review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is reason to suspect the student has a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student needs to be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in Chapter 3 of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update. IDEA and Section 504 have different requirements that must be followed if the school does not suspect a disability and determines that evaluation would not be warranted. Under IDEA, schools must give parents prior written notice of a refusal to evaluate, including an explanation of why the school refuses to conduct an initial evaluation, the information that was used as the basis for the decision, and a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. Section 504 does not require prior written notice; however, best practice is to provide a parent with an explanation of the reasons an evaluation is denied. OCR recommends that districts be able to provide documentation that the denial was based on data to support there is no disability. For additional information regarding identification and procedural safeguards under IDEA and Section 504, refer to Appendix D, IDEA/Section Side-by-Side Comparison in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update.

Procedures for Evaluation

The identification of reading disabilities, including dyslexia, will follow one of two procedures. School districts and charter schools must make decisions based on data and the unique needs of each student. School districts and charter schools may evaluate for dyslexia through either IDEA or Section 504. If a student is suspected of having a disability and the determination is made to evaluate through IDEA, all special education procedures must be followed. Procedural processes require coordination among the teacher, campus administrators, diagnosticians, and other professionals as appropriate when factors such as a student's English language acquisition, previously identified disability, or other special needs are present. Under IDEA, the referral of a student for an evaluation should be made by a committee or team with knowledge of the child and may include other individuals as appropriate. When evaluation occurs under Section 504, it is best practice to include on the committee or in the team making the determination the same members that IDEA requires, including the parent or guardian. The Pathways for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia flowchart in Figure 3.8 (pg. 35 of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update or on page 2-2 of this District Guideline) illustrates the process for determining the appropriate supports needed by students with dyslexia.

Pursuant to TEC §38.003(a), all public-school students are required to be screened for dyslexia while in kindergarten and grade 1. Additionally, students enrolling in public schools in Texas must be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders "at appropriate times" (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance; reading difficulties; poor response to supplemental, scientifically-based reading instruction; teachers' input; and input from parents/guardians. The appropriate time for

assessing is early in a student's school (19 TAC §74.28). Texas Education Code §28.006, Reading Diagnosis, requires assessment of reading development and comprehension for students in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and as applicable, seventh grade. While earlier is better, students should be recommended for evaluation for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

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

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

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

1. Data Gathering

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

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

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

Cumulative Data

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

information from parents/guardians. Sources and examples of cumulative data are provided in Figure 3.2 from The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update.

Figure 3.2 Sources and Examples of Cumulative Data

- 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 as required in TEC §38.003(a)
- K-2 reading instrument results as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)
- 7th grade reading instrument results as required §28.006
- State student assessment program results as described TEC 39.022
- Observations of instruction provided to the student
- Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE)
- Outside evaluations
- Speech and language assessment
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Instructional strategies provided and Student's response to instruction
- Screening
- Parent survey

Environmental and Socioeconomic Factors

Information regarding a child's early literacy experiences, environmental factors, and socioeconomic status must be part of the data collected throughout the data gathering process. These data supports the determination that difficulties in learning are not due to cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantage. Studies that have examined language development and the effects of home experiences on young children indicate that home experiences and socioeconomic status have dramatic effects on cumulative vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 1995). Having data related to these factors may help in determining whether the student's struggles with reading are due to a lack of opportunity or a reading disability, including dyslexia.

Language Proficiency

Much diversity exists among EIs. A student's language proficiency may be impacted by any of the following: native language, English exposure, parent education, socioeconomic status of the family, amount of time in the United States, experience with formal schooling, immigration status, community demographics, and ethnic heritage (Bailey, Heritage, Butler, & Walqui, 2000). EIs may be students served in bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) programs as well as students designated Limited English Proficient (LEP) whose parents have denied services. In addition to the information discussed in the previous section, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) maintains documentation (TAC §89.1220(g)-(i)) that is necessary to consider when identifying EIs with dyslexia. The LPAC is required to meet annually to review student placement and progress and consider instructional accommodations

and interventions to address the student's linguistic needs. Since the identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be aligned to the student's linguistic environment and educational background, involvement of the LPAC is required. Additional data sources for EIs are provided below in Figure 3.3 from The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update:

Figure 3.3 Additional Data Sources for English Learners

- Home Language Survey
- Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency (oral language proficiency test and norm-referenced tests) – all years available
- Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) information for four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- Instructional interventions provided to address language needs
- Information regarding previous schooling inside and/or outside the United States
- Type of language program model provided and language of instruction

2. Initial Evaluation Pathway

WRCCISD must make data-informed decisions that reflect the input of staff and parents for every student on an individual basis, every time. Our district must consider all resources and services based on student needs. WRCCISD must carefully consider all the relevant student data to gauge the level of impact that a student's specific presentation of dyslexia or a related disorder will have on the student's ability to access and make progress in the general curriculum. If it is suspected or known that the student may need special education because of suspected dyslexia or a related disorder, the parent/guardian must be given a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards and sign consent before the student is evaluated under IDEA. If the district or school suspects that the student may need interventions and accommodations specific to their suspected dyslexia or a related disorder rather than special education services, then the student can be evaluated under Section 504.

A student's reading difficulties alone may warrant evaluation under IDEA. At times, students may display additional, potential learning challenges, such as oral language deficits, written expression difficulties (dysgraphia), or math difficulties (dyscalculia), which may further impact student learning. These challenges may also warrant an evaluation under IDEA. Students who are currently eligible under IDEA and have an individualized education program (IEP) and who are now suspected of having dyslexia or a related disorder must undergo reevaluation under IDEA.

3. Formal Evaluation

After data gathering, the next step in the process is formal evaluation. This is not a screening; rather, it is an individualized evaluation used to gather specific data about the student. Formal evaluation includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence that indicates dyslexia. Information collected from the parents/guardians also provides valuable insight into the student's early years of language

development. This history may help explain why students come to the evaluation with many different strengths and weaknesses; therefore, findings from the formal evaluation will be different for each child. Professionals conducting evaluations for the identification of dyslexia will need to look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom reading performance, educational history, early language experiences, and when warranted, academic potential to assist with determining reading, spelling, and writing abilities and difficulties.

Notification and Permission

When formal evaluation is recommended, the school must complete the evaluation process as outlined in IDEA or Section 504. Procedural safeguards under IDEA and Section 504 must be followed. For more information on procedural safeguards, see Appendix D, IDEA/Section 504 Side-by-Side Comparison in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, and TEA's Parent Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process (Parent's Guide) or OCR's Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools which are available at your child's campus.

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

Tests and Other Evaluation Materials

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

- Used for the purpose for which the evaluation or measures are valid or reliable
- Include material(s) tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely material(s) that are designed to provide a single, general intelligence quotient
- Selected and administered to ensure that when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude, achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
- Selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory
- Include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion-referenced evaluations, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations)
- Administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials
- Provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information regarding what the child can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer

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

- Knowledge of first and second language acquisition theory
- Knowledge of the written system of the first language: transparent (e.g., Spanish, Italian, German); syllabic (e.g., Japanese-kana); Semitic (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew); and morphosyllabic (e.g., Chinese-Kanji)
- Knowledge of the student's literacy skills in native and second languages
- Knowledge of how to interpret results from a cross-linguistic perspective
- Knowledge of how to interpret TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System) results
- Knowledge of how to interpret the results of the student's oral language proficiency in two or more languages in relation to the results of the tests measuring academic achievement and cognitive processes as well as academic data gathered and economic and socioeconomic factors

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

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

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

Domains to Assess

Academic Skills

The school administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Difficulties in the areas of letter knowledge, word decoding, and fluency (rate, accuracy, and prosody) may be evident depending upon the student's age and stage of reading development. In addition, many students with dyslexia may have difficulty with reading comprehension and written composition.

Cognitive Processes

Difficulties in phonological and phonemic awareness are typically seen in students with dyslexia and impact a student's ability to learn letters and the sounds associated with letters, learn the alphabetic principle, decode words, and spell accurately. Rapid naming skills may or may not be weak, but if deficient, they are often associated with difficulties in automatically naming letters, reading words fluently, and reading connected text at an appropriate rate. Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words (orthographic processing) may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses. Finally, various language processes, such as morphemes and syntax awareness, memory and retrieval of

verbal labels, and the ability to formulate ideas into grammatical sentences, may also be factors affecting reading (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, pp. 134-135).

Possible Additional Areas

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

Figure 3.4 Areas for Evaluation

Academic Skills	Cognitive Processes	Possible Additional Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological/phonemic awareness • Rapid naming of symbols or objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Procedures for Identification

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

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

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

Additionally, committee members must have knowledge regarding:

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

Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluations

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

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

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

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

Another factor to consider when interpreting test results is the student’s linguistic background. The nature of the writing system of a language impacts the reading process. Thus, the identification guideposts of dyslexia in languages other than English may differ. For example, decoding in a language with a transparent written language (e.g., Spanish, German) may not be as decisive an indicator of dyslexia as reading rate. A transparent written language has a close letter/sound correspondence (Joshi & Aaron, 2006). Students with dyslexia who have or who are being taught to read and write a transparent language may be able to decode real and nonwords adequately but demonstrate serious difficulties in reading rate with concurrent deficiencies in phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming (RAN).

Figure 3.5 Dyslexia in Transparent and Opaque Orthographies

<u>Opaque</u>	<u>Transparent</u>
Early and marked difficulty with word-level reading	Less difficulty with word-level reading
Fluency and comprehension often improve once decoding is mastered	More difficulty with fluency and comprehension

Figure 3.6 Characteristics of Dyslexia in English and Spanish

English	Spanish
Phonological awareness	Phonological awareness - may be less pronounced
Rapid naming	Rapid naming
Regular/irregular decoding	Decoding – fewer “irregular words” in
Fluency	

Spelling

Spanish

Fluency – often a key indicator

Spelling – may show fewer errors than in

English, but still more than students that do not have dyslexia

Reading comprehension may be a weakness in both English and Spanish.

Findings support guidance in the interpretation of phonological awareness test scores.

There is evidence that blending skills develop sooner than analysis skills, and that students can have good blending skills and inadequate reading development. Only when both blending and analysis skills are mastered do we see benefits for reading development.

--Kilpatrick, D.A. Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, And Overcoming Reading Difficulties, 2015.

With this in mind, when determining phonological awareness deficits, evaluation personnel should examine subtest scores, including discreet phonological awareness skills, instead of limiting interpretation to composite scores since a deficit in even one skill will limit reading progress.

Based on the above information and guidelines, should the Section 504 or ARD 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 in relation to the student's other abilities, sociocultural factors, language difference, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate and effective instruction. For example, the student may exhibit strengths in areas such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, math reasoning, or verbal ability yet still have difficulty with reading and spelling. Therefore, it is not one single indicator but a preponderance of data (both informal and formal) that provide the committee with evidence for whether these difficulties are unexpected.

Dyslexia Identification

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

Figure 3.7 Questions to Determine the Identification of Dyslexia

- Do the data show the following characteristics of dyslexia?
 - o Difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading
 - o Poor spelling skills
 - o Poor decoding ability
- Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in the phonological component of Language?

(Please be mindful that average phonological scores alone do not rule out dyslexia.)

- Are these difficulties unexpected for the student's age in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction?

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

Review of Evaluation by Section 504 Committee

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

Based on the student's pattern of performance over time, test evaluation results, and other relevant data (e.g., Rtl and classroom data, observations, etc.) the committee will determine whether the student meets Section 504 eligibility criteria. For eligible students, the Section 504 committee will develop the student's Section 504 Plan, which must include appropriate reading instruction as appropriate to meet the individual needs of the student. Appropriate reading instruction includes the components and delivery of standard protocol dyslexia instruction identified in Chapter IV: Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction from The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update. The Section 504 committee will also consider whether the student requires additional accommodations and/or related services for the provision of FAPE. Revision of the Section 504 Plan will occur as the student's response to instruction and use of accommodations, if any, is observed. Changes in instruction and/or accommodations must be supported by current data (e.g., classroom performance and dyslexia program monitoring).

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

Within 30 calendar days of completion of the written evaluation report, the ARD committee will determine whether a student who has dyslexia is eligible under IDEA as a student with a specific learning disability (19 TAC §89.011(d)). A student with dyslexia has a disability under IDEA if the student meets the criteria for a specific learning disability (discussed in greater detail below) and, because of dyslexia or a related disorder, needs special education. The October 23, 2015 letter from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) (Dear Colleague: Dyslexia Guidance) states that dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia are conditions that could qualify a child as a child with a specific learning disability under IDEA. The letter

further states that there is nothing in IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents. For more information, please visit:

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>.

A 2018 Letter to the Administrator addressed from the Texas Education Agency regarding the provision of services for students with dyslexia and related disorders states that anytime it is suspected that a student requires special education or related services to provide appropriate reading supports and interventions, a referral for a FIEE should be initiated. The “letter” further states that all students who are identified with dyslexia or a related disorder and who require special education services because of dyslexia or a related disorder should be served under the IDEA as students with a specific learning disability. For more information, please visit:

https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/Provision_of_Services_for_Students_with_Dyslexia_and_Related_Disorders_-_Revised_June_6,_2018/

In IDEA, dyslexia is considered one of a variety of etiological foundations for specific learning disability (SLD). 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 term SLD does not apply to children who have learning difficulties that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disabilities; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

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

If a student with dyslexia found eligible for special education, the student’s IEP must include appropriate reading instruction. Appropriate reading instruction includes the components and delivery of dyslexia instruction discussed in Chapter IV: Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction from The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update. If a student has previously met special education eligibility and is later identified with dyslexia, the ARD committee should include in the IEP goals that reflect the need for dyslexia instruction and determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student’s dyslexia intervention.

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

The Pathways flowchart (found in Figure 3.8 on pg. 35 of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update

and also found in the WRCCISD District Guidelines on pg. 2-2) illustrates a process for determining the instructional support needed by students with dyslexia. While the process may begin with an initial screening, screening is NOT required to proceed through the evaluation and identification process. A special education evaluation should be conducted whenever it appears to be appropriate, including upon request from the parent/guardian. Some students will not proceed through all the steps before being referred for a FIIE or Section 504 evaluation. A dyslexia evaluation may be incorporated into the FIIE through special education.

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

Reevaluation for Dyslexia Identification and Accommodations

Dyslexia is a lifelong condition. However, with proper help, many people with dyslexia can learn to read and write well. Early identification and treatment is the key to helping individuals with dyslexia achieve in school and in life.

--The International Dyslexia Association

<http://www.interdys.org/ewebeditpro5/upload/DyslexiaBasicREVMay2012.pdf>

Texas Education Code §38.003(a) was originally passed in 1985 to ensure that students enrolling in public schools in this state are tested for dyslexia and related disorders. In 2011, Senate Bill 866 added into law Subsection (b-1) to ensure that districts consider previously collected data before reevaluating students already identified as having dyslexia. The 85th Texas Legislature in 2017 further amended this provision to clarify requirements related reevaluation.

TEC §38.003(b-1) reads as follows:

Unless otherwise provided by law, a student determined to have dyslexia during screening or testing under section (a) or accommodated because of dyslexia may not be rescreened or retested for dyslexia for the purpose of reassessing the student's need for accommodations until the district reevaluates the information obtained from previous screening or testing of the student.

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

There are many initiatives, programs, evaluations, and data available for use in identification, placement, and program planning for students, including ELs, who struggle with dyslexia. Evaluation and ongoing progress monitoring are key components that must be considered by trained personnel.

A 2014 U.S. Department of Justice technical assistance document summarized regulations regarding testing accommodations for individuals with disabilities as follows:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to fairly compete for and pursue such opportunities by requiring testing entities to offer exams in a manner accessible to persons with disabilities. When needed testing accommodations are provided, test-takers can demonstrate their true aptitude.

West Rusk CCISD

INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

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

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

Texas Education Code §38.003(b) states, “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 rules in 19 TAC §74.28 require 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 and 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 Ch. IV: Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction, The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, 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).

For students with dyslexia ho been determined eligible for and who are receiving special education services, specially designed instruction must also address the critical, evidence-based components described in Ch. IV of The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update. 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.

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 the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar, sentence variation, and the mechanics of language” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).
- **Reading comprehension** – Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader with the text to be comprehended and the specific purpose for reading. The reader’s skill in reading comprehension depends upon the development of accurate and fluent word recognition, oral language development (especially vocabulary and listening comprehension), background knowledge, use of appropriate strategies to enhance comprehension and repair it if it breaks down, and the reader’s interest in what he or she is reading and motivation to comprehend its meaning (Birsh, 2018, p. 14; Snow, 2002).
- **Reading fluency** – “Reading fluency is the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension” (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 52). Fluency also includes prosody. Teachers can help promote fluency with several interventions that have proven successful in helping students with fluency (e.g., repeated readings, word lists, and choral reading of passages) Henry, 2010, p. 104).

In addition, other areas of language processing skills, such as written expression, which require integration of skills, are often a struggle for students with dyslexia. Moats and Dakin (2008) posit the following:

The ability to compose and transcribe conventional English with accuracy, fluency, and clarity of expression is known as basic writing skills. Writing is dependent on many language skills and processes and is often even more problematic for children than reading. Writing is a language discipline with many component skills that must be directly taught. Because writing demands using different skills at the same time, such as generating language, spelling, handwriting, and using capitalization and punctuation, it puts a significant demand on working memory and attention. Thus, a student may demonstrate mastery of these individual skills, but when asked to integrate them all at once, mastery of an individual skill, such as handwriting, often deteriorates. To write on demand, a student has to have mastered, to the point of being automatic, each skill involved (p. 55).

Both the teacher of dyslexia and the regular classroom teacher should provide multiple opportunities to support intervention and to strengthen these skills; therefore, responsibility for teaching reading and writing must be shared by classroom teachers, reading specialists, interventionists, and teachers of dyslexia programs.

Delivery of Dyslexia Intervention

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

- **Simultaneous, multisensory (VAKT)** – “Teaching is done using all learning pathways in the brain (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) simultaneously in order to enhance memory and learning” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26). “Children are actively engaged in learning language concepts and other information, often by using their hands, arms, mouths, eyes, and whole bodies while learning” (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58).

- **Systematic and cumulative** – “Multisensory language instruction requires that the organization

material follow order of the language. The sequence must begin with the easiest concepts and most basic elements and progress methodically to more difficult material. Each step must also be based on [elements] already learned. Concepts taught must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).

- **Explicit instruction** – “Explicit instruction is explained and demonstrated by the teacher one language and print concept at a time, rather than left to discovery through incidental encounters with information. Poor readers do not learn that print represents speech simply from exposure to books or print” (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58). Explicit instruction is “an approach that involves direct instruction: The teacher demonstrates the task and provides guided practice with immediate corrective feedback before the student attempts the task independently” (Mather & Wendling, 2012, p. 70).

- **Diagnostic teaching to automaticity** – “The teacher must be adept at prescriptive or individualized teaching. The teaching plan is based on careful and [continual] assessment of the individual’s needs. The content presented must be mastered to the degree of automaticity” (Birsh, 2018, p. 27). “This teacher knowledge is essential for guiding the content and emphasis of instruction for the individual student” (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58). “When a reading skill becomes automatic (direct access without conscious awareness), it is performed quickly in an efficient manner” (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 70).

- **Synthetic instruction** – “Synthetic instruction presents the parts of the language and then teaches how the parts work together to form a whole” (Birsh, 2018, p. 27).

- **Analytic instruction** – “Analytic instruction presents the whole and teaches how this can be broken into its component parts” (Birsh, 2018, p. 27).

As appropriate intervention is provided, students with dyslexia make significant gains in reading. Effective instruction is highly-structured, systematic, and explicit, and it lasts for sufficient duration. With regard to explicit instruction, Torgesen (2004) states, “Explicit instruction is instruction that does not leave anything to chance and does not make assumptions about skills and knowledge that children will acquire on their own” (p. 353).

In addition, because effective intervention requires highly structured and systematic delivery, it is critical that those who provide intervention for students with dyslexia be trained in the program used and that the program is implemented with fidelity.

Teachers of students with dyslexia in WRCCISD shall be prepared to utilize these techniques and strategies. These teachers may also serve as trainers and consultants in the area of dyslexia and related disorders to regular, remedial, and/or special education teachers so long as such duties do not prevent the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with the student's Section 504 plan or special education IEP. All plans, whether Section 504 or IDEA, must be implemented as written meeting fidelity standards for the teacher. "The delivery of a dyslexia program must be in accordance with the way the program was designed to be delivered. Therefore, when a district has purchased a program, the amount of time for instruction/intervention reflected in the author's/publisher's program mandates the amount of time required to deliver the instruction (e.g., 45 minutes, 5 times per week)." (The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, Question #51, p. 89). Dyslexia programs supplement a student's

ELA program – it does NOT replace it. The dyslexia program may not be delivered to a student during the time that student's core curriculum subjects are being provided. Any and all dyslexia services specified in the student's written plan shall be made up with the exception of absences due to student illness or school cancellation. Teacher absences due to illness, meetings and/or trainings shall require said services for students to be scheduled for makeup. This is an issue of FAP.

West Rusk CCISD

GUIDELINES FOR TRANSITIONING ENGLISH LEARNERS IN THE DYSLEXIA PROGRAM

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

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

Dyslexia, as defined by both the Texas Education Code and the International Dyslexia Association, is neurobiological in nature. This means that the individual is born with it. Therefore, it stands to reason that once an individual is identified with dyslexia, he/she will require continued support, regardless of the language of instruction. The Bilingual Time and Treatment Guidelines in the regular education setting is crucial for all ELs, but especially so for students who are exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia in their native language. A hasty transition into the English reading curriculum may compound the reading difficulties. A student who has been evaluated in Spanish and identified with dyslexia must attend Spanish dyslexia services. In order to gain benefit from the Spanish dyslexia intervention services, the student should also be receiving Spanish reading instruction in the regular education bilingual classroom. The Spanish dyslexia intervention program extends over a two-year period and to remove the student prematurely would compromise the fidelity of the program. The campus LPAC should be cautious when considering changes to the bilingual category of a student who has been identified with dyslexia and is attending the Spanish dyslexia intervention program. When the LPAC has determined that the transition period is appropriate for these students, it is recommended that the Esperanza Transitional Lessons be implemented in the dyslexia program before initiating the standard protocol dyslexia intervention program curriculum. Since the student must exhibit average to high average English listening comprehension skills, this measure ensures that the dyslexia English curriculum does not become an ESL program.

For ELs who were not considered for dyslexia evaluation when they were receiving Spanish reading instruction, it is critical that when they transition into English reading that we do not confuse English learners with students who are dyslexic. They may have some of the same characteristics of dyslexia and require some of the same types of instruction. However, the root of the characteristics is quite different.

West Rusk CCISD

DISTRICT PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS PRESENTING OUTSIDE INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS FOR DYSLEXIA SERVICES

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

The outside independent evaluation must:

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

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

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

- The student has passed the hearing screening. This screening must be current, and the student must be able to hear, and process sounds normally. "Students must possess the ability to distinguish the difference between sounds – the sounds of language (phonemes) and the sounds of noise – and the ability of the phonological module to distinguish speech from non-speech words."
(Overcoming Dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz, pgs. 48-49.)
- The student has passed the vision screening with or without correction (i.e., glasses, contacts). Screening must be current, and students must be able to see the written word and differentiate between letters. (Overcoming Dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz, pg. 50; Learning Disabilities – From Identification to Intervention, Jack M. Fletcher, pgs. 92 – 94.)
- The classroom teacher can provide a list of academic concerns for the student and the Student exhibits of the characteristics of dyslexia. The Teacher Interview for Student At-Risk for Dyslexia (Dyslexia Screening Checklist) is sufficient to determine general characteristics of dyslexia.
- Effective classroom instruction and interventions have previously been provided by the Classroom teacher. Previous interventions, including the receipt of an accelerated reading program as defined by TEC §28.006 should be documented

by the classroom teacher or through a response to intervention process. However, progression through Rtl is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia (The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, p. 23).

- All EL students, depending on their bilingual category, must receive appropriate instruction based on their LEP category. The LPAC Committee determines and documents the student's bilingual category. A current TELPAS, LAS, etc. score is necessary. It is the expectation that the LEP student possesses Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) before being dismissed from the bilingual program. If the student does not possess CALP and/or the additional data being submitted indicates language acquisition as a factor for the student's current concerns, the request for dyslexia evaluation may be refused (The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, pgs. 27,29).
- Parents must be provided with written information concerning their child's difficulties in Reading and must have been informed about the accelerated (intensive) reading program and/or interventions that appropriately addresses the student's reading difficulties and enables them to catch up with their typically performing peers (TEC §28.006(g)(h), The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, pgs. 24, 100-101). In addition, parents must provide the school with written consent for the dyslexia evaluation to be conducted under either Section 504 or IDEA (The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, p. 28).
- Frequently due to sociocultural factors such as irregular attendance or lack of Experiential backgrounds, students will be referred to as being a child with a disability. Both Section 504 and IDEA prohibit referrals for disability based on irregular attendance or lack of experiential background and/or other sociocultural factors (34 C.F.R., Appendix Part 104 Definitions; 34 C.F.R. §300.306; The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, p. 26).

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

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

West Rusk CCISD

DISTRICT PROCEDURES FOR SERVING IN-STATE OR OUT OF STATE TRANSFERS

FOR STUDENTS IDENTIFIED WITH DYSLEXIA

IN-STATE STUDENT TRANSFERS:

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

1. Receiving campus must have written documentation from the previous school district that student has been identified as a student with dyslexia as outlined in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update.
2. Receiving campus must have written documentation from the previous school district that the student has a current Section 504 plan.
3. West Rusk CCISD, upon receipt of the written documentation outlined in items 1 and 2, will provide the student with FAPE (free and appropriate public education) as defined under Section 504 including services comparable to those described in the student's Section 504 plan) from the previous school district UNTIL the current school district either:
 - a. Formally adopts the student's Section 504 plan by a duly constituted campus Section 504 committee pursuant to district procedures implementing Section 504 ; or
 - b. Develops, adopts and implements a new Section 504 plan that meets the applicable requirements including the determination of whether:
 - i. New or additional testing is required;
 - ii. Previous testing presented to the current school district is not older than one year;
 - iii. Previous testing meets the requirements as outlined in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update; and
 - iv. Previous testing meets the standards and procedures implemented by West Rusk CCISD.
4. The timeline for completing the procedures outlined above shall be 30 instructional days from the date the student is verified as being a student with dyslexia and eligible for dyslexia and Section 504 services.

STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM OUT OF STATE:

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

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

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

a. Conducts an evaluation pursuant to the procedures outlined in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018, Section 504, and West Rusk CCSD procedures for evaluating students with dyslexia; and

b. Develops, adopts and implements a new Section 504 plan, if appropriate, that meets the applicable requirements pursuant to the procedures outlined in The Dyslexia Handbook, 2018 Update, and Section 504.

4. The timeline for completing the procedures outlined above shall be 45 instructional days from the date the student is verified as being a student with dyslexia.

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

- The student has passed the hearing screening. This screening must be current, and the student must be able to hear, and process sounds normally. "Students must possess the ability to distinguish the difference between sounds – the sounds of language (phonemes) and the sounds of noise – and the ability of the phonological module to distinguish speech from non-speech words." (Overcoming Dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz, pgs. 48 – 49).

- The student has passed the vision screening with or without correction (i.e., glasses, contacts). This screening must be current, and the student must be able to see the written word and differentiate between letters. (Overcoming Dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz, p. 50; Learning Disabilities – From Identification to Intervention, Jack M. Fletcher, pgs. 92 – 94).

- Data indicating that student's difficulties are not due to LEP issues and/or sociocultural factors such as irregular attendance or lack of experiential backgrounds.

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

West Rusk CCISD

DYSLEXIA INTERVENTION OR DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTION EXIT CRITERIA

Student: _____ ID#: _____ DOB: _____ Gr: _____ Campus: _____
Date of Meeting: _____

Standard protocol dyslexia intervention program services (SPDI) or dyslexia specially designed instruction (SDI) services exit must be based on a comprehensive and thorough consideration of a preponderance of student data that meets most, or all of the criteria outlined below. Either the Campus Section 504 Committee or the ARD Committee (based on which program student is being served by) can make the decision to exit a student from the District's dyslexia SPDI or SDI if a preponderance of evidence is available to support such a decision.

YES NO 1. Student has met standards on the STAAR/EOC Reading Writing tests for at least two years;

AND

YES NO 2. Student is reading at grade level as measured by a Reading Inventory Measure from the District's dyslexia SPDI or SDI program and classroom administered fluency checks;

AND

YES NO 3. The student has completed/mastered all the objectives in the District's dyslexia SPDI or SDI program;

AND

YES NO 4. Student's reading teacher indicates student's grades and performance in the Regular reading program demonstrates that there is no longer an education concern or need for placement through the SPDI or SDI program;

AND

YES NO 5. Student's dyslexia teacher, regular reading program teacher (or ELA) and parents are in agreement that student no longer has an educational need for the SPDI or SDI program.

YES NO

N/A

6. Student demonstrates minimal to no measurable progress in the District's SPDI or SDI program and/or an inability to grasp the concepts taught in the support services after consistent implementation and is demonstrating regression. This must be supported by documentation of parent conferences as well as progress reports on the impact of the SPDI or SDI services on student learning. This lack of progress must be documented in either the student's Section 504 committee minutes or ARD minutes. Student must be referred for further evaluation.

YES NO

N/A

7. Factors such as behavior and/or absenteeism prevent the student from benefiting from the District's SPDI or SDI program. This must be supported by documentation of parent conferences as well as progress reports on the impact of the program's interventions on student learning. This lack of benefit must be documented in either the student's Section 504 committee minutes or ARD minutes along with documentation indicating District remediation.

A student exited from SPDI or SDI program services will continue to be monitored by the dyslexia teacher on a six-week basis and may continue to require a Section 504 plan or IEP to be implemented in the general education classroom or least restrictive environment to meet their individual needs. All students receive an annual review by either the campus Section 504 Committee or ARD Committee.

A student who has been exited from the SPDI or SDI program services and begins to show regression may be reinstated back into the SPDI or SDI program by either the campus Section 504 Committee or ARD Committee.

YES NO 1. The student has met the above exit criteria

YES NO 2. The data used for making this decision is on file with this form in the student's Section 504 or Special Education folder.

YES NO 3. A parent conference was held prior to this committee decision to collect parental input.

YES NO 4. At this time, the student does NOT meet exit criteria; however, the parent has requested that the student be exited from the SPDI or SDI program. Parent has withdrawn consent for program services.

Based on the above noted data, the Section 504 Committee or ARD Committee has exited this student from the district SPDI or SDI program services, effective _____ (date).

THIS PLACEMENT DECISION WAS MADE BY A LEGALLY CONSTITUTED CAMPUS SECTION 504 COMMITTEE OR ARD COMMITTEE .

COMMITTEE SIGNATURES: Section 504 ARD

Signature

Position

Signature

Position

Signature

Position

Signature

Position

West Rusk CCISD

DYSLEXIA TEACHER ROLE

The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders, 2018 Update lists and describes the components of instruction that must be a part of a program used for students identified with dyslexia. In order to provide effective intervention, school districts are encouraged to employ highly trained individuals to deliver dyslexia instruction. Licensed dyslexia practitioners or licensed dyslexia therapists should be considered if they are available as well as certified academic language therapists or certified academic practitioners. Teachers, such as reading specialists, master reading teachers, general education classroom teachers, or special education teachers, who provide dyslexia intervention for students are not required to hold a specific license or certification. However, these educators must at a minimum have additional documented dyslexia training aligned to 19 TAC §74.28(e) and must deliver the instruction with fidelity. This includes training in critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction such as phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. In addition, they must deliver multisensory instruction that simultaneously uses all learning pathways to the brain, is systematic and cumulative, is explicitly taught, uses diagnostic teaching to automaticity, and includes both analytic and synthetic approaches.

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

English Learners (ELs) receiving dyslexia services will have unique needs. Provision of dyslexia instruction must be in accordance with the program model the student is currently receiving (e.g., dual language, transitional bilingual, ESL). Interventionists working with ELs must have additional training on the specialized needs of ELs.

“Both the teacher of dyslexia and the regular classroom teacher should provide multiple opportunities to support intervention and to strengthen these skills (critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction); therefore, responsibility for teaching reading and writing must be shared by classroom teachers, reading specialists, interventionists, and teachers of dyslexia programs.”

The Dyslexia Handbook – 2018 Update, pg. 41

Role of Dyslexia and/or Itinerant Reading Teachers

The dyslexia and/or itinerant reading teacher will:

- Deliver instructional reading programs (standard protocol dyslexia instruction/Esperanza) for identified students with dyslexia only
- Be assigned to specific campus(es) for purposes of accountability but will NOT be available to assist the campuses with campus responsibilities due to itinerant constraints

- Maintain a teacher/student ratio NOT to exceed the recommended of 1:6 per group
- Administer and gather pre/post instructional data to monitor program effectiveness and student growth in the area of reading
- Communicate with teachers, administrators and parents as needed
- Support and attend the district annual Parent Awareness Meeting
- Conduct parent training sessions
- Stay abreast of current research and development in dyslexia and research-based reading programs
- Assist in organizing and/or conducting in-services at their assigned campuses to facilitate the implementation of the dyslexia program and to ensure general classroom teacher knowledge on dyslexia
- Maintain all necessary student records required by the dyslexia program
- Comply with all state and federal laws as well as district policies
- Review dyslexia folders
- Attend all district dyslexia trainings and/or meetings
- Maintain student progress monitoring portfolios
- Review dyslexia referrals/folder for completion of required documentation prior to folder being sent to Dyslexia office. This review must be conducted in a timely manner and may only be conducted during your planning period. Time taken to review dyslexia referral folders shall not under any circumstances prevent standard protocol dyslexia intervention services teacher from providing their assigned dyslexia programs. This is a compliance/FAPE issue.

West Rusk CCISD

LEGAL ISSUES FOR DYSLEXIA TEACHERS AND CAMPUSES

Provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

A recipient that operates a public elementary or secondary education program or activity shall provide a free appropriate public education to each qualified person with a disability who is in the recipient's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability. 34 CFR §104.33

A school district's Section 504 compliance with the obligation to provide FAPE hinges on its following specific procedures in the provision of services to students with disabilities. Section 504 regulations at 34 CFR §104.33(b)(1)(ii) establish the procedural component of FAPE by requiring "*adherence to procedures that satisfy the requirements of §104.34, §104.35 and §104.36.*"

District violated Section 504 by failing to maintain guidelines for providing services to students with disabilities. [*School Admin. Unit No. 6 (1994)*].

FAPE under Section 504 is NOT bound by a cost-sensitive standard, such as reasonable accommodation. [*Response to Zirkel (1993)*; ADA, (2009)].

Insufficient staff, heavy workloads, and inadequate pay are NOT acceptable excuses for failing to provide students with disabilities with FAPE. [*Department of Public Instruction (1988)*; *Sherry v. NYS Ed. Dept. (1979)*].

Violation of Section 504 resulted from failure of student's teachers to consistently implement certain accommodations, including progress reports, provided for under Section plan. (*Inglewood (2008)*).

Student deprived of FAPE when district did not provide him with class notes as required by Section 504 plan; two teachers did not receive a copy of the plan until a month into the school year. [*Barlow County (2009)*].

Kindergarten student, who missed 30-minute block of inclusion time for at least two months, did NOT receive FAPE; shortage in time called for by the student's plan constituted material plan implementation failure. [*Norton (2009)*].

District failed to properly implement student's Section 504 plan when it failed to provide accommodations for use during the state assessment. [*Lake County (2008)*].

District inconsistently implemented services student's plan, as paraprofessional assigned to the student confirmed she was sometimes unavailable due to staffing shortages; district also did not fully disseminate copy of plan to all employees responsible for provision of services to students. [*Toltec* (2008)].

District denied FAPE to students with ADHD because Section 504 plan lacked specificity and was not distributed to staff responsible for implementing it. [*Corunna* (2005)].

In implementation cases, a denial of the FAPE regulation is triggered by substantial or fundamental alteration of a basic element of the student's program or in the level of services to the student; in this case, a failure to provide 20 percent of the child's plan for the school year met this standard. [*Minneapolis* (2003)].

Significant persons responsible for a student's accommodation plan lacked requisite knowledge and training, resulting in denial of FAPE in violation of Section 504. [*Ocean View* (1995)].

Compensatory Education

Although the majority of federal courts have held that compensatory damages are an available remedy under Section 504, they are divided on whether an award of damages must be conditioned on a showing of intentional discrimination. There is however some disagreement as to whether punitive damages are available under Section 504.

Compensatory damages are an available remedy under Section 504. [*Salinas* (2018); *Breanne C.* (2009);

A.W. v. Jersey City (2007); *Butler* (2000); *Garrett* (1996); *W.B.* (1995)].

Because Section 504 claim relied on district's denial of FAPE and nothing in the record indicated injury as a result of anything other than denial of FAPE, appropriate remedy was compensatory education, not monetary damages. [*School District of Philadelphia* (2009)].

Parents have the right to sue districts for alleged FAPE violations, as the definition of FAPE provided in the regulations further the statute's nondiscriminatory aims; parents also can seek monetary damages under Section 504 for a denial of FAPE. [*Mark H.* (2008)].

Fidelity of Program Implementation

Fidelity of Implementation – means carry out an instructional program in the manner in which it was designed. All campus teams, from the RTI core team, Section 504 committee and/or

ARD committee, are not able to analyze data and provide support if it cannot determine the appropriateness of the instruction within the classroom.

“Fidelity means that district and campus staff apply the intervention in the manner it was intended, based on how it was researched and validated. If the intervention requires a minimum of three 30-minute sessions per week and you have decided that you don’t have time but for two 30-minute sessions per week, then you have NOT met fidelity. You cannot reduce the total time or time per session or alter the materials and still maintain fidelity.” [John McCook, *The RtI Guide* (2006)].

District level teams must outline the assessments to be used in the RTI, Section 504, and/or Special Education process; devise a user-friendly format for presenting the data; articulate the interventions endorsed by the district; create a system for analyzing the data; and outline methods for accountability – particularly when intervention non-compliance occurs. [Andrea Ogonosky, *The Response to Intervention Handbook* (2008)].

Lack of fidelity/treatment integrity comprises (1) our assessment of student progress and (2) our ability to determine the efficacy of the intervention. [Brown-Chidsey and Steege, *Response to Intervention* (2010), pg. 45].

The reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act states that all reading intervention should be research-based. In order to be a valid research-based methodology, material, or strategy, the intervention must be delivered to replicate the intervention cited in the research. If it is not provided with fidelity, the intervention is no longer research-based and, thus, is out of compliance with that component of the law. “The delivery of a dyslexia program must be in accordance with the way the program was designed to be delivered. Therefore, when a district or charter school has purchased a program, the amount of time for instruction/intervention reflected in the author’s/publisher’s program mandates the amount of time required to deliver the instruction.” [*The Dyslexia Handbook*, 2018 Update, Question #51, pg. 89].

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DYSLEXIA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REQUIRED TRAINING

The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders, 2018 Update. (pg. 97) School Districts MUST do the following:

... “Provide training about dyslexia to educators and ensure that campus planning and decision making committee addresses dyslexia instructional strategies in professional development activities.” (TAC§74.28(e) and TAC §232.11)

Texas Administrative Code 19 TAC §74.28(e)

... “Teachers who screen and treat these students must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components described in the ‘Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders.’ The professional development activities specified by each open-enrollment charter school and district and/or campus planning and decision making committee shall include these instructional strategies.

Texas Administrative Code 19 TAC §74.28(i)

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

Texas Education Code TEC §21.044

... “(b) Any minimum academic qualifications for a certificate specified under Subsection (a) that require a person to possess a bachelor’s degree must also require that the person receive, as part of the curriculum for that degree, instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia.” “(c) The instruction under Subsection (b) must: ... (2) include information: (A) characteristics of dyslexia; (B) identification of dyslexia; and (C) effective, multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia.”

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

“(b) Continuing education requirements for an educator who teaches students with dyslexia must include training regarding new research and practices in educating students with dyslexia.” “(c) The training required under Subsection (b) may be offered in an online course.”

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

- Language development
- Phonology and phonemic Awareness
- Alphabetic knowledge
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Composition
- Behavior management
- Study skills
- History of English language
- Technology

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

Louisa Moats states the following:

“The knowledge and skills needed to teach reading include the following:

- The psychology of reading and reading development
 - o Basic facts about reading
 - o Characteristics of poor and novice readers
 - o Environmental and physiological factors in reading development
 - o How reading and spelling develop
- Knowledge of the language structure
 - o Phonology
 - o Phonetics
 - o Morphology
 - o Orthography
 - o Semantics
 - o Syntax and text structure
- Practical skills of instruction – use of validated instructional practices
- Assessment of classroom reading and writing skills”

Moats, L. C. (1999). Teaching reading is rocket science: What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do (Item No. 39-0372). Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.

The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update. Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas. November 2018, pg. 50.

“How reading is taught matters—reading instruction is most effective when it is taught comprehensively, systematically, and explicitly.”

National Reading Panel. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update. Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas. November 2018, pg. 50.

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DYSLEXIA PARENT AWARENESS LEGAL REQUIREMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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DYSLEXIA PARENT AWARENESS

RECOGNIZING DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is:

- One of several distinct learning disabilities.
- Of constitutional origin and is NOT the result of a generalized developmental delay or sensory impairment.
- Language-based. There is a weak sensitivity to the sounds of language (insufficient phonological processing ability).
- Characterized by having difficulty reading or decoding single words. This difficulty is unexpected for the age and in comparison to other cognitive and academic abilities. Other language skills are often variably and conspicuously impaired, particularly writing and spelling.
- A specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties 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).
- Manifested by difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and socio-cultural opportunity.

Characteristics of Dyslexia:

- Difficulty saying the alphabet correctly in sequence
- Difficulty forming the shapes of the letters
- Difficulty writing the alphabet correctly in sequence
- Errors in naming letters
- Difficulty in learning and remembering printed words
- Repeated spelling errors
- Difficulty in handwriting
- Slow rate of writing
- Difficulty with reading comprehension

Characteristics which may be associated with dyslexia:

- Delay in spoken language

- Difficulty pronouncing words with sounds in the right order
- Difficulty finding the “right” word
- Late establishing preferred writing handedness
- Late learning right, left, and other directionality components
- Problems learning concept of time and temporal sequencing
- Family history of similar problems

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Trends and Tendencies:

- Grades slip downward year-to-year
- Inconsistent grades from day-to-day
- Inconsistent performance on standardized tests
- Confusion with math symbols, but not computation
- Math computation is better than word problems
- Memorized spelling is better than spontaneous spelling
- Homework is better quality than classwork
- Inordinate time spent on homework
- Deteriorated organization and study habits
- Deteriorating motivation and self-esteem
- Good grades but too much struggle is evident
- Chooses oral performance over written when given chance
- Compensation by use of pictures, prompt from teacher, etc.
- Stress reflected by irregular writing and uneven pencil pressure

Frequent, Common or Typical Behaviors:

- Short attention span
- Posture indicative of poor self-esteem
- Anxiety results in inappropriate behaviors
- Withdrawal
- Inordinate stress during performance time
- Cheating
- Overcompensation through pseudo-confidence
- Poor motivation resulting from lack of success
- Situational behaviors manifested in specific situation (child/teacher conflict) though not characteristic of student’s general behavior

These students may exhibit intellectual ability, mechanical ability, and talent in non-academic areas, social skills, and other strengths

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO HELP A CHILD WITH DYSLEXIA?

Help your child understand the nature of his/her difficulty:

- Read books or view videos about dyslexia
- Emphasize the child's abilities instead of "disabilities"

Help other members of the family:

- Help others recognize and understand your child's learning disability. Family members often ask "who, what, where, and when" questions to get the necessary information.

Help your child locate and develop other talents:

- Sports, art, music, mechanics, hobbies, etc.
- Help improve your child's self-image by giving your child tasks he/she can master
- Give the child chores to do (e.g., setting the table for supper, clearing the dishes, and making the beds).
- Make short lists of tasks to help the child remember . A list is impersonal and reduces irritations. The child will gain satisfaction as he checks off tasks completed.
- Often children do not process multiple requests quickly or accurately . State your ideas in simple, clear, one-concept commands and ask the child to repeat what was said. Speaking at a slower rate of speed to the child is often helpful.

Structure the child's life at home:

- Stick to a regular routine for meals, play, TV, chores, homework, etc.
- Keep belongings in the same place. Help the child remember where to put them.
- Keep instructions simple – one at a time.
- Break tasks into small parts or steps.
- Relieve stress in weak areas.
- Guard against negative remarks, especially those referring to laziness or lack of effort.
- Avoid threats of punishment for such things as low grades, their need for repetition of directions, ineptness at simple tasks, etc.
- Set standards, goals, and expectations of achievement within reach of our child's abilities.

How can parents build self-esteem?

- Praise your child often and sincerely
- Don't constantly nag or criticize
- Catch your child doing well
- Give your child opportunities to succeed
- Tell your child you believe in him/or her
- Give your child lots of hugs and kisses
- Praise efforts that are working towards a goal
- Don't compare your child with anyone else
- Look for ways to make your child feel capable
- Encourage your child to make age appropriate decisions
- Give your child a chance to solve problems before jumping in

- Listen to our child's thoughts, feelings, and ideas without judging or criticizing

What strengths are we likely to see in individuals with dyslexia?

- Highly creative
- Links previously unrelated ideas, processes
- Finds new ways to do old things
- Problem solver
- Inventor
- Builder
- Diplomat
- Good sense of humor
- Likes and enjoys helping people
- May anticipate people's emotions
- Excels at individual sports
- Works better alone than with team
- Understands animals, plants, living things
- Mechanically inclined
- Wants to know how things work
- Likes to repair or make things better
- Enjoys working with hands
- Likes building things
- Scientific thinker
- Very curious and observant
- A good motivator
- Has high energy
- Enthusiastic
- Is open-minded

Parent Suggestions for Student Success:

- Parent(s) establish good study habits for the child. Consider a regular study schedule and a quiet study environment to address possible attention interference. Monitor nightly study to verify work is progressing or is completed.
- Work closely with your child's teacher. Regular communication between parent and teacher is necessary.
- Parent(s) consider reading to child 15 minutes a day or acquiring audiotapes of books to read along.
- Help children develop a positive attitude and understanding of self-worth.
- Read Chapters 15, 16, and 17 in *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz for additional reading support.

Resources:

1. *Parenting a Struggling* by Hall, S. & Moats, L. (2002) Broadway Books

2. Learning Outside the Lines by Mooney, J. & Cole, D: Simon & Schuster
3. Overcoming Dyslexia by Shaywitz, Sally
4. The International Dyslexia Association – <https://dyslexiaida.org>
5. LD-Online – www.ldonline.org
6. Understood for Learning and Attention Issues – www.understood.org
7. Learning Ally – www.learningally.org
8. Talking Book Program, State of Texas – www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html

Spanish Resources:

1. International Dyslexia Association – <https://dyslexiaida.org>

Refer to the following Fact Sheets:

- Effective Reading Instruction for Students with Dyslexia
- Dyslexia Basics
- Understanding Dysgraphia
- ADHD and Dyslexia

2. ¡Colorín Colorado – www.colorincolorado.org

Refer to the following:

- Families:
 - o Help Your Child Learn to Read – Tips by Age
 - o Learning Together at Home
 - o Schools and Families: An Important Partnership
 - o The Preschool Years

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DYSLEXIA

AND THE

**WEST RUSK COUNTY CONSOLIDATED
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**



WEST RUSK CCISD

P. O. BOX 168, 10705 S. MAIN

NEW LONDON, TX 75682

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A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DYSLEXIA AND THE WEST RUSK CCISD

1. What is Dyslexia?

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

As defined in the Texas Education Code:

- (1) "Dyslexia' means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.
- (2) 'Related Disorders' includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability."
TEC §38.003 (d)(1)(2) (1995)

The current definition from the International Dyslexia Association states:

"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 (decoding), reading fluency, and spelling. Consequences of dyslexia 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. "From a practical perspective this means that the weakness in reading is isolated and circumscribed, reflecting a local rather than generalized cerebral dysfunction. A child who is slow in all cognitive skills would not be eligible for consideration of dyslexia; a dyslexic child has to have some cognitive strengths, not only depressed reading

functions.” (Overcoming Dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz, M.D., 2003.) Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

2. What is NOT dyslexia?

Dyslexia is NOT:

- It is not a sign of poor intelligence.
- It is not the result of laziness or not caring.
- It cannot be “cured with pills, diets, or medical treatment.”
- It is not an eye (visual) problem.
- It is not outgrown, although individuals with dyslexia can be taught how to learn.
- It is not writing letters and words backwards. “While it is true that children with dyslexia have difficulties attaching the appropriate labels or names for letters and words, there is no evidence that they actually see letters and words backwards.” (Overcoming Dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz, M.D., 2003.)

The good news is that with appropriate education, understanding, and time, many individuals with dyslexia learn to read and write and to develop their special abilities and talents. Many successful scientists, artists, athletes, and world leaders are people with dyslexia.

(Basic Facts About Dyslexia: What Every Lay Person Ought to Know. The Orton Emeritus Series, The International Dyslexia Association, Baltimore, MD. 2nd Edition, 1998.)

3. Who is considered an individual with dyslexia?

Research is ongoing and some results vary. The National Institutes of Health and other reputable agencies estimate that between 10% and 15% of the men, women, and children in this country may have dyslexia. Nancy Mather and Barbara Wendling report recent estimates suggest approximately 5% to 8% of the school age population have dyslexia. Some people may have severe problems, in several areas, such as reading, spelling, remembering, listening, and sequencing. Other people may have less severe or even mild difficulty in just one or two areas. Dyslexia occurs among all groups of the population, from young children to adults. Dyslexia is NOT related to race, age, or income.

(Basic Facts About Dyslexia: What Every Lay Person Ought to Know. The Orton Emeritus Series, The International Dyslexia Association, Baltimore, MD. 2nd Edition, 1998.)

(Mather, N., & Wendling, B.J. (2012). Essentials of Dyslexia Assessment and Intervention. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

4. What are the characteristics of dyslexia? (It is important to note that individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment.)

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

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

(The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update. Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas. November 2018, pgs. 1 – 2.)

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).

Preschool:

- Delay in learning to talk
- Difficulty with rhyming
- Difficulty pronouncing words (e.g., “pusgetti” for “spaghetti”, “mawn lower” for “lawn mower”)
- Poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
- Difficulty in 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 book is read aloud)

Kindergarten and First Grade:

- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts (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., “to,” “said,” “been”)

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., 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 (e.g., 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 with 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 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)

(Fact Sheets - Dyslexia Basics, The International Dyslexia Association, May 2012, <https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-basics/> (Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-based Program for Reading Problems at any Level, Sally Shaywitz, M.D., 2003.)

(The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update. Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas. November 2018, pgs. 2 – 4.)

5. What causes dyslexia?

Dyslexia results from differences within the organization of the brain. Why these differences occur and what they mean for understanding dyslexia are questions yet to be answered. People with dyslexia are born with this condition, and it has a tendency to run in families. Most individuals with dyslexia have been found to have difficulty identifying the separate speech sounds within a word and/or learning how letters represent those sounds, a key factor in their reading difficulties. Some adults may not realize that their difficulties are due to dyslexia. Even students in colleges or graduate schools who are having difficulty may be dyslexic and have gone undiagnosed. Dyslexia is not due to either lack of intelligence or desire to learn; with appropriate teaching methods and remediation, individuals with dyslexia can learn successfully.

(Frequently Asked Questions about Dyslexia, The International Dyslexia Association, 2018)

6. Who can make a referral for consideration of dyslexia?

Anyone can refer a child for evaluation and consideration of dyslexia. In addition, students who have not reached age-appropriate developmental milestones with the use of scientifically, research-based interventions and/or remediation, and who display characteristics of dyslexia should be referred for consideration of a dyslexia evaluation as outlined in the district's Section 504 evaluation process or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

While anyone can make a referral, such as parents or a doctor, OCR stated in a staff memorandum that "the school district must also have reason to believe that the child is in need of services under Section 504 due to a disability." (OCR Memorandum, April 29, 1993; Frequently Asked Questions About Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities, Question 30, OCR, Revised Sept. 2018; Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 – Student Evaluations and Placement Under Section 504, OCR, pg. 12, Dec. 2016.) Therefore, a

school district does not have to refer or evaluate a child under Section 504 for consideration of dyslexia solely upon parental demand. The key to a referral is whether the school district staff suspects that a child has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as reading) and is in need of either regular education with supplementary services or special education and related services [Letter to Mentink, 19 IDELR 1127 (OCR) 1993]. A special education full and individual initial evaluation (FIIE) may occur if it is suspected that dyslexia may create an educational need requiring specially designed instruction. In IDEA (special education), dyslexia is considered one of a variety of etiological foundations for specific learning disability (SLD). [34 C.F.R. §300.8(c)(10)].

Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia evaluation has been made, the school district is obligated to review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is reason to believe the student may have a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student needs to be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in The Dyslexia Handbook – 2018 Update in Chapter 3.

The academic history of each student will provide the school with the cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dyslexia is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading. Additional information to be considered includes the results from some or all of the following: vision screening; hearing screening; teacher reports of classroom concerns; accommodations or interventions provided; academic progress reports (report cards); gifted/talented assessments (if given/applicable); samples of school work; parent conference notes; K-2 reading instrument results as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible); K-1st grade dyslexia screening as required in TEC §38.003(a); 7th grade reading instrument results as required in TEC §28.006; observations of instruction provided to the student; speech and language assessment (if applicable); outside evaluations (if available); school attendance, curriculum-based assessment measures; universal screening for all grade levels available; and state student assessment program results (grades 3 and above).

If a parent requests a referral for evaluation and consideration of dyslexia, and the school district refuses, the school district must provide the parent with the rationale for refusal and notice of their due process rights under Section 504 or the IDEA. Progression through tiered intervention is NOT required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia.

(The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update. Texas Education Agency, November 2018.)

7. Is a student automatically “504” if he/she has been determined to be dyslexic?

NO. This applies to those students referred for a dyslexia evaluation as well as those students who may have received a diagnosis of dyslexia from a professional resource outside of the school district. To be a person with a disability (dyslexia) within the meaning of Section 504, the

student's dyslexia must affect the student's education. Thus, a student with dyslexia may be considered to have a disability within the scope of §504 if the condition substantially limits the student's learning and/or ability to read, write or spell.

In determining whether a student with characteristics of dyslexia is eligible within the meaning of Section 504, a variety of information must be considered. Information from parents, including professional evaluations and/or a diagnosis, will be carefully documented and considered by the Section 504 committee. It is important to understand that a single source of information, such as an outside professional evaluation or doctor's diagnosis, does not mean that a student is automatically eligible for identification and placement into a dyslexia program and Section 504 eligibility. The decision concerning Section 504 eligibility and need for services must be determined by a "duly constituted Section 504 committee" in accordance with federal regulations and state law.

8. How does a district address the instructional needs of identified and eligible students with dyslexia?

Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia must be made by a committee (§504 or ARD) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia. In accordance with 19 TAC §74.28(e) districts shall purchase or develop a reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that incorporates all the components of instruction and instructional approaches outlined in TEA's The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update, Chapter 4.

These programs are individualized, intensive, utilize multi-sensory teaching methods, contain writing and spelling components and meet the state required descriptors. In addition, the student will be provided appropriate instructional strategies including accommodations/interventions to be utilized throughout the school day. Instructional and accommodation decisions for students must be determined by the Section 504 Committee or the Special Education ARD Committee, and be designed to meet the student's individual needs and provide the student with a free appropriate public education.

9. As a parent, what can I do at home to assist my child?

As a parent, it is important that you:

- Establish good study habits for the child. Consider a regular study schedule and a quiet study environment to address possible attention interference. Monitor nightly study to verify work is progressing or is completed.
- Consider establishing a system of reinforcers, either tangible or intangible, to encourage the child to be more successful in reading. Student can participate in these Choices.
- Listen to your child's feelings.
- Encourage the child to discuss and talk about his/her feelings.
- Reward effort and not just the "product" of school.

- Stress improvement and not just the grades.
- Encourage the child to succeed in other areas such as talents in athletics, the arts, mechanics, volunteer work, and community service.
- Help the child to set realistic goals.

(The Other Sixteen Hours: The Social and Emotional Problems of Dyslexia. The Orton Emeritus Series, The International Dyslexia Association, Baltimore, MD, 1997.)

10. What testing accommodations are available for students identified with dyslexia taking the state student assessment program – STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)? Please check the TEA website for the most current information.

www.tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/accommodations/staar-telpas

Accommodations for students with disabilities provide students with effective and equitable access to grade-level or course curriculum and assessments. For the purposes of the statewide assessments, students needing accommodations due to a disability include:

- Students with an identified disability who receive special education services and meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations
- Students with an identified disability who receive Section 504 services and meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations
- Students with a disabling condition who do not receive special education or Section 504 services but met established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations

When making decisions about accommodations, instruction is always the foremost priority. Not all accommodations used in the classroom are allowed during a state assessment. However, the decision to use a particular accommodation with a student should be made on an individual basis. An educator’s ability to meet the individual needs of a student with dyslexia should not be limited by whether an accommodation is allowable on a state assessment. An educator should take into consideration both the needs of the student, and whether the student routinely receives the accommodation in classroom instruction and testing. If a student receives special education services or Section 504 services, all accommodations must be documented in the student’s individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 individualized accommodation plan (IAP).

For specific accommodation descriptions, STAAR assessments, student eligibility criteria, and the committee that has the authority for decision-making and the required documentation, view the TEA Accommodation information at:

www.tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/accommodations/staar-telpas

Once on this link, “click” each specific accommodation being considered to access further detail.

11. Are testing accommodations available for the ACT or SAT?

YES. A student with a documented disability may be eligible for accommodations on College Board tests. A Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Student Eligibility Form must be

submitted for each student requesting accommodations. If the student is requesting accommodations that require a nonstandard administration of the test, there is a specific process that schools must follow. Just because you have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or §504 plan (IAP) does not automatically guarantee that you are eligible for accommodations. A student needing accommodations on a College Board exam must first meet the basic eligibility requirements. The requirements include (but are not limited to):

- Does the student have a disability that makes it difficult to learn?
- Does the disability makes it hard to take tests in the traditional manner?
- Does the student receive accommodations for the tests they currently take in school? (Extra time, a different version of the test, etc.)
- Is the student part of a resource room or special education class?
- Does the student have documents on file at the student's school that show the student has a disability that requires test accommodations?

If the student answers "YES" to any of the above questions, they may be eligible for accommodations. Additionally, the documentation on file at the student's school of secondary education needs to:

- State the specific disability, as diagnosed;
- Be current – in most cases, the evaluation should be completed within three years of the request for accommodations;
- Provide relevant educational, developmental, and medical history;
- Describe the comprehensive testing and techniques used to arrive at the diagnosis (including evaluation dates and test results with subtest scores from measures of cognitive ability, current academic achievement, and information processing);
- Describe the functional limitations supported by the test results;
- Describe the specific accommodations requested, and state why the student's disability qualifies the student for such accommodations on standardized tests; and
- Establish the professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification and area of specialization.

Accommodations that may be available include (but are not limited to):

- Extended testing time;
- Enlarged print;
- Testing across more than one day;
- Alternative test formats; and
- Assistance marking their responses.

Accommodations requested may vary depending on the specific disability and documentation provided.

For information about testing accommodations for the SAT, go to: www.collegeboard.com.
For information about testing accommodations for the ACT, go to: www.actstudent.org.

12. Will the district test my child for dyslexia after graduation from high school?

NO. Although colleges frequently require students to provide a professional evaluation and assessment scores, a district is NOT required by any state regulation to provide this service. According to the Office of Civil Rights, neither the high school nor the postsecondary school is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document a student's disability and need for accommodations.

(Appendix H: Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities. OCR 2011. The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders – 2018 Update, Texas Education Agency, November 2018, pg. 147.)

To learn more about dyslexia and service agencies, contact:

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

Learning Disabilities Association of Texas
P.O. Box 831392
Richardson, TX 75083-1392
www.ldatx.org

For additional information regarding the
West Rusk CCISD Dyslexia Program, contact:

Tamara Elliott, Dyslexia Teacher
903 - 392 - 7850 ext. 5105

Amanda Kirkendoll, Elementary/Intermediate Counselor
903 - 392 - 7850 ext. 5104

Akiko Jones, Rusk County Special Education SSA Director
903 - 657 - 9761