**Welcome to the Walcott Independent School District's Dyslexia and Related Disorders Website!**

This website is designed to share information with parents, guardians, students and anyone else interested in dyslexia, dysgraphia, reading and the WISD dyslexia and related disorders program. It is updated regularly, so visit often.

**Our Mission**

The mission of Walcott Independent School District’s dyslexia and related services program is to properly identify students with dyslexia and dysgraphia, provide academic support that meets their individual needs and assist the student in developing skills to compensate for any difficulties they may have in order to become successful individuals.

**Dyslexia Defined**

As defined in TEC §38.003 (The Dyslexia Law):

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

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

The International Dyslexia Association’s definition of dyslexia states:
 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.

Dysgraphia is 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.

**Informational Brochures**

**Dyslexia Brochure**[**Dysgraphia Brochure**](https://ccisdnet-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/g/personal/lhardcas_ccisd_net/EQLNdnYtdARBugUrCvZEuwgBWfRkqDZxG6ECi2s5Luah7w?e=dYaUum)

**What If I Suspect My Child Has Dyslexia or Dysgraphia? ​**

First and foremost, discuss your concerns with your child’s classroom teacher. He or she may be able to reassure you that your child is making appropriate progress. If you continue to be concerned about your child’s progress, contact your child’s assistant principal in writing, expressing your concerns. All referrals are processed through the Student Success Team (SST). The SST will meet and decide whether the district suspects dyslexia or dysgraphia. If so, your child will be referred for a dyslexia or dysgraphia assessment as well as evaluation for either Section 504 or Special Education. If your child is currently eligible for either Section 504 or Special Education, please contact the appropriate committee with your concerns.

## TEXAS DYSLEXIA LAW

Texas is unique in that it has a law to specifically identify and address the needs of the student with dyslexia.

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**Dyslexia
Texas Administrative Code §74.28 (State Board of Education Rule) §74.28. Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders.**

1. The board of trustees of a school district must ensure that procedures for identifying a student with dyslexia or a related disorder and for providing appropriate instructional services to the student are implemented in the district. These procedures will be monitored by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) with on-site visits conducted as appropriate.
2. A school district's procedures must be implemented according to the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved strategies for screening, and techniques for treating, dyslexia and related disorders. The strategies and techniques are described in "Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders," a set of flexible guidelines for local districts that may be modified by SBOE only with broad-based dialogue that includes input from educators and professionals in the field of reading and dyslexia and related disorders from across the state. Screening should be done only by individuals/professionals who are trained to assess students for dyslexia and related disorders.
3. A school district shall purchase a reading program or develop its own reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders that is aligned with the descriptors found in "Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders." Teachers who screen and treat these students must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components described in the “Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders.” The professional development activities specified by each district and/or campus planning and decision making committee shall include these instructional strategies.
4. Before an identification or assessment procedure is used selectively with an individual student, the school district must notify the student’s parent or guardian or another person standing in parental relation to the student.
5. Parents/guardians of students eligible under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, §504, must be informed of all services and options available to the student under that federal statute.
6. Each school must provide each identified student access at his or her campus to instructional programs required in subsection (c) of this section and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. The school district may, with the approval of each student’s parents or guardians, offer additional services at a centralized location. Such centralized services shall not preclude each student from receiving services at his or her campus.
7. Because early intervention is critical, a process for early identification, intervention, and support for students at risk for dyslexia and related disorders must be available in each district as outlined in the “Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders.”
8. 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.

Source: The provisions of this §74.28 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 4311; amended to be effective September 1, 2001, 25 TexReg 7691; amended to be effective August 8, 2006, 31 TexReg 6212; amended to be effective August 24, 2010, 35 TexReg 7211.

The [**Dyslexia Handbook**](https://tea.texas.gov/academics/dyslexia/) outlines the guidelines that TEA recommends districts follow to comply with the dyslexia law.

**Links**

[**TEA Dyslexia Website**](http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=25769814312)
[**TEA Dyslexia Brochure**](http://www.region10.org/r10website/assets/File/Dyslexia%20Brochure_Eng2014%281%29.pdf)
[**Programa de conocimiento de dislexia para los educadores y padres**](http://www.region10.org/r10website/assets/File/dyslexia_brochure_span.pdf)
[**El Manual Sobre la Dislexia**](http://www.region10.org/r10website/assets/File/TEA_Dyslexia_Handbook_SpanishwithTabs120814.pdf)

## ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF DYSLEXIA

The identification and intervention process for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia is multifaceted. These processes involve both state and federal requirements that must be followed. Frequently in Texas, dyslexia and/or dysgraphia identification and intervention happens through general education rather than special education. Special education and the assessment through IDEA 2004 may occur when dyslexia and/or dysgraphia is associated with complicating factors, thus requiring more support than what is available through the general education dyslexia and related disorders program.

**Prior to Assessment and Identification**

In Texas and throughout the country, there is a focus on a Response to Intervention (RtI) or tiered intervention 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) 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 assessment, and monitor reading achievement progress for students at risk for dyslexia or other reading/writing difficulties.

While not required prior to the assessment and identification of dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, RTI is considered best practice.

**Evaluation Procedures**

If a decision is made to evaluate a student for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, consent will be obtained from the parent or guardian via Section 504 or IDEA procedures. Walcott ISD uses previously collected, as well as current information, to evaluate the student’s academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student’s improved academic performance

**Cumulative Data**

The academic history of each student will provide the school with the cumulative data needed to ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having dyslexia and/or dysgraphia is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading. This information should include data that demonstrates that the student was provided appropriate instruction and include data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. This cumulative data also includes information from parents/guardians.

Sources and examples of cumulative data include, but are not limited to:

* Vision and hearing screening
* Teacher input
* Report cards
* Samples of classwork
* K - 2 reading assessment
* Intelligence quotient testing
* State assessment results (if applicable)
* Full Individual Evaluations (if applicable)
* Outside assessments (if applicable)
* Speech and Language assessments (if applicable)
* Attendance records
* Curriculum Based Assessments
* Second Language Learner information such as
	+ Home Language Surveys
	+ English Proficiency data
	+ TELPAS
	+ Language of instruction and intervention information

**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 involves multiple sources of data, including informal, criterion, curriculum and norm referenced data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. Professionals conducting evaluation for the identification of dyslexia and/or dysgraphia will need to look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student’s classroom reading performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining reading and spelling abilities and difficulties.

Domains assessed for dyslexia include:

* Academic achievement
	+ Letter knowledge
	+ Reading words in isolation
	+ Decoding nonsense words
	+ Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy)
	+ Reading comprehension
	+ Spelling
* Cognitive areas associated with dyslexia
	+ Phonological/Phonemic Awareness
	+ Rapid Naming
* Other optional areas
	+ Listening comprehension
	+ Orthographic processing
	+ Phonological memory

**Identification of Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia**

The identification of dyslexia and/or dysgraphia is made by a §504 committee or, in the case of a special education referral, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. In order to make an informed determination, either committee must include members who are knowledgeable about the student being assessed, assessments used, and meaning of the collected data. Additionally, the committee members should have knowledge regarding the reading process; dyslexia and related disorders; dyslexia and/or dysgraphia instruction; and district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for assessment.

In Walcott ISD, assessment results are first reviewed by a Dyslexia/Dysgraphia Assessment Committee (DAC) and recommendations regarding eligibility are made to the §504 or ARD committee. The DAC members look beyond scores on standardized assessments alone and examine the student’s classroom reading and writing performance, educational history, and early language experiences to assist with determining reading and spelling abilities and difficulties.

To be identified with dyslexia, there must be a preponderance of data supporting:

* A pattern of low reading and spelling skills and
* An underlying cognitive deficit in either
	+ phonological/phonemic awareness (or history of such deficit)
	+ rapid symbolic naming
	+ orthographic processing
* That is unexpected for the student in relation to the student’s other cognitive abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction.

**Re-evaluations for Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia**

According to the International Dyslexia Association, “Dyslexia is a lifelong condition. However, with proper help, many people with dyslexia can learn to read and write well. Early identification and treatment is the key to helping individuals with dyslexia achieve in school and in life."

TEA does not require students with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia to undergo re-evaluation therefore, formal re-evaluations are not conducted. However, students will be re-evaluated for the need for continued services periodically.

**Parent Request for Evaluation and Identification**

Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time. Once a parent request for dyslexia and/or dysgraphia 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 believe the student has a disability. If a disability is suspected, the student needs to be evaluated following the guidelines outlined in this chapter. If the school does not suspect a disability and determines that evaluation would not be warranted, the parents/guardians must be given a copy of their due process rights. While §504 is silent on prior written notice, best practice is to provide a parent the reasons an evaluation is denied.

**Privately Obtained Evaluations**

A parent/guardian may choose to have his/her child evaluated by a private diagnostician or other source. To be valid, this assessment must comply with the requirements set forth in §504 and the guidelines in the Dyslexia Handbook.  The evaluation provided is part of the evaluation data but does not, independently, create eligibility.

Outside evaluations will be reviewed by the SST (including the dyslexia teacher) and a decision whether to refer for a dyslexia evaluation under Section 504 or IDEA will be made. If the SST does not refer for evaluation, the parents/guardians must be given a copy of their due process rights. While §504 is silent on prior written notice, best practice is to provide a parent the reasons an evaluation is denied. If evaluation is recommended, consent for an evaluation will be obtained from the parent/guardian. If necessary, additional formal evaluation will be conducted and all data reviewed by the DAC team.

**Testing/Assessment Resources**

[**Parenting Perspectives: Understanding Test Scores**](https://ccisdnet-my.sharepoint.com/personal/lhardcas_ccisd_net/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=Kui44GJhrrqz53NP7mOkc6wDcVsRvWs0t9Ky7aVCVMY%3d&docid=06877e9f1578d4f3c98cb97586e1bc5b0)
[**Handy Handouts, Testing Tips!**](https://ccisdnet-my.sharepoint.com/personal/lhardcas_ccisd_net/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=CV9YeMNpG3XWVaMJg3riwgqEJVk2poGlGlQdPUaF%2bts%3d&docid=09ba0fca26ef642ba827250be76021acf)
[**Handy Handouts: Testing Tips - Spanish**](https://ccisdnet-my.sharepoint.com/personal/lhardcas_ccisd_net/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=ShEBYhPkv3bCJjL5hLRcnljpoUKuUZjpt2EKl8k9Mmk%3d&docid=0cd2cd8ca381047acaf33fc2bf467b45a)
[**NASP Test Scores: A Guide to Understanding and Using Test Results**](https://ccisdnet-my.sharepoint.com/personal/lhardcas_ccisd_net/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=2EL2PGgbg5FcOGhYrDmB2dzA%2bsgNx97tSOf9hOium94%3d&docid=066db8ddcc5f9452e9e608ddb7519d133)
[**IDA Testing and Evaluation**](https://ccisdnet-my.sharepoint.com/personal/lhardcas_ccisd_net/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=LHOqs0uixvx8ycfU3GS9FABYD4V3ezJMGv4i%2b1YYZyk%3d&docid=0af629c96081448d8a7fba3a593e93e93)