

District Dyslexia Procedures



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Muenster ISD

113 7th Street
Muenster, Texas 76252

Dyslexia Contact
Beth Saucer
940-759-2282
beth.saucer@muensterisd.org

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I. DEFINITION and CHARACTERISTICS

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003

- “Dyslexia” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.
- “Related disorders” includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The current definition from the International Dyslexia Association states the following:

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. *(Adopted by the International Dyslexia Board of Directors, November 12, 2002).*

Refer to [The Dyslexia Handbook*](#) to learn about all the common risk factors associated with dyslexia.

II. SCREENING

In order for early interventions to be provided, a student must first be identified as at risk for dyslexia or another reading difficulty. This is done by administering a universal screening to *all* students. Whereas educators once delayed identification of reading difficulties until the middle of elementary grades, research now encourages screening in the very early grades. In accordance with TEC 28.006 Muenster ISD will administer a reading instrument within the first 20 days of the school year to all students in kindergarten, first, and second grades. This is a **universal screening** used to determine if a student has any reading difficulties. For students in first and second grade, MISD uses the *Texas Primary Reading Inventory* (TPRI), a state approved instrument, for this screening. Kindergarten will use the *Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment* (TX-KEA), another state approved assessment. Teachers will provide all parents/guardians with a written copy of screening results. Students who show reading difficulties during this initial screening will be closely monitored and provided with reading intervention in the classroom. No additional testing will be done at this time, unless requested by the parent or reading teacher.

For the purpose of screening for dyslexia, MISD will follow the guidelines outlined in TEC 38.003 which requires all schools to administer a screening instrument for **dyslexia** to students in first grade and kindergarten. Parents can request a full evaluation under IDEA at any point during this process. The time frame for this dyslexia screening is **no later than January 31** of each year for first grade, and **by the end of the school year** for kindergarten. First grade and kindergarten will use the same screening instrument as they did in the fall (TPRI and TX-KEA). Parents will again be given a copy of screening results.

Note: Since the screening under tec38.0003 only applies to kindergarten and first grade, it is important for teachers in all grades to continue monitoring progress on an ongoing basis. It will be the responsibility of the reading teacher to initiate a screening for any student who continues to struggle with reading.

III. EVALUATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Once the entire screening process is complete, the dyslexia team will analyze the data to determine if the student is at risk for dyslexia and/or related disorder. If results show characteristics of dyslexia, the teacher will seek parental consent for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIE) under the IDEA.

FORMAL EVALUATION

Whereas a screening is a brief assessment to determine which students are at risk, a formal evaluation is a battery of tests used to determine whether a student demonstrates the specific characteristics and underlying causes of dyslexia and/or any other cognitive impairment. This testing will be done by the special education department.

REVIEW AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Testing results will be analyzed by qualified personnel. During this review process, data will be organized and plotted on a [dyslexia profile](#) to help determine if the student meets the criteria for a person with dyslexia.

When diagnosing a student with dyslexia, MISD will follow the decision points provided by [Scottish Rite Hospital for Children Dyslexia Center](#)

- Is there 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:
- Are these difficulties a result of a deficit in the phonological component of language? ¹
- Are there secondary characteristics of dyslexia evident in reading and written expression?
- Are these difficulties **unexpected** for the student in relation to the student's other cognitive abilities (the ability to learn in the absence of print) and **unexpected** in relation to the provision of effective classroom instruction ^(Figure 1)

Going through each of these decision points is very useful when trying to decide whether or not a student has dyslexia. However, it is important to note that a series of formal tests is not sufficient for diagnosing dyslexia. Information collected during this **entire** process should also be reviewed and analyzed. It is a **preponderance** of data that is needed to ensure a **valid** diagnosis of dyslexia.

Scientists and experts continue to study dyslexia. Criteria necessary to diagnose dyslexia is forever changing. It is essential for members of the ARD committee to be watchful for any new information that may alter their interpretation of data. Such vigilance is needed to ensure that no student with dyslexia is ever overlooked.

Figure 1:

Assessment	Areas Tested	Below Average?
CTOPP2	<p>Underlying Cause of Dyslexia</p> <p><i>Phonological Processing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Phonological Awareness •Rapid Naming Composite •Rapid Automatized Naming 	✓
WRMT-III GORT-5	<p>Characteristics of Dyslexia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Decoding •Word Recognition •Fluency 	✓
WRMT-III GORT-5 TEWL	<p>Secondary Characteristics / Outcomes of Dyslexia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reading Comprehension •Written Expression 	✓

*A student does not have to have an average or above average cognitive score (IQ) to show that difficulties are unexpected. The committee can look at other factors such as performance in other subjects, verbal skills, and listening comprehension skills.

RE-EVALUATION OF STUDENT

With effective instruction, a student with dyslexia can become very successful in the classroom. However, when making the determination for the need for accommodations, MISD will not retest or rescreen a student previously diagnosed with dyslexia without first evaluating the data from *previous* testing. It is important not to reject the idea that the student no longer has a disability just because he/she is doing well academically. Dyslexia is a lifelong condition that is neurobiological in origin. Mitigation may mask the signs of dyslexia. But that does not mean the condition no longer exists. This in accordance with TEC §38.003(b-1).

IV. INSTRUCTION for STUDENTS with DYSLEXIA

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, the ARD committee must then determine if the student requires special education as a result of that disability. Such decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, using the information collected during FIIE. If data shows that a student requires *specially designed instruction* along with standard protocol dyslexia instruction, the ARD committee will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will meet the unique needs of that student. If the student only needs accommodations, or if the parent declines special education services, the student may be eligible for a 504 plan.

STANDARD PROTOCOL DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTION

Muenster ISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in TEC §38.003. Dyslexia instruction must include the following evidence-based components:

- ✓ Phonological Awareness
- ✓ Sound-symbol Association
- ✓ Syllabication
- ✓ Orthography
- ✓ Morphology
- ✓ Syntax
- ✓ Reading Comprehension

OUR PROGRAM

Muenster ISD uses [Take Flight Dyslexia Therapy](#), a curriculum written by the staff of the Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. Take Flight is aligned with the descriptors found in the 2021 Dyslexia Handbook. The descriptors include the components of phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. Instructional approaches include simultaneous, multisensory, systematic and cumulative, explicit, diagnostic teaching to automaticity, synthetic and analytic instruction.

V. DYSGRAPHIA

Texas Education Code 38.003 requires districts to identify all students with dyslexia and related disorders. Dysgraphia falls into this category of “related disorders”.

Definition

Dysgraphia is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects written language. Whereas students with dyslexia have difficulty with word-level skills such as decoding, word identification, and spelling, those with dysgraphia have trouble with handwriting and letter formation.

A student with dysgraphia struggles with orthographic memory. During the writing process, a student must first retrieve a letter from memory, and then hold the letter in their “minds eye” as they recall the sequential order of forming the letter. This is called the “orthographic loop”. When a student has dysgraphia, they have difficulty holding the letter in their mind long enough to write it down. It is for this reason that writing is such a taxing and exhausting process. Often educators attribute messy handwriting to lack of effort or laziness, claiming that a student can write neatly if they “really try”. This is not true for students with dysgraphia.

Characteristics of Dysgraphia:

- Frustration and writing avoidance
- Incomplete letter formation
- Illegible/poor handwriting
- Mixture of capital and lowercase letters
- Misuse of space between words and letters
- Swimming/floating letters
- Excessive erasure marks
- Discrepancy between written and oral language skills

Dysgraphia is NOT caused by:

- Lack of effective handwriting instruction
- A damage motor nervous system
- Fine motor deficits
- Laziness/lack of effort by student

Screening and Identification

When dysgraphia is suspected, a student can be referred for screening by either the parent or teacher. Muenster ISD will use a variety of informal screeners to determine if a student is at risk for dysgraphia. If results show evidence of dysgraphia, additional qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered. The student will then be formally evaluated for Dysgraphia through either IDEA.

Dysgraphia Intervention and Instruction

It is critical that content delivery is consistent with research-based practices. Effective intervention for students with dysgraphia should included the following:

- Simultaneous and multisensory (VACT)
- Systematic and cumulative
- Explicit instruction

VI. PARENT COMMUNICATION

Teachers will maintain open communication with parents/guardians on an ongoing basis. A link to the [2021 Dyslexia Handbook](#) will be made available to all parents/guardians via the Muenster ISD website. Teachers will send home written communication throughout all stages of the screening process. Parents/guardians will be informed of all available dyslexia services offered here at Muenster.

For additional information, visit:

[International Dyslexia Association](#)

[Texas Education Agency Website](#)

[Talking Book Program](#)