



Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Related Disorders Program Procedures

It is the policy of the Gonzales Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability in its educational programs, services or activities, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of The Educational Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Table of Contents

- 1. Section 1- Definitions and Characteristics**
- 2. Section 2- Screening and Referral Process**
- 3. Section 3-Assessment and Identification Process**
- 4. Section 4- Dyslexia Specialists and Services**
- 5. Section 5- Parent Awareness and Resources**

Section 1

Definitions

Dyslexia

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)

The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 update pg 1

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 imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 update pg 1

Dysgraphia

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. 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.

The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 update pg 60

Mission Statement

Identify and provide students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders a multi-sensory researched-based curriculum, academic support, and help create a strong self-esteem to prepare them to be successful lifelong learners.

School Board Policies

- EHB(LEGAL): Curriculum Design - Special Programs
- EKC(LEGAL): Testing Programs - Reading Assessment
- FB(LOCAL): Equal Educational Opportunity
- BQ(LEGAL): Planning and Decision-Making Process
- EIE(LEGAL): Academic Achievement - Retention and Promotion
- AG(LEGAL): Home-Rule Districts
- EHBC(LEGAL): Special Programs - Compensatory/Accelerated Services
- EL(LEGAL): Charter Campus or Program
- EKB(LEGAL): Testing Programs - State Assessment

Program Goals

Gonzales Independent School District strives to have an exemplary program for students enrolled in grades K–12. Through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), GISD monitors students on a regular basis utilizing formal and informal observations, student data and other assessments including, but not limited, to Curriculum Based Assessments (CBA), Benchmarks and/or written evidence of curriculum-based monitoring (CBM).

Addressing our commitment, the following reflect the goals of the district dyslexia program:

- Screen, refer, and evaluate students in grades K – 12 who may be at-risk of dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders
- Provide instructional treatment options for students identified with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders
- Provide staff development that includes:
 - Characteristics of dyslexia, dysgraphia, and related disorders
 - Intervention strategies and accommodations
 - Any information regarding dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders that is deemed important by administrators, teachers, parents and/or other school staff members
- Provide a parent education program that includes:
 - Awareness of the characteristics of dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders
 - Information on testing and the educational diagnosis of dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders
 - Information on effective strategies and options for parents to use at home to effectively communicate and help their child with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders
 - Information on state assessment accommodations and/or accommodations allowed for post-secondary testing (PSAT/ACT/SAT)

Section 2

Screening Process

In accordance with state education code, Gonzales ISD utilizes a screening process for students in grades kindergarten, first, and second grades. In addition, GISD utilizes a screening process for incoming seventh-grade students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the sixth-grade reading state assessment. Those administering and interpreting the screening instruments are appropriately trained and qualified. Monitoring of all students is conducted through the use of universal screening at all grade levels.

If a student in kindergarten, first grade, or second grade is determined to be at-risk for dyslexia, parent notification is provided. In addition, a reading acceleration program is implemented and documented for these students.

Referral Process

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:

- Data-driven meeting of knowledgeable persons that MUST include a dyslexia specialist.
- Parents/Guardians can request evaluation for dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders at any time.

In addition to the state and local requirements to screen and identify students who may be at risk for dyslexia, there are also overarching federal laws and regulations to identify students with disabilities, commonly referred to as Child Find. This requires the state to have policies and procedures in place to ensure that every student in the state who needs special education and related services is located, identified, and evaluated (Gonzales ISD Operating Guidelines <https://www.gonzalesisd.net/Page/4581>).

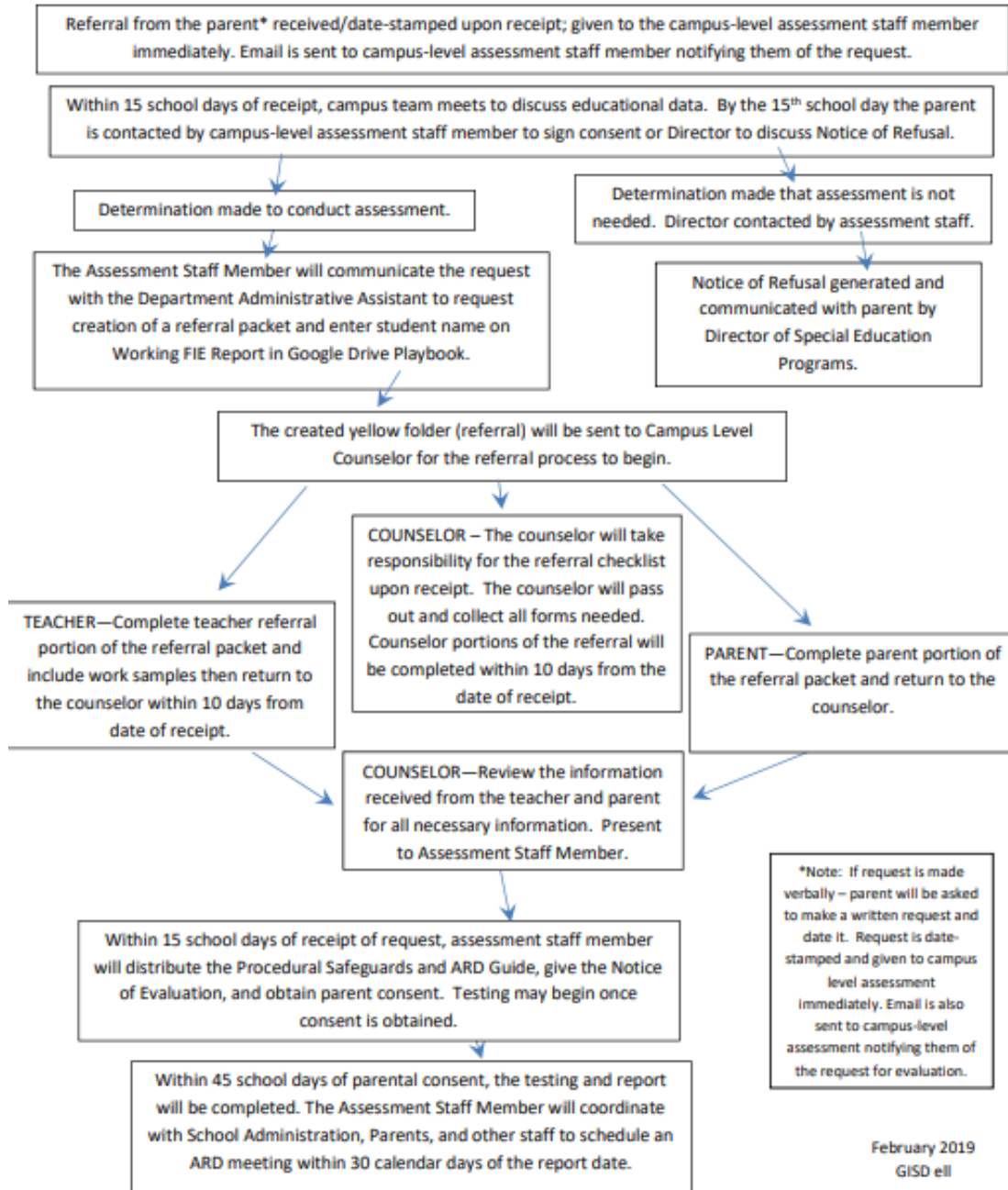
Because a student suspected of having dyslexia may be a student with a disability, the Child Find mandate includes these students. Gonzales ISD utilizes the following referral processes:

GISD School Referral Procedures



February 2019
GISD ell

GISD Parent Referral Procedures



February 2019
GISD eil

Language Proficiency Data

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

The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 Update

Additional Data Sources for English Language Learners

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

Additional assessment when assessing English Language Learners:

- Comprehensive oral language proficiency testing should be completed in English and the student's native language whenever possible.
- If the student has received academic instruction in his/her native language, as well as English, then the "Domains to Assess" need to be completed in both languages to the appropriate extent.

Interpretation:

Test results of English Language Learners will be interpreted in light of the student's: language development (in both English and the student's native language), educational history, linguistic background, socio economic issues, and any other pertinent facts that affect learning.

Section 3

Dyslexia Assessment and Identification Process

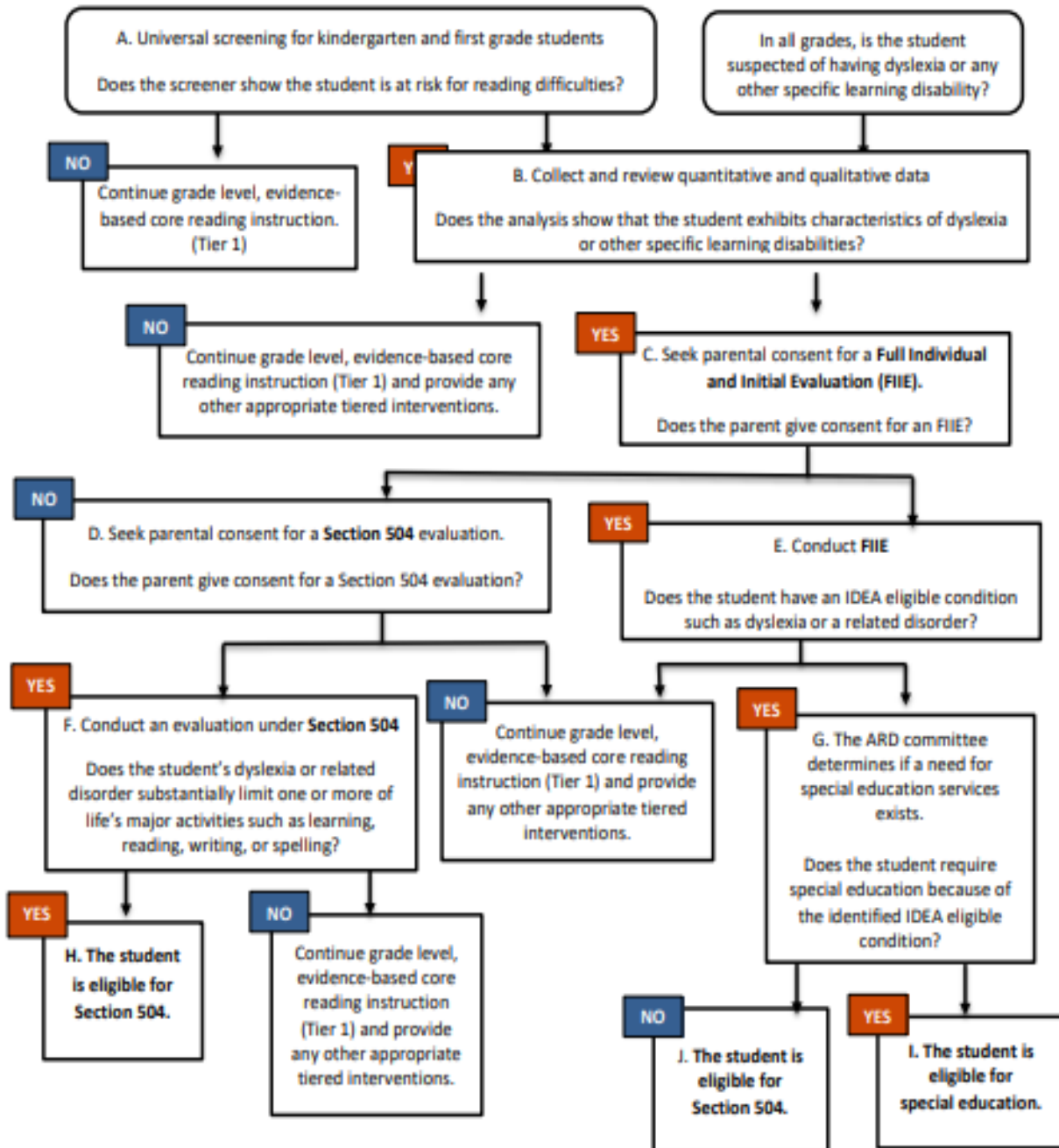
The evaluation and identification process for dyslexia can be multifaceted. The process involves both state and federal requirements that must be followed. The evaluation and identification process for students suspected of having dyslexia is guided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

In Texas and throughout the country, there is a focus on a Response to Intervention (RTI) or a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process as a vehicle for meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students. The components of the Student Success Initiative (SSI) and other state-level programs offer additional support. Current federal legislation under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), calls for the use of benchmark assessments for early identification of struggling students before they fail. In fact, state law requires the use of early reading assessments that are built on substantial evidence of best practices. Carefully chosen, these assessments can give crucial information about a student's learning and can provide a basis for the tiered intervention model. Through the tiered intervention process, schools can document students' learning difficulties, provide ongoing evaluation, and monitor reading achievement progress for students at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties.

The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 Update

TEA Pathway to Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia Flowchart

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



Procedures for Students Presenting Outside Independent Evaluations for Dyslexia Services

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

The outside independent evaluation (assessment) must:

- have been administered by an individual certified to conduct an educational evaluation and knowledgeable about dyslexia;
- be considered valid and comparable to the evaluation standards that Gonzales ISD would conduct; and
- comply with the requirements set forth in Section 504 and the TEA requirements specified in TEA's, ***The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 Update***

Additionally, §504 regulations and TEA requirements as outlined in ***The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 Update*** have identified certain expectations in regards to the referral process for a dyslexia assessment and/or eligibility. An outside independent evaluation is considered a single source of data. §504 and/or the IDEA both require that ***data must be provided from a variety of sources in determining a child's eligibility*** for services. Case law allows the District to maintain the right to conduct their own evaluation.

Section 4

Dyslexia Specialists and Services

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, dysgraphia, and/or related disorders 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 *The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 Update*.

Roles of Dyslexia/Interventionist Teachers:

- Deliver instructional reading program (Dyslexia Intervention Program) for identified dyslexic students with fidelity.
- Maintain a teacher/student ratio not to exceed the recommendation by the Dyslexia Intervention Program (extenuating circumstances may occur which will be approved by the Dyslexia Coordinator).
- 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 training at their assigned campuses to facilitate the implementation of the dyslexia program and to ensure general classroom teacher knowledge on dyslexia.
- Conduct Dyslexia evaluations for students referred for Dyslexia as recommended by the §504/ARD committee.
- Comply with all state and federal laws as well as district policies.

Fidelity of Program Implementation

Fidelity of implementation – means to carry out an instructional program in the manner in which it was designed.

Gonzales ISD utilizes research-based multisensory approaches. Currently, the Scottish-Rite Take Flight/Pre-Flight and the Multi-sensory Teaching Approach (MTA) programs are being utilized.

To meet fidelity of the Dyslexia Intervention Program, the student must receive services for the frequency and duration indicated by the program.

Critical, Evidence-Based Components of Dyslexia Instruction

- **Phonological awareness**—“Phonological awareness is the understanding of the internal sound structure of words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds. An important aspect of phonological awareness is the ability to segment spoken words into their component phonemes [phonemic awareness].” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).

- **Sound-symbol association**—Sound-symbol association is the knowledge of the various speech sounds in any language to the corresponding letter or letter combinations that represent those speech sounds. The mastery of sound-symbol association (alphabetic principle) is the foundation for the ability to read (decode) and spell (encode) (Birsh, 2018, p. 26). “Explicit phonics refers to an organized program in which these sound symbol correspondences are taught systematically” (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 53).

- **Syllabication**—“A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. Instruction must include the six basic types of syllables in the English language; closed, open, vowel-consonant, r-controlled, vowel pair (or vowel team), and final stable syllable. Syllable division rules must be directly taught in relation to the word structure” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).

- **Orthography**—Orthography is the written spelling patterns and rules in a given language. Students must be taught the regularity and irregularity of the orthographic patterns of a language in an explicit and systematic manner. The instruction should be integrated with phonology and sound symbol knowledge.

- **Morphology**—“Morphology is the study of how morphemes are combined to form words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in the language” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).

- **Syntax**—“Syntax is the set of principles that dictate sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar, sentence variation, and the mechanics of language” (Birsh, 2018, p. 26).

- **Reading comprehension**—Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader with the text to be comprehended and the specific purpose for reading. The reader’s skill in reading comprehension depends upon the development of accurate and fluent word recognition, oral language development (especially vocabulary and listening comprehension), background knowledge, use of appropriate strategies to enhance comprehension and repair it if it breaks down, and the reader’s interest in what he or she is reading and motivation to comprehend its meaning (Birsh, 2018, p.14; Snow, 2002).

- **Reading fluency**—“Reading fluency is the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension”(Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 52). Fluency also includes prosody. Teachers can help promote fluency with several interventions that have proven successful in helping students with fluency (e.g., repeated readings, word lists, and choral reading of passages) (Henry,2010,

The Dyslexia Handbook – 2021 Update

Dyslexia Record Keeping

Once a student is identified as having dyslexia and/or a related disorder, the dyslexia specialist completes the dyslexia reporting indicators into the student information system (currently Skyward). Using a data transfer process, Gonzales ISD then reports that information through the Texas Student Data System (TSDS) Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

Dyslexia Specialists **MUST** be notified of all dyslexia students who move into the district so that appropriate records can be obtained. Also, Dyslexia Specialists **MUST** be notified when a Dyslexia student moves out of the district so records can be sent to the new district.

Section 5

Parent Awareness

Texas Administrative Code 19 TAC §74.28(k)

“(k) Each school district **shall** provide a parent education program for parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. This program should include awareness of characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders, information on testing and diagnosis of dyslexia, information on effective strategies for teaching dyslexic students; and awareness of information on modification, especially modifications allowed on standardized testing.”

Gonzales ISD provides a variety of resources and educational opportunities for parents including, but not limited to, parent meetings and roundtable discussions, printed notifications, phone calls, and links to various related websites through the district website.

A complete copy of the Dyslexia Handbook, 2021 Update, can be accessed at the following link:

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/texas-dyslexia-handbook-2021.pdf>

Dyslexia Resources for Parents

In Gonzales ISD, students identified with dyslexia are provided personalized login information and individual accounts for both *Bookshare* and *Learning Ally*, programs that allow for electronic access to digitally-recorded materials for students with print disabilities.

Resources:

- *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
- Talking Book Program, State of Texas – www.tsl.state.tx.us/tbp/
- Learning Ally - www.learningally.org/Parents/Dyslexia-Resources
- Learning Disability Association of America – www.lidaamerica.org/parents
- Center for Parent Information and Resources - www.parentcenterhub.org/ld/

Spanish Resources:

- International Dyslexia Association - www.interdys.org
- ¡Colorín Colorado! - www.colorincolorado.org
- LD--Online En Español -- www.ldonline.org/espanol (type “Dyslexia” in the search box)
- Center for Parent Information and Resources - www.parentcenterhub.org/ld/ (Click on *en español*)