

# Union Hill ISD



## **District Dyslexia Plan**

2021-2022

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# **I. Definition, Risk Factors and Characteristics of Dyslexia**

## **a. Definition of Dyslexia**

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

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

*"Related disorders" include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.*

TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)

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

The International Dyslexia Association defines "dyslexia" in the following way:

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

Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board of Directors, November 12, 2002

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

## **b. Program Description**

The Union Hill ISD dyslexia program is offered to students in grades K-12 who are identified as having dyslexia through §504 or IDEA. The program is offered as a *pull-out* intervention, meaning students are pulled out of the general education classroom to receive the intervention in a small group setting. The dyslexia instruction provides evidence-based, multisensory structured literacy instruction for students. In addition, students who have exited the program remain on a monitoring status after completion of the program. If the student continues to experience difficulties the §504 or ARD Committee should meet to review accommodations and programming.

## **c. Risk Factors**

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2018, lists the following common risk factors associated with dyslexia. If the following behaviors are unexpected for an individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities, they may be risk factors associated with dyslexia. A student with dyslexia usually exhibits several of these behaviors that persist over time and interfere with his/her learning. A family history of dyslexia may be present; in fact, recent studies reveal that the whole spectrum of reading disabilities is strongly determined by genetic predispositions (inherited aptitudes) (Olson, Keenan, Byrne, & Samuelsson, 2014).

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

### **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 adding new vocabulary words
- Inability to recall the right word (word retrieval)
- Trouble learning and naming letters and numbers and remembering the letters in his/her name
- Aversion to print (e.g., doesn’t enjoy following along if a book is read aloud)

### **Kindergarten and First Grade**

- Difficulty in breaking words into smaller parts, or syllables (e.g., “baseball” can’t be pulled apart into “base” “ball” or “napkin” can be pulled apart into “nap” “kin”)
- Difficulty in identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables (e.g., “man” sounded out as /m//ă//n/)
- Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling their corresponding sounds
- Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- Difficulty spelling words the way they sound (phonetically) or remembering letter sequences in very common words seen often in print (e.g., “sed” for “said”)

### **Second 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 “efer”)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Difficulty with written expression

### **Fourth through Sixth Grade**

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

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

### **Middle School and High School**

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

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

### **Postsecondary**

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

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

### **d. Characteristics of Dyslexia**

The following are the primary reading/spelling characteristics of dyslexia:

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

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

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

## **II. Screening**

### **a. Screening**

#### **The Importance of Early Screening**

*If the persistent achievement gap between dyslexic and typical readers is to be narrowed, or even closed, reading interventions must be implemented early, when children are still developing the basic foundation for reading acquisition. The persistent achievement gap poses serious consequences for dyslexic readers, including lower rates of high school graduation, higher levels of unemployment, and lower earnings because of lowered college attainment. Implementing effective reading programs early, even in preschool and kindergarten, offers the potential to reduce and perhaps even close the achievement gap between dyslexic and typical readers and bring their trajectories closer over time.*

---Ferrer, et al., Achievement Gap in Reading Is present as Early as First Grade and Persists through Adolescence, 2015

#### **State Requirements**

Prior to 2017, Texas state law required the testing of students for dyslexia and related disorders “at appropriate times.” Appropriate times depended on multiple factors as determined by each school district or charter school, including the student’s reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to evidence-based reading instruction, teachers’ input, and parent/guardian input. While screening for dyslexia and related disorders was encouraged by the State Board of Education (SBOE), there was no mandate to do so. In 2017, the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1886, amending Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003, Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia.

#### **TEC §38.003**

- requires that **all** kindergarten and first grade public school students be screened for dyslexia and related disorders
- requires that **all** students beyond first grade be screened or tested as appropriate
- 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

#### **District Procedures for Screening**

When formal assessment is recommended, Union Hill ISD completes the evaluation process as outlined in §504 unless a referral to special education is indicated.

Through §504 process, Union Hill ISD will complete the evaluation using the following procedures:

- Notify parents or guardians of proposal to assess student for dyslexia (§504).
- Inform parents or guardians of their rights under §504.
- Obtain parent or guardian permission to assess the student for dyslexia.
- Assess student, being sure that individuals/professionals who administer assessments have training in the evaluation of students for dyslexia and related disorders (19 TAC §74.28).

In compliance with §504 and IDEA 2004, test instruments, and other evaluation materials must meet the following criteria:

- Be validated for the specific purpose for which the tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials are used.
- Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely materials designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

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

### **Interpretation of Data**

After screening has been completed 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 recognize characteristics of dyslexia (reading interventionist). Union Hill ISD utilizes the Response to Intervention team (RtI) to document any early or scientifically research-based intervention programs and support services available to students who are experiencing difficulty in the general education classroom.

- The PST has knowledge about the student and will make the recommended plan for each student.
- A parent letter will be sent home after the PST informing the parent(s) of the recommended plan for their child.

### **Possible Recommendations**

- RtI Tiered interventions targeting the student's deficit areas.
- If a suspected disability exists a Special Educational Referral for a Specific Learning Disability **MUST** be recommended.
  - This is to determine if the student has a Basic Reading disability with or without the condition of dyslexia; and/or a Reading Fluency disability.
- If RtI is recommended, the campus will discuss how to meet the need of the student in the Tiered intervention.

### **b. Referral Process**

All students suspected of having dyslexia or other related disorders, such as dysgraphia, will be assessed through Special Education.

- This will ensure that UHISD meets the Child Find requirements for IDEA and §504.
- The FIE will ensure all areas of a possible disability have been thoroughly investigated and identified.

### **Referral Timeline**

Texas law establishes that a full individual and initial evaluation (FIE) must be completed within 45-school days from the time a district or charter school receives consent. After the FIE is completed, an ARD/IEP Meeting will be scheduled, within 30 calendar days from the date of the report, to review evaluation results.

### **III. Evaluation and Identification**

#### **a. When should a dyslexia evaluation be recommended?**

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 intervention or RTI.

Schools must recommend 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

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.

If a student continues to struggle with reading or there is a suspected reading disability (including dyslexia), UHISD will follow one of the following procedures:

- Evaluation will occur to determine if the student qualifies for services through IDEA; or
- For a student that is receiving special education services, the ARD committee will review existing evaluation data and determine if additional assessment is needed.

When formal assessment is recommended, UHISD completes the evaluation process using the following procedures for all evaluations:

- Schedule a PST at the campus that includes classroom teachers and assistant principal.
- Notify parents or guardians of proposal to assess the student for dyslexia.
- Inform parents or guardians of their rights under IDEA.
- All testing is completed through IDEA (special education).
- Obtain parent or guardian permission to assess the student for dyslexia.
- This consent is only for testing and not for placement.
- Placement is discussed after the evaluation is completed during an ARD/IEP meeting.
- Parents must sign consent for placement depending on student eligibility.

#### **Parent Request for Evaluation**

A parent/guardian may request to have his/her child evaluated for dyslexia and related disorders by staff at the school district. IDEA procedures must be followed, including providing the parent /guardian with prior written notice. Parent requests for evaluation are emailed to [collierp@uhisd.com](mailto:collierp@uhisd.com).

#### **Test 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

## **b. Data Gathering**

Schools collect 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 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, schools 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 will provide information regarding factors that may be contributing to or primary to the student’s struggles with reading and spelling.

### **Sources and Examples of 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
- K-2 reading instrument results as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading instrument results as required in TEC §28.006
- State student assessment program results as described in TEC §39.022
- Observations of instruction provided to the student
- Full Individual and Initial Evaluation
- Outside evaluations
- Speech and language assessment
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Instructional strategies provided and student’s response to the instruction
- Screening
- Parent survey

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 due to cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantage.

### **Domains to Assess**

UHISD 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. Union Hill ISD evaluates students for dyslexia through an FIE in which all academic and cognitive areas are assessed. The following are the areas related to reading that should be assessed when looking specifically for dyslexia:

#### **Academic Skills**

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

#### **Cognitive Process**

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

#### **Possible Additional Areas**

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

### **c. Identification**

The identification of dyslexia is made by a §504 committee or, in the case of a special education referral, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. In order to make an informed determination, either committee **must** include members who are knowledgeable about:

- Student being assessed
- The reading process
- Dyslexia and related disorders
- Dyslexia instruction
- District, state, and federal guidelines for assessment
- Assessments used
- The meaning of the collected data

The (§504 or ARD) committee will review all accumulated data to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dyslexia. This data will include the following:

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

Additionally, committee members should have knowledge regarding—

- the reading process,
- dyslexia and related disorders,
- dyslexia instruction, and
- district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for evaluation.

The (§504 or ARD)committee determines if a student's difficulties in the areas of reading and spelling reflect a pattern of evidence for the primary characteristic 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.

The (§504 or ARD)committee must 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.**

These questions must be considered when making a determination regarding dyslexia.

- Does the data show the following characteristics of dyslexia?  
Difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading  
Poor spelling skills  
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 provision of effective classroom instruction?

### **Placement**

If the student is found eligible for dyslexia services in the areas of reading, the student will be able to participate in Union Hill ISD's general education dyslexia intervention program. However, if the reading difficulties continue and the student is not successful in the dyslexia intervention program, the ARD committee will determine the breadth and depth of additional support.

The (§504 or ARD) committee will also determine the need to continue or stop the research-based dyslexia intervention for a student who is consistently not making adequate progress.

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

All assessment reports completed by outside agencies will be reviewed by the campus educational diagnostician (special education) to determine if the testing meets the state and local guidelines. Union Hill ISD may choose to accept the outside assessment or may re-assess the student to ensure compliance. The ARD committee will determine the identification of a student enrolled in Union Hill ISD and the placement of the student in the dyslexia program(s). An outside assessment does not automatically create eligibility.

### **d. Re-evaluation**

Dyslexia is a lifelong condition. State law indicates that a student may not be re-tested for dyslexia for determining continued eligibility until the district re-evaluates the information from previous testing of the student. However, Special Education laws require periodic re-evaluation. Under IDEA, the ARD committee should review the student's assessment data, progress monitoring data, state assessments, teacher reports, etc. and determine if current programming is effective. If current programming is not effective, the committee will discuss and implement new programming recommendations.

## **IV. Dysgraphia**

### **a. Definition and Characteristics**

Difficulty with handwriting frequently occurs in children with dyslexia. When Texas passed dyslexia legislation, the co-existence of poor handwriting with dyslexia was one reason why dysgraphia was called a related disorder. Dyslexia and dysgraphia are now recognized to be distinct disorders that can exist concurrently or separately. They have different brain mechanisms and identifiable characteristics.

A review of recent evidence indicates that dysgraphia is best defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder manifested by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. This difficulty is the result of deficits in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and orthographic codes (letter forms) (Berninger, 2015). Secondary consequences may include problems with spelling and written expression. The difficulty is not solely due to lack of instruction and is not associated with other developmental or neurological conditions that involve motor impairment.

The characteristics of dysgraphia include the following:

- variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- excessive erasures and cross-outs
- poor spacing between letters and words
- letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing
- awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting (Andrews & Lonbardino, 2014)

Additional consequences of dysgraphia may also include:

- difficulty with unedited written spelling
- low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

All students suspected of having dyslexia or other related disorders, **such as dysgraphia** will be assessed through Special Education.

- This will ensure that UHISD meets the Child Finds requirements for IDEA and §504.
- The FIE will ensure all areas of a possible disability have been thoroughly investigated and identified.

#### **b. When should a student be evaluated for dysgraphia?**

Schools shall recommend evaluation for dysgraphia if the student demonstrates the following:

- impaired or illegible handwriting that is unexpected for the student's age/grade
- impaired handwriting that interferes with spelling, written expression, or both that is unexpected for the student's age/grade

#### **c. Data Gathering**

Documentation of the following characteristics of dysgraphia could be collected during the data gathering phase:

- slow or labored written work
- poor formation of letters
- improper letter slant
- poor pencil grip
- inadequate pressure during handwriting (too hard or too soft)
- excessive erasers
- poor spacing between words
- poor spacing inside words
- inability to recall accurate orthographic patterns for words
- "b" and "d" reversals beyond developmentally appropriate time
- inability to copy words accurately
- inability of student to read what was previously written
- overuse of short familiar words such as "big"
- avoidance of written tasks
- difficulty with visual-motor integrated sports or activities

#### **Domains to Assess**

The school administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Difficulties in the areas of letter formation, orthographic awareness, and general handwriting skills may be evident dependent on the student's age and writing development. Additionally, many students with dysgraphia may have difficulty spelling and written expression.

#### **Academic Skills**

- letter formation
- handwriting
- word/sentence dictation (timed and untimed)
- copying of text
- written expression
- writing fluency (both accuracy and fluency)

### **Cognitive Processes**

- memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing)

### **Possible Additional Areas**

- phonological awareness
- phonological memory
- working memory
- letter retrieval
- letter matching

## **d. Identification**

The identification of dysgraphia is made by the ARD committee. To make an informed determination, either committee must include members who are knowledgeable about the following:

- student being assessed
- evaluation instruments being used
- interpretation of the data being collected

Additionally, the committee members should have knowledge regarding

- the handwriting process;
- dysgraphia and related disorders;
- dysgraphia instruction, and;
- district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for evaluation

These questions must be considered when making a determination regarding dysgraphia.

- Do the data show a pattern of low writing and spelling ability that is unexpected for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction?
- Does the pattern indicate the student has dysgraphia?
- Does the student meet eligibility as a student with a disability under Section 504 or IDEA?

## **V. Instruction**

### **a. Dyslexia Instruction**

Union Hill ISD shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder.

The following procedures must be followed:

- 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.
- Union Hill ISD must purchase or develop an evidence-based reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that incorporates **all** the components of instruction and instructional approaches. The critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction are phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension and reading fluency.
- Union Hill ISD dyslexia intervention includes the principals of effective instruction. The intervention is multisensory, systematic, synthetic, analytic and delivered with explicit instruction and taught to automaticity.
- Union Hill ISD trains teachers in the program used and the program is implemented with fidelity. The effective instruction is highly-structured, systematic, and explicit, and lasts for a sufficient duration.

- 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(c) and must deliver the instruction with fidelity.
- 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.
- Reading Interventionist will maintain daily logs of student interactions including date, unit/lesson number, and notes regarding the lesson. Dyslexia teachers will update parents regularly (with the same frequency as report cards) regarding their student's progress through the intervention program. This update will include material covered since the last report and successes/concerns for the progress period.

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

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

## **b. Dysgraphia Instruction**

Between 10% and 30% of students struggle with handwriting. Early difficulties in this area are significantly correlated with poorer performance on composition tasks. The following are research-based elements of effective handwriting instruction. These elements, which apply to both manuscript and cursive handwriting, may not necessarily apply to an entire class but instead may be used to support instructional methods delivered in small groups with students whose penmanship is illegible or dysfluent.

1. Show students how to hold a pencil.
2. Model efficient and legible letter formation.
3. Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice effective letter formation.
4. Use scaffolds, such as letters with numbered arrows showing the order and direction of strokes.
5. Have students practice writing letters from memory.
6. Provide handwriting fluency practice to build students' automaticity.
7. Practice handwriting in short sessions.

--Adapted from Beringer et al., 1997; Berninger et al., 2006; Denton, Cope, & Moser, 2006; Graham et al., 2012; Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000; Graham & Weintrub, 1996.

Union Hill ISD delivery of dysgraphia instruction is consistent with the principals of effective intervention for students in that it is multisensory, systematic, has explicit instruction and is taught to automaticity.

## **Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Interventions in UHISD:**

In Union Hill ISD for the 2021-22 school year, the following interventions are used for students with dyslexia:

- K-2 Scottish Rite Pre Flight
- 3-12 Scottish Rite Take Flight

**Pre-Flight** is an introduction for young students to **Take Flight: A Comprehensive Intervention for Students with Dyslexia**.

**Take Flight: A Comprehensive Intervention for Students with Dyslexia** is a curriculum written by the staff of the Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders of Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children (TSRHC). **Take Flight** contains the five components of effective reading instruction supported by the National Reading Panel research meta-analysis and mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonic Skills
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Reading Comprehension

### **c. Instructional Decisions**

Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia are made by the ARD or §504 committee which consists of professionals that are knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and instructional components and delivery of instruction for students with dyslexia. Dyslexia instruction must be given with fidelity and consistently (ex. 4 days a week for 45 minutes a day). The district dyslexia calendar is released at the beginning of the school year.

Dyslexia sessions are not made up for the following reasons:

- Student Absent
- District or State Testing
- Field Day
- Field Trip
- School Assembly

### **d. Instructional Accommodations**

In addition to dyslexia instruction, accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom.

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

- copies of notes (e.g., teacher-or peer-provided)
- note-taking assistance
- additional time on class assignments and tests
- reduced/shortened assignments (e.g., chunking assignments into manageable units, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)
- alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions
- priority seating assignment
- oral reading of directions or written material
- word banks



- audiobooks
- text to speech
- speech to text
- electronic spellers
- electronic dictionaries
- formula charts
- adaptive learning tools and features in software programs

When considering accommodations for the student with **dysgraphia**, UHISD considers the following:

- the volume of the work to be produced
- the complexity of the writing task
- the tools used to produce the written product
- the format of product (Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, 2018, p. 5)

Listed below are **examples** of reasonable classroom accommodations for a student with **dysgraphia**, based on the above considerations:

- allow more time for written tasks including note taking, copying, and tests
- reduce the length requirements of written assignments
- provide copies of notes or assign a note taking buddy to assist with filling in missing information
- allow the student to audio record important assignments and/or take oral tests
- assist the student with developing logical steps to complete a writing assignment instead of all at once
- allow the use of technology (e.g., speech to text software, etc.)
- allow the student to use cursive or manuscript, whichever is most legible and efficient
- allow the student to use graph paper for math, or to turn lined paper sideways, to help with lining up columns of numbers
- offer an alternative to a written project such as an oral report, dramatic presentation, or visual media project

Decisions about which accommodations to use are very individualized and should be made for each student by that student's ARD or Section 504 committee, as appropriate. Students can, and should, play a significant role in choosing and using accommodations.

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, an educator's ability to meet the individual needs of a student with dyslexia or provide support for the use of an accommodation should not be limited by whether an accommodation is allowable on a state assessment.

#### **e. Progress Monitoring**

Union Hill ISD Dyslexia Therapists will administer progress monitoring at the beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY) and end of year (EOY) to track student progress throughout the intervention program. Results of this progress monitoring will be sent home after each completion.

All program monitoring will be based on the criteria of each intervention. Elementary programs will use the Scottish Rite *Take Flight* program.

## **f. Intervention Completion and Monitor Status**

Upon successful completion of UHISD's *Take Flight* program, as measured by the program decoding survey or other program assessments, completed at regular intervals, students will be exited from the district dyslexia program.

Additional criteria for exit may include, but is not limited to:

- DIBELS data (if applicable)
- STAAR data
- Benchmark data
- Classroom grades on progress reports or report cards
- Input from classroom teachers and parents

No one factor is sufficient to warrant exiting a student from district dyslexia services. Dismissal is determined by the ARD committee. The committee considers the following factors when recommending exiting or reduction of dyslexic services:

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

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

During the first year after the student has completed the UHISD dyslexia intervention the student will receive regular monitoring by the campus professional trained in dyslexia.

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

- progress reports
- report cards
- state assessment data
- teacher reports/checklists
- parent reports/checklists
- counselor reports
- other program reports
- additional assessment data

## **VI. English Learners**

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

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

It is also necessary to incorporate ESL strategies during the intervention process and in all content areas. In Texas, school districts are required to implement the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) as an integral part of each subject area in the required curriculum (TAC §74.4(a)). Dyslexia instruction for ELs must incorporate the ELPS. A few strategies to consider include the following:

- Establish routines so that ELs understand what is expected of them
- Provide native language support when giving directions or when students do not understand the task
- Provide opportunities for repetition and rehearsal so that the new information can lead to mastery
- Adjust the rate of speech and the complexity of the language used according to the second language proficiency level of each student
- Provide extra time for the EL to process the English language. This is especially necessary during the early stages of second language development.
- Provide extra time for the EL to formulate oral and written responses
- Emphasize text that includes familiar content and explain the structure of the text

For ELs, a member of the LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee) must be part of either the Section 504 or ARD committee.

Additionally, committee members should have knowledge regarding—

- the reading process
- dyslexia and related disorders
- dyslexia instruction
- district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for evaluation

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 instruction

## Interpretation

When interpreting test results, it is important to factor 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).

Dyslexia in Transparent and Opaque Orthographics	
Opaque	Transparent
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

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