



RIO GRANDE CITY GRULLA

Independent School District

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DYSLEXIA & RELATED DISORDERS

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A PARENT’S GUIDE TO DYSLEXIA

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Dyslexia Parent Awareness – Legal Requirements

The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders, Revised 2021. “School Districts MUST do the following:

... Provide a parent education program.”

Texas Administrative Code 19 TAC §74.28(l)

(l) Each school district and open-enrollment charter school shall provide a parent education program for parents/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.

Parent Awareness – Recognizing Dyslexia

What is Dyslexia?

The student who struggles with reading and spelling often puzzles teachers and parents. The student displays ability to learn in the absence of print and receives the same classroom instruction that benefits most children; however, the student continues to struggle with some or all of the many facets of reading and spelling. This student may be a student with dyslexia.

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

- 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” 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)**

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

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

The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021: pg. 1

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.

What are the characteristics of Dyslexia?

(It is important to note that individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairments)

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 – Revised 2021: pg. 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., "sed" for "said")

Second Grade and Third Grade:

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

- Difficulty recognizing common sight words (e.g., "to," "said," "been")
- Difficulty decoding single words
- Difficulty recalling the correct sounds for letters and letter patterns in reading
- Difficulty connecting speech sounds with appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., "after" spelled "eftr")

- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., 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)

The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021: pg. 3-4

What causes Dyslexia?

The exact causes of dyslexia are still not completely clear, but anatomical and brain imagery studies show differences in the way the brain of a person with dyslexia develops and functions. Moreover, most people with dyslexia have been found to have problems with identifying the separate speech sounds within a word and/or learning how letters represent those sounds, a key factor in their reading difficulties. Dyslexia is not due to either lack of intelligence or desire to learn; with appropriate teaching methods, students with dyslexia can learn successfully.

(Frequently Asked Questions about Dyslexia, The International Dyslexia Association, 2021)

Parent Awareness – Recognizing Dysgraphia

What is Dysgraphia?

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. Subsequently, dyslexia and dysgraphia have been found to have diverse co-morbidities, including phonological awareness (Döhla and Heim, 2016). However, dyslexia and dysgraphia are now recognized to be distinct disorders that can exist concurrently or separately. They have different brain mechanisms and identifiable characteristics. Dysgraphia is related to dyslexia as both are language-based disorders. In dyslexia, the impairment is with word-level skills (decoding, word identification, spelling). Dysgraphia is a written language disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter. This involves not only motor skills but also language skills—finding, retrieving and producing letters, which is a subword-level language skill. The impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling and/or composing, but individuals with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading (Berninger, Richards, & Abbott, 2015).

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 retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms) (Berninger, 2015). Secondary consequences may include problems with spelling and written expression. The difficulty is not solely due to lack of instruction and is not associated with other developmental or neurological conditions that involve motor impairment.

What are the characteristics of Dysgraphia?

- 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 & Lombardino, 2014)

Resource: *The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021*, pg., 60

Common Risk Factors Associated with Dysgraphia

- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

What Causes Dysgraphia?

Dysgraphia can be due to:

- Impaired feedback the brain is receiving from the fingers
- Weaknesses using visual processing to coordinate hand movement and organize the use of space
- Problems with motor planning and sequencing
- Difficulty with storage and retrieval of letter forms (Levine, 1999)

Resource: The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021, pg., 61

Questions & Answers

How does RGCGISD identify students with dyslexia?

The state requires all school districts to develop procedures for identification and appropriate instructional programs for students identified with dyslexia and related disorders. At any time, a student continues to struggle with reading, the district will gather data from parents, teachers and others to determine the appropriate intervention. Assessment for dyslexia may be appropriate for a student who shows some or all of the characteristics of dyslexia, and who has unexpected poor performance in reading, writing and/or spelling in the classroom. Students with known family history of dyslexia may also be monitored through the district-wide primary assessments for early signs of difficulty with reading so that intervention and possible assessment for dyslexia may take place as early as needed.

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. At RGCGISD, the committee of knowledgeable persons functioning in the position may be the RtI team ARD/IEP (hereafter referred to as “The Committee.”)

The Committee must be knowledgeable about:

- The student being assessed
- Dyslexia and other related disorders
- The assessment used
- District, RtI, and federal guidelines for assessment
- The reading process
- Dyslexia instruction
- The meaning of the data collected

How does RGCGISD identify students with dysgraphia?

While schools must follow federal and state guidelines, they must also develop procedures that address the needs of their student populations. 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

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. At RGCGISD, the committee of knowledgeable persons functioning in the position may be the RtI team ARD/IEP (hereafter referred to as “The Committee.”)

The Committee must be knowledgeable about:

- The student being assessed
- The meaning of the data collected
- Dysgraphia and related disorders
- District, RtI, and federal guidelines for assessment
- The assessment used
- The handwriting process
- Dysgraphia instruction

What is the Assessment, Identification and Placement Process for students with characteristics of dyslexia or related disorders?

Do not assess until parental consent for evaluation is obtained. Do not obtain consent for assessment until after the referral documentation is all in place and approved by the §504 Committee.

1. Within 45 instructional days of parent consent for Assessment, the student must be assessed by individuals/professionals who have been trained in the evaluation of students for dyslexia and related disorders (19 TAC §74.28).
2. In compliance with §504 and IDEA 2004, the Campus Diagnostician will use the assessment instruments that have been approved by the district for the purpose of identifying for characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders.
3. The Campus Diagnostician shall integrate the sum of the data collected into the final dyslexia assessment report.
4. Within 30 instructional days of receipt of completed Assessments the §504/ARD Committee, Campus Diagnostician, schedules meeting with parents and will to make determination of eligibility.
5. The §504/ARD Committee, **including the Campus Diagnostician**, shall use ALL pertinent student data collected to interpret the results derived from the formal assessments given for Dyslexia and related disorders.
6. Upon determination of eligibility, the §504/ARD Coordinator, including the Dyslexia and Special Education Teacher, completes all required forms including the Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) and/or Individual Evaluation Plan (IEP) if a student qualifies.
7. Parents are given **Consent for Placement in Special Education/Dyslexia Program for Services**.
8. Once a parent consents to placement in the Program, the Intervention Program begins.

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 this chapter. Under the IDEA, if the school refuses the request to evaluate, it must give parents prior written notice of refusal to evaluate, including an explanation of why the school refuses to conduct an FIE, the information that was used as the basis for the decision, and a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. Should the parent disagree with the school's refusal to conduct an evaluation, the parent has the right to initiate dispute resolution options including; mediation, state complaints, and due process hearings. Additionally, the parent may request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense. Should the parent believe that their child is eligible for Section 504 aids, accommodations, and services the parent may request an evaluation under Section 504.

What are the strategies that RGCCISD uses to address the instructional needs of identified and eligible students with dyslexia or a related disorder?

Once a student is identified with dyslexic (or related) characteristics, there are several courses of action available for use depending on the needs and accommodations of the individual student.

- Instruction in the regular classroom with accommodations by the regular education teacher.
- Instruction in the regular education classroom with accommodations by the regular education teacher coupled with instruction by a dyslexia teacher in a pull-out classroom setting.
- Any accommodations should be based on the student's individual needs for the disability of dyslexia.
- Interventions in reading based on student's individual needs for the disability of dyslexia.

In accordance with 19 TAC §74.28(e), RGCCISD Dyslexia program incorporates all the components of instruction and instructional approaches listed below:

Phonological awareness	Sound-symbol association	Syllabication
Orthography	Morphology	Syntax
Reading comprehension	Reading fluency	

The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021, pg. 40-42

RGCCISD utilizes The New Herman Method™ as the main instructional program for students who are identified as dyslexic. The New Herman Method™ is a small group reading intervention that provides instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. Its multisensory Orton-Gillingham-based approach is used in thousands of schools nationwide and has proved successful with inner-city classes, English learners, and students with learning disabilities.

How does The NEW HERMAN METHOD help students?

- Builds strong readers and writers with a comprehensive approach to literacy
- Sequentially and systematically teaches students reading, spelling, handwriting, and composition skills
- Incorporates visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities
- Introduces new procedures to aid teachers and students in successfully completing the introduction to new graphemes for reading, handwriting, spelling, and dictation activities

What is the TEA Amplio MTA Platform for Intensive Digital Dyslexia Intervention?

RGCGISD also utilizes the TEA Amplio Platform for Accelerating Progress and Addressing Learning Loss for Students with Dyslexia. Amplio facilitates individualized, outcomes-focused interventions and intensive digital guided practice that monitors student progress and empowers educators to devote more time to direct instruction. Using advanced technologies, Amplio enables high-fidelity instruction, streamlines administrative tasks and increases net individual learning time.

Utilizing evidence-based dyslexia curricula in English and Spanish, Amplio offers interactive, multisensory activities for students, both in-class and online. The platform, together with the interventionist, assesses student responses in reading accuracy, comprehension and other skills. Amplio's digital platform connects students, educators and administrators with advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and natural language processing to help students with dyslexia maximize their potential.

How does The TEA Amplio platform help students?

- Accelerated Progress – Targeted, engaging interventions with individualized, adaptive learning to equip students with a quicker path to success.
- More time for teachers and therapists to help students – Digitized curricula, smart content, and auto-documentation that allows educators to spend less time on paperwork and more time with students.
- Better compliance and oversight – Mechanisms to boost compliance, data-rich dashboards to monitor student progress and fidelity of instruction, turnkey staffing, reimbursement and more.

What are the qualifications for teachers delivering services to students with dyslexia and related disorders?

In order to provide effective intervention, school districts are encouraged to employ highly trained individuals to deliver dyslexia instruction. 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.

Figure 4.1. Training Requirements for Educators Providing Dyslexia Services								
Dyslexia Certification/License	Licensing Body	Degree Required	Training Program	Course Contact Hours	Practicum Hours	Direct Observations	Certification Exam	Continuing Education Requirement
Educator certification* as appropriate	State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)	Bachelors	Training which meets components of instruction and delivery	Varies with program	Varies with program	Varies with program	None	None
*Teachers, such as reading specialists, master reading teachers, general education classroom teachers, or special education teachers are not required to hold a specific license or certification to provide dyslexia intervention for students; however, they must at a minimum have additional documented dyslexia training aligned to 19 TAC §74.28(c) and must deliver the instruction with fidelity.								

The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021, pg. 45

Texas does not have a certification requirement specific to teachers providing intervention to students identified with dyslexia. School districts must consider the needs of students and the qualification of teachers. It is important that teachers (general or special education) who provide instruction for students with dyslexia must have training in the listed components of instruction as well as be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, and multi-sensory methods as outlined in Chapter IV of *The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021*.

What is the role of a dyslexia teacher at RGGCISD?

- Deliver instructional reading program (Dyslexia Intervention Program) for identified dyslexic students with fidelity. **Completing “other duties as assigned” by campus/district administration shall NOT, under any circumstance, prevent the dyslexia teacher from providing their assigned dyslexia therapies. This is a compliance/FAPE issue.**
- Maintain a teacher/student ratio not to exceed 1:10 per group as recommended by the Dyslexia Intervention Program
- Administer and gather pre/post instructional data to monitor program effectiveness and student growth in the area of reading
- Communicate with student’s teachers, administrators and parents as needed regarding student’s progress
- Maintain all necessary student documentation and attendance records required by the district and the dyslexia program
- Provide training and support for parents and attend the district annual Parent Awareness Meeting
- Attend Professional Development each year to stay abreast of current research and development in dyslexia and research---based reading programs
- Assist in organizing and/or conducting trainings at their assigned campuses to facilitate the implementation of the dyslexia program and to ensure general classroom teacher knowledge on dyslexia
- Review referral packets for completion of required documentation. **Time taken to review the referral packets shall NOT, under any circumstance, prevent the dyslexia teacher from providing their assigned dyslexia therapies. This is a compliance/FAPE issue.**
- Complete Dyslexia paperwork for students who qualify for Dyslexia as recommended by the §504/ARD committee. All reports and data will go through the District Dyslexia Coordinator.
- Attend §504/ARD meetings when requested from the Dyslexia Diagnostician or District Dyslexia Coordinator.
- Comply with all state and federal laws as well as district policies

What are instructional accommodations for students with dyslexia?

Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodation. 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. *The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021, pg. 55*

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

What are instructional accommodations for students with dysgraphia?

In addition to targeted instruction, accommodations provide the student with dysgraphia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom. Accommodations are not a one size fits all; rather, the impact of dysgraphia on each individual student determines the accommodation. *The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021, pg. 72*

When considering accommodations for the student with dysgraphia, consider the following:

- The rate of producing written work
- 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 the product (Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, 2018, pg. 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 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

What testing accommodations are available for students identified with dyslexia or related disorders taking the state student assessment – 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

Educators, parents, and students must understand that accommodations provided during classroom instruction and testing might differ from accommodations allowed for use on state assessments. The state assessment is a standardized tool for measuring every student's learning in a reliable, valid, and secure manner. An accommodation used in the classroom for learning may invalidate or compromise the security and integrity of the state assessment; therefore, not all accommodations suitable for instruction are allowed during the state assessments.

For the purposes of the statewide assessments, students needing accommodations due to a disability include the following:

- 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 meet established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations

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

How are eligibility decisions made at RGCGISD for students with dyslexia or a related disorder?

To be a person with a disability within the meaning of Section 504, the student must have an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working (34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)). Learning, reading, and writing are all major life activities. Therefore, a student with dyslexia or a related disorder may be considered to have a disability within the scope of Section 504 if the condition substantially limits the student's academic functioning or other major life activity. All students who qualify for IDEA would also be considered students who meet the criteria for Section 504 and would be protected under both statutes. If the dyslexia or related disorder impairs a student's ability to learn, the student has a disability and is protected by and must be served in accord with the requirements of Section 504. If the student also needs special education services as a result of this disability, the student is served under IDEA but continues to receive the protection from discrimination afforded by Section 504. *The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021*

Who can make an evaluation request for consideration of Dyslexia or a related disorder?

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). **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 processes. 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. *Resource: The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021*

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

No. The school district’s or charter school’s duty to evaluate only applies for purposes of determining eligibility and services in the school’s programs and activities during the period in which the student is eligible. According to the OCR, 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. *The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021*

What services are available at RGCCISD for students identified with dyslexia or a related disorder?

Once a student is identified with dyslexic (or related) characteristics, there are several courses of action available for use depending on the needs and accommodations of the individual student.

- Instruction in the regular classroom with accommodations by the regular education teacher.
- Instruction in the regular education classroom with accommodations by the regular education teacher coupled with instruction by a dyslexia teacher in a pull-out classroom setting.
- Any accommodations should be based on the student's individual needs for the disability of dyslexia.
- Interventions in reading based on student's individual needs for the disability of dyslexia.

What is Universal 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

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 first grade and kindergarten students be screened at the end of the school year. RGCCISD will assess each grade level at the times listed below:

Grade Level	Timeframe For Testing	Notification of Results
Kindergarten	By the end of the school year	May
First Grade	By January 31st	February

Resource: *The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021*

What is Response to Intervention?

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. RGCCISD students who are identified as at risk for dyslexia, will be provided with targeted intervention by the appropriate staff four times a week for 45 minutes each day.

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.

What Can Parents 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 your child's abilities.

Parent Suggestions for Student Success:

- 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.
- Reading to child 15 minutes a day or acquiring audiotapes of books for read along.
- Help child 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.

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 your 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

Dyslexia Resources for Parents

Resources:

- Talking Book Program, State of Texas – www.tsl.state.tx.us/tbp/
- Dyslexia Handbook (English) Updated 2018 - <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2018-Dyslexia-Handbook-Approved-Accommodated-12-11-2018.pdf>
- *Parenting a Struggling Reader* by Hall, S. & Moats, L. (2002) Broadway Books
- *Learning Outside the Lines* by Mooney, J. & Cole, D.: Simon & Schuster
- *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Shaywitz, Sally
- The International Dyslexia Association – www.interdys.org
- LD---Online --- www.ldonline.org (type “Dyslexia” in the search box)
- Texas Scottish Rite Hospital – www.tsrhc.org/p_child_development.cfm
- Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic --- www.rfbd.org
- Learning Ally - www.learningally.org/Parents/Dyslexia-Resources
- Learning Disability Association of America – www.lidaamerica.org/parents
- Center for Parent Information and Recourses - www.parentcenterhub.org/ld/

Spanish Resources:

- Dyslexia Handbook (Spanish) Updated 2018
https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/Spanish_Dyslexia_Handbook_2018.pdf
- International Dyslexia Association - www.interdys.org - Refer to the following fact sheets:
 - AD/HD and Dyslexia
 - Adolescents and Adults with Dyslexia
 - At Risk Students English Language Learners
 - Dyslexia and the Brain
 - Dyslexia Basics
 - Dyslexia-Stress-Anxiety Connection
 - Effective Reading Instruction for Students with Dyslexia
 - Evaluating Professionals
 - Gifted and Dyslexic
 - Spelling
 - Understanding Dysgraphia
- ¡Colorín Colorado! - www.colorincolorado.org - Refer to the following:
 - For Families
 - What you can do at home
 - Helping your child succeed at school
 - Let’s read
- LD---Online En Español --- www.ldonline.org/espanol (type “Dyslexia” in the search box)
- Center for Parent Information and Recourses - www.parentcenterhub.org/ld/ (Click on en español)

**For additional information regarding the RGCCISD
Dyslexia Program, contact:**

**Maricela O. Garcia
Director for Special Services
(956) 370-4582**

**Monique P. Villarreal
Director for 504/Dyslexia
(956) 370-4583**

**Jessica Z. Ramirez
Dyslexia Strategist
(956) 370-4589**