

Excelsior ISD

Dyslexia Plan 2025-2026



Excelsior ISD does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, or gender in the educational programs and activities which it operates.

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The Dyslexia Handbook and Updates may be referenced by clicking the link below:

[Dyslexia Handbook & Updates](#)

I. Definition of Dyslexia

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003

(1) “Dyslexia” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.

(2) “Related Disorders” includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

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

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 and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Consequences may include difficulties in phonological awareness that 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.

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

- Reading words in isolation
- Accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored without prosody)
- Spelling
- 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 name 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

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

Risk Factors associated with Dyslexia at different stages / gradelevels:

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II. Reading and Dyslexia Screening/Timeline

Universal screening for Dyslexia is administered to all Kindergarten and First grade students at Excelsior ISD.

Kindergarten students will be screened by the end of the school year before the last day of school. First grade students will be screened in the middle of the school year no later than January 31st.

Dyslexia Screener-TPRI/CLI Engage

In 2017 the 85th Texas Legislature passed HB 1886, amending TEC §38.003, Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia to require that all kindergarten and first-grade public school students be screened for dyslexia and related disorders.

Additionally, the law requires that all students beyond first grade be screened or tested as appropriate. In response to the screening requirements of HB 1886, the SBOE amended its rule in 19 TAC §74.28, Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders. While this rule speaks primarily to evaluation and identification of a student with dyslexia or related disorders, it also requires that evaluations only be conducted by appropriately trained and qualified individuals.

All students beyond first grade will be screened or tested as appropriate. The district will choose an appropriate instrument that includes a measure of the screening criteria included in the dyslexia handbook and approved by the commissioner of education. **SCREENING is NOT a formal evaluation.**

Who May Administer the Reading and Dyslexia Screener?

A district or charter school must ensure that appropriately trained and qualified individuals administer and interpret the results of the selected screening instrument.

- An individual who is certified/licensed in dyslexia
- A classroom teacher who holds a valid certification for kindergarten and grade 1.
 - Keli Chandler, Kindergarten Teacher
 - Chloe Rogers, 1st Grade Teacher
 - Leslie Akridge- Dyslexia Coordinator

The individual who administers and interprets the screening instrument must receive training designed specifically for the selected instrument in characteristics of dyslexia and other reading difficulties and interpretation of screening results and at-risk indicators and decisions regarding placement/services.

Interpretation of Screening Data:

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

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

- Recognize the characteristics of dyslexia

The team may consist of the student's classroom teacher, the dyslexia specialist, the individual who administered the screener, a representative of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) (as appropriate), and an administrator.

It is important to remember that at any point in the data review process a referral for a *FIIE under the *IDEA may be initiated. Parents also have the right to request a FIIE at any time. Regardless of the process in place for screening and data review, whenever accumulated data indicates that a student continues to struggle with one or more of the components of reading, despite the provision of adequate instruction and intervention, the student must be referred for a full individual and initial evaluation under the IDEA.

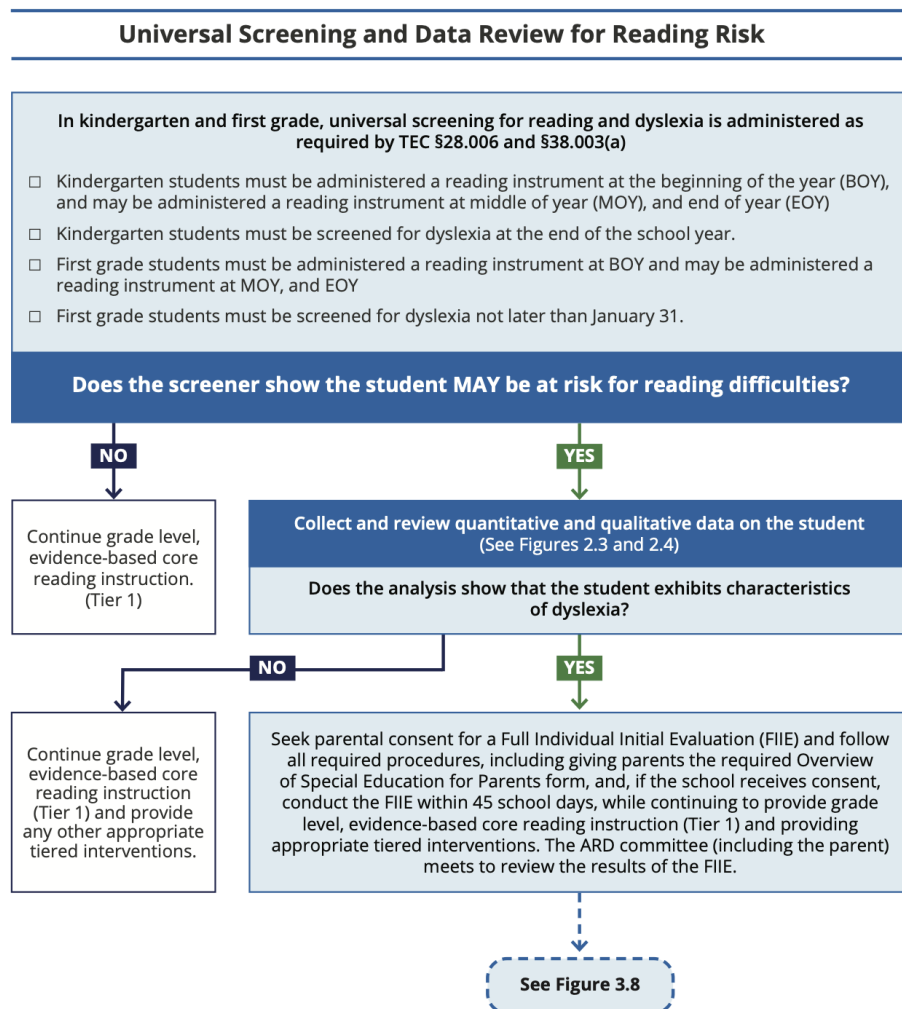
Excelsior ISD will refer to figure 2.5 in the Dyslexia Handbook to guide in the screening process.

See figure 2.5 from the Dyslexia Handbook on the next page.

*FIIE-Full and Initial Individual Evaluation

*IDEA-Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Figure 2.5 Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk



III. Procedures for Evaluation and Identification

Students enrolling in Excelsior ISD shall be evaluated for dyslexia and related disorders at any time from kindergarten through grade 12 if the student continues to struggle with one or more components of Reading. Excelsior ISD will collect additional information about the student. The process involves both state and federal requirements that must be followed. The evaluation and identification process for students suspected of having dyslexia is guided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

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.

When a concern is expressed by a parent, guardian, teacher, interventionist, etc., the following steps must be taken in the referral process:

1. A Data-Driven meeting of knowledgeable persons is held to discuss data - also called Student Success Team.
 - These meetings will be scheduled by Leslie Akridge with the assistance of Shelia Cobb & Roni Waller.
2. When the data leads to a suspicion of a disability, including dyslexia or a related disorder, the team refers the student for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIIE) (45 school days from the date of parental consent).
3. The referral packet must be completed and turned in.

When a referral for suspected disability assessment, including dyslexia and related disorders, is made, Excelsior ISD will ensure the evaluation procedure follows the timelines Texas has established for the completion of initial special education evaluations through TEC §29.004(a).

Data Gathering:

Information will be used to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. This information should include data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction and data-based documentation of repeated evaluations of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal/informal evaluation of student progress during instruction. The cumulative data will also include information from parents/guardians.

Additional information to be considered includes the results from some or all of the following:

- Vision and Hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns/interventions
- Classroom reading assessments
- Accommodations or interventions provided
- Academic progress reports (report cards)
- Gifted/Talented assessments
- Samples of schoolwork
- Parent conference notes/Survey
- Testing for limited English proficiency (all years available)
- Speech and language screening through a referral process (English and native language, if possible)
- The K-2 reading instrument as required in TEC §28.006 (English and native language, if possible)
- Reading instrument results as required in TEC§28.006
- State student assessment program as described in TEC §39.002
- Observations of instruction provided to the student
- Previous evaluations
- Outside evaluations
- School attendance
- Curriculum-based assessment measures
- Screening Data
- RTI/MTSS

Data that supports the student received conventional (appropriate) instruction and that the difficulties are not primarily the result of sociocultural factors which include language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background.

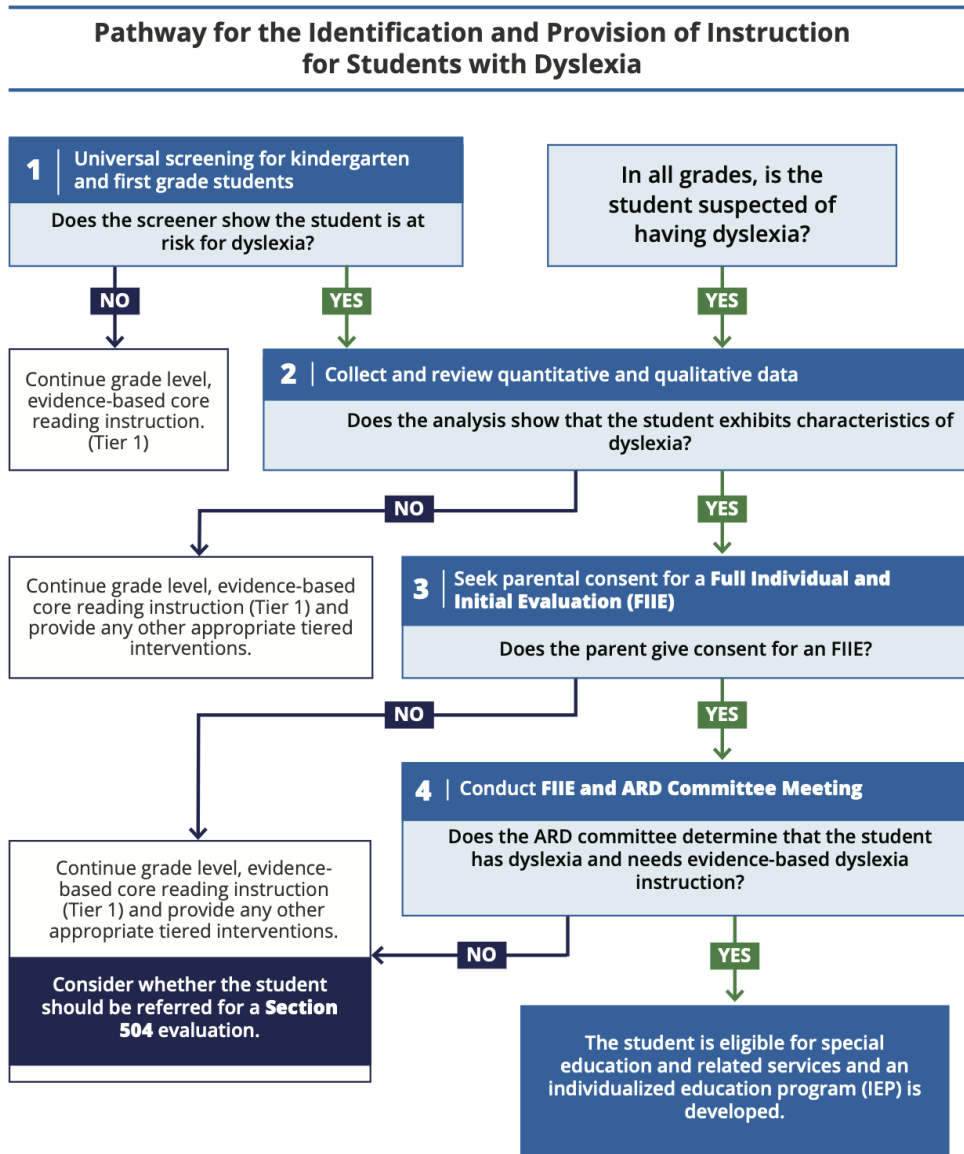
Among the actions that Excelsior ISD has available for the student is a recommendation that the student be assessed for dyslexia. Excelsior ISD recommends assessment for dyslexia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Poor performance in one or more areas of reading and/or the related area of spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade
- Characteristics and risk factors of dyslexia
- K-2 Screener Results
- Parent/Teacher Request
- Primary Reading/Spelling Characteristics of Dyslexia:
- Difficulty reading words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored)

*It is important to note that students demonstrate differences in degree of impairment

Once dyslexia has been identified as the IDEA-eligible disability, a determination must be made by the ARD committee regarding the most appropriate way to serve the student. If a student with dyslexia is found eligible for special education (i.e., a student has both the disability and requires dyslexia instruction, which is specially designed instruction), the student's IEP must include appropriate reading instruction. Appropriate reading instruction includes the components and delivery of dyslexia instruction discussed in Chapter 4: Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction. If a student has previously met special education eligibility and is later identified with dyslexia, the ARD committee should include in the IEP goals that reflect the need for dyslexia instruction and determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia instruction.

Figure 3.8. Pathway for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia



English Language 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.

Much diversity exists among English Language Learners (ELLs). The identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be in step with the student's linguistic environment and educational background. Involvement of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) in the decision-making process is required.

Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Language Learners:

Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) documentation which includes the following:

- Home Language Survey
- Designation of the student's level of language proficiency
- Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) information for four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- Instructional interventions provided to address language needs
- Information regarding previous schooling inside and/or outside the United States
- Type of language program model provided and language of instruction

Additional assessment when assessing English Language Learners:

Comprehensive oral language proficiency testing should be completed for a dyslexia evaluation due to the importance of the information for the following:

- consideration in relation to academic challenges,
- planning the assessment, and
- interpreting assessment results.

Assessment of Students Identified Outside the District:

Students identified as having dyslexia or related disorders from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the district's program. Excelsior ISD may choose to accept the outside assessment, or may re-assess the student. In either situation, the committee (ARD) will determine the identification status of a student enrolled in Excelsior ISD, and the placement of the student in the dyslexia program(s).

IV . Instruction for Students with Dyslexia

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, Excelsior ISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in TEC §38.003:

The board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder.

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

The following procedures must be followed:

- Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia are made by a committee (Student Success Team) that is knowledgeable about the instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia.
- Excelsior ISD shall use an approved reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that incorporates all the components of instruction and delivery of instruction.
 - Critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction: Phonological 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.
- Excelsior ISD must provide each identified student access at his/her campus to an instructional program that meets the requirements in 19 TAC §74.28(c) and to the services of a highly trained individual in dyslexia and related disorders.
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components. (19 TAC §74.28).
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in the professional development activities specified by Excelsior ISD, and/or campus planning and decision making committee which shall include the instructional strategies indicated above (19 TAC §74.28).
- Excelsior ISD uses the following programs for dyslexia instruction:
 - Reading By Design

Excelsior ISD shall provide a parent education [brochure](#) for parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders on the district website. The brochure should include the following:

- Characteristics of dyslexia/related disorders
- Information on evaluation, identification and diagnosis
- Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia
- Awareness of information on classroom accommodations

Both the dyslexia coordinator 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 and teachers of dyslexia programs.

Student Progress Reports:

Any student that is provided an evidence-based reading program must have a progress report prepared and communicated to a parent specifically on the student's progress as a result of that program at least once per grading period. To the extent that an IEP goal progress report would not comply with this requirement for a student receiving special education and related services, a separate progress report should be sent to comply with TEC §29.0031(d).

Providers of Dyslexia Instruction:

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(d) and must deliver the instruction with fidelity. This includes training in critical, evidence-based components of dyslexia instruction such as phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. In addition, they must deliver multisensory instruction that simultaneously uses all learning pathways to the brain, is systematic and cumulative, is explicitly taught, uses diagnostic teaching to automaticity, and includes both analytic and synthetic approaches.

A provider of dyslexia instruction:

- must be fully trained in the LEA's adopted instructional materials for students with dyslexia
- is not required to be certified as a special educator unless he or she is employed in a special education position that requires the certification.
 - Excelsior ISD-Leslie Akridge

V . Student Monitoring and Dyslexia Program Exit Criteria (Optional)

Upon successful completion of Excelsior ISDs program, as measured by student achievement, teacher input, and program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals, students will be exited from the district dyslexia program(s). Additional criteria for exit may include but is not limited to: grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessment data, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, teacher and/or parent observations/checklists, and individual dyslexia program requirements.

Students that have completed the Excelsior ISD dyslexia program will receive regular monitoring during the first year .

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

- Progress reports
- Report cards
- State assessment data
- Teacher reports/checklists
- Parent reports/checklists
- Counselor reports
- Other program reports
- Additional assessment data

No one factor is sufficient to warrant exiting a student from direct dyslexia services. Dismissal is determined by 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 the 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. When a child is exited from the dyslexia program, a dismissal form will be completed and placed in the child's cumulative folder .

(NOTE: Reevaluation does not mean reassessing to establish the identification of dyslexia, but rather viewing data that supports student progress, and achievement.)

VI. Dysgraphia Identification and Services

Texas state law requires districts and charter schools to identify students who have dyslexia and related disorders. Texas Education Code §38.003 identifies the following examples of related disorders:

- developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability. Recent research in the field of dysgraphia has prompted the addition of the following guidance regarding the evaluation, identification, and provision of services for students with dysgraphia.

Dysgraphia is related to dyslexia as both are language-based disorders. Dysgraphia is a written language disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter . 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).

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 & Lombardino, 2014)

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)

Procedures for Identification

The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow Child Find procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. These procedural processes require coordination among the teacher, campus administrators, diagnosticians, and other professionals as appropriate when factors such as a student's English language acquisition, previously identified disability, or other special needs are present. The first step in the evaluation process, data gathering, should be an integral part of the district's or charter school's process for any student exhibiting learning difficulties.

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 letterslant
- Poor pencil grip
- Inadequate pressure during handwriting (too hard or too soft)
- Excessive erasures
- 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

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.

Formal Evaluation

After data gathering, the next step in the process is formal evaluation. This is not a screening; rather, it is an individualized evaluation used to gather evaluation data. Formal evaluation includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dysgraphia. Information collected from the parents/guardians also provides valuable insight into the student's early years of written language development. This history may help to explain why students come to the evaluation with many different strengths and weaknesses; therefore, findings from the formal evaluation will be different for each child. Professionals conducting evaluations for the identification of dysgraphia will need to look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student's classroom writing performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining handwriting, spelling, and written expression abilities and difficulties.

Instruction for Students with Dysgraphia:

Some students who struggle with handwriting may actually have dysgraphia. Dysgraphia may occur alone, or with dyslexia. An assessment for dysgraphia, as it relates to dyslexia, is important in order to determine whether children need additional explicit, systematic instruction in handwriting only; handwriting and spelling; or handwriting, spelling, and written expression along with word reading and decoding (IDA, 2012).

TEC §38.003(b) states, "In accordance with the program approved by the State Board of Education, the board of trustees of each school district shall provide for the treatment of any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder."

While it is important for students with dysgraphia to receive the research-based elements of handwriting, spelling, and written language instruction as part of the core curriculum, for those students who require additional supports and services for dysgraphia, instructional decisions must be made by a committee that is knowledgeable about the instructional elements and delivery of instruction that is consistent with research-based practice.

-Excelsior ISD-Leslie Akridge

VII. State and Federal Law Regarding Early Identification and Intervention Prior to Formal Assessment

State and Federal Law Regarding Early Identification and Intervention Prior to Formal Evaluation Both state and federal legislation emphasize early identification and intervention for students who may be at risk for reading disabilities such as dyslexia. Those professionals responsible for working with students with reading difficulties should be familiar with the legislation listed below.

State and Federal Laws TEC §28.006, Reading Diagnosis-This state statute requires schools to administer early reading instruments to students in grades 1 and 2 to assess their reading development and comprehension. If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties, the school must notify the students' parents/guardians. According to TEC §28.006(g), the school must also implement an accelerated (intensive) reading program that appropriately addresses the students' reading difficulties and enables them to catch up with their typically performing peers.

[TEC §38.003](#), Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia Texas state law requires that public school students be screened and tested, as appropriate, for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times in accordance with a program approved by the SBOE. The program approved by the SBOE must include screening for each student at the end of the kindergarten year and then again during first grade.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) The services offered to students who are reported to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties should align to the requirements of ESSA, which requires schools to implement comprehensive literacy instruction featuring "age appropriate, explicit, systematic, and intentional instruction in phonological awareness, phonic decoding, vocabulary, language structure, reading fluency, and reading comprehension" (ESSA, 2015).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) The most recent reauthorization of this federal act is consistent with ESSA in emphasizing quality of instruction and documentation of student progress. A process based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention is one of the criteria included in IDEA that individual states may use in determining whether a student has a specific learning disability, including dyslexia. As referenced in the 2011 letter from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to the State Directors of Special Education, states have an obligation to ensure that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of the RTI process.

Notification and Permission

When formal evaluation is recommended, the school completes the evaluation process as outlined in IDEA. Procedural safeguards under the IDEA must be followed.

**For more information on procedural safeguards, see [TEA's](#) Parent Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process (Parent's Guide) and Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

Additional Resources:

[Required Implementation of PK-2 Instruments and Dyslexia Screening for the 2025-2026 School Year and Updates Relating to Grade 7 Reading Diagnostic Administration](#)