



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

TITLE: Identification and Educational Support of Students with Characteristics of Dyslexia

NUMBER: BUL-045788.0

ISSUER: Beth Kauffman, Associate Superintendent
Division of Special Education

DATE: February 6, 2018

ROUTING

All Locations
 Local District Superintendents
 Local District Directors
 Instructional Directors
 Special Education Administrators
 Psychological Services
 Administrative Staff
 Division of Special Education Staff
 Charter School Staff
 School Psychologists
 Special Education Teachers
 General Education Teachers

POLICY: The purpose of this Bulletin is to provide guidelines, raise awareness, and increase understanding of the characteristics of dyslexia. Additionally, this Bulletin outlines a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for addressing dyslexia in the general education program. The Bulletin provides guidance on the assessment of students referred for a suspected disability, including dyslexia, and for making recommendations on how to best address the unique educational needs of students.

School communities and Individualized Educational Program (IEP) teams should understand that:

- Many students with dyslexia can be supported in general education programs with targeted interventions and/or appropriate supports;
- “Specific Learning Disability” (SLD) is an umbrella term and does not prohibit the use of the term “dyslexia” when determining special education eligibility and educational services; and
- Core deficits associated with dyslexia will be assessed when considering special education eligibility under the category of SLD.

District schools will establish a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and will use phonological processing assessment measures to determine the unique educational needs of students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia.

MAJOR CHANGES: This is a new policy Bulletin.

BACKGROUND: In 2015, AB 1369 became law in California, requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop program guidelines for dyslexia to be used by general and special education teachers and parents, to identify and assess pupils with dyslexia, and to plan, provide, evaluate, and improve education services to pupils with dyslexia. Additionally, Section 56334 augmented existing language in



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BACKGROUND (Continued): the California Education Code to read, “the state board shall include ‘phonological processing’ in the description of basic psychological processes in Section 3030 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.”

On June 20, 2017, the LAUSD Board of Education passed Board Resolution 101-16/17: *Recognizing and Addressing the Educational Implications of Dyslexia in LAUSD Schools*.

GUIDELINES: The following guidelines apply:

1) **Definition of Dyslexia**

Dyslexia is a 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. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension, difficulty with vocabulary and background knowledge due to reduced reading experiences, as well as social-emotional and behavioral issues. (International Dyslexia Association IDA 2002).

The impact of dyslexia is different for each person and depends on a number of risk factors, including the severity of the condition, and protective factors including the effectiveness of instruction or remediation. Dyslexia affects people from different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds nearly equally. Dyslexia affects individuals throughout their lives. However, its impact can vary at different stages in a student’s life. Learning needs related to dyslexia exist on a continuum; schools should address the diverse needs of individual students within an integrated MTSS.

Students who have dyslexia, or exhibit characteristics of dyslexia, are general education students first, can typically be educated in general education classrooms, and will benefit from a wide variety of targeted interventions and/or appropriate supports. Those supports must include a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to reading and language instruction that is implemented by trained educators.

Required supports may include various accommodations and assistive technology. Students with dyslexia sometimes require the support of a 504 Plan and those students with dyslexia in its most severe forms may meet eligibility criteria for special education under the category of SLD, which is defined in California regulations pertaining to students who qualify for special education services, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 3030(b)(10) .



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GUIDELINES (Continued):

While many students may struggle with acquiring the skills required for efficient reading for a variety of reasons, students with dyslexia have specific characteristics that contribute to their academic challenges. These characteristics can be evidenced in different combinations or clusters ranging from mild to severe. The academic impact of dyslexia can manifest differently at different stages of a student's educational career.

A. Primary characteristics of dyslexia include:

- Difficulties reading words in isolation.
- Inability to remember high frequency words.
- Difficulties decoding unfamiliar words.
- Slow, inaccurate, or labored oral reading.
- Difficulties with spelling and written expression.

B. Early childhood indicators most associated with dyslexia may include difficulties with:

- Directionality (turning books right-side up and turning pages in the correct direction).
- Telling or retelling a story.
- Remembering the letters in their name or some letters of the alphabet.
- Pronouncing familiar words.
- Learning and naming colors, shapes, days of the week.
- Reciting the alphabet or days of the week sequentially.
- Naming familiar objects quickly or automatically.

C. Reading and spelling deficits most often associated with dyslexia include:

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonological 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/fluency).
- Memory for rules and representations of word (orthography/spelling).

D. Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include a variety of challenges with:

- Acquiring fluent reading skills.
- Aspects of reading comprehension.
- Written language.
- Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences.



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- Social emotional development (low academic self-concept, low self-esteem, anxiety about making mistakes, negative coping mechanisms)
- Behavior (avoidance of academic tasks, frustrated, resistant or defiant, appear to lack motivation).

2) English Learners (EL) and Dyslexia

Dyslexia is found in all student populations and in people within all cultures and in all languages. It is important to distinguish between poor English reading skills that result from dyslexia, and those resulting from learning English as an additional language.

Since vocabulary knowledge and phonological awareness are associated with success in reading, young English Learners who enter school with a limited vocabulary in English and limited or nonexistent literacy in their native language lack the prerequisite skills that facilitate reading development and require educational approaches that address these needs. The difficulties that these young English Learners may demonstrate should not be confused with the reading difficulties of dyslexia.

It is also important to remember that young English Learners are often learning to read a language that they do not yet speak proficiently and, as a result, have difficulty connecting the words they read with the meaning of the word. English Learners often struggle with a basic awareness of the sounds (phonemes) of the language they are learning, many of which are different from or additional to the sounds of their native language, and therefore challenging to distinguish. English Learners may also experience reading difficulties because they may have a limited English vocabulary.

English Learners need:

- Extra support in oral language development as a foundation for literacy instruction and reading interventions.
- Repetition and adjustment of the speed and complexity of language in instructions and explanations.
- Extra time to process and sufficient time to respond.
- Ample time to interact and develop language and conversation skills, with frames and examples of language structures.



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GUIDELINES (Continued):

Refer to the LAUSD Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department's webpage for more information about the learning profile and needs of English Learners.

While differentiating the challenges of English Learners from the signs that might indicate dyslexia can be a challenge, careful evaluation at the earliest stage possible is necessary with English Learners, just as it is for native English speakers. Measures of critical foundational skills, such as phonological awareness and rapid naming (two major predictors of early reading ability and dyslexia), should be assessed in both the native and English languages when possible – because phonological awareness and rapid naming are strong indicators of later literacy outcomes. Significantly, these early literacy skills transfer across languages.

3) Layered Continuum of Support for Students With or Suspected of Having Dyslexia within the General Education Program

Early intervention is critical in addressing the needs of students with or suspected of having dyslexia. Early intervention can have a significant impact on the student's ability to overcome the academic challenges associated with dyslexia. The District provides resources to assess and support students at every level of the continuum through a MTSS framework. MTSS is defined as a systemic, continuous framework predicated on high-quality first instruction, data-based decision making, evidence-based interventions, and assessment practices that are applied across all levels of the system, to align resources and supports necessary for each student's academic, behavior, and social success.

Within MTSS, all students first receive evidence-based high quality instruction. Educators plan collaboratively to deliver instruction seamlessly across a continuum of layered interventions and supports. Students move fluidly through the 3 Tiers of interventions and supports, based on universal screening and progress monitoring data.

Tier 1 represents the supports and interventions that all students receive, Tier 2 supports and interventions are what some students receive, and Tier 3 supports and interventions are reserved for a few students who may require the highest level of support. As student needs increase in intensity, the duration (length of time), frequency (how often) interventions are provided, and intensity (narrower instructional focus) between the tiers increases. Additionally, the Academic Engaged Time (AET), as the number one predictor of student achievement, increases as student needs increase through the Tiers.



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GUIDELINES (Continued):

Current District practices for universal screenings and periodic academic assessments, as well as curriculum-based assessments, may assist in identifying students that manifest dyslexia risk factors and may inform student-specific, targeted interventions when needed. Once students that are “at risk” for dyslexia are identified, Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions which provide direct, multisensory, explicit, structured and sequential instruction are warranted. Frequent progress monitoring over time is necessary to determine if interventions are effective, and when it may be appropriate for a student to access more intensive intervention.

The Student Support and Progress Team (SSPT) should be addressing the needs of any student who is not making progress or who is unresponsive to intervention. Students may be referred for consideration of special education eligibility due to dyslexia, depending on the student’s reading performance; reading difficulties; poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction; and teachers’ input. However, lack of implementation of MTSS, including SSPT, at a school site should not be considered a reason to deny a parental request for a special education assessment.

4) Assessment to Consider Eligibility for Special Education Services

A comprehensive evaluation to consider special education eligibility requires the use of a variety of sources of information and data-gathering tools by a multidisciplinary team, in order to address student strengths, areas of need, and special education eligibility criteria. When considering special educational eligibility under the category of SLD for students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia, the following areas of assessment should be considered:

A. Psycho-educational Comprehensive Assessment

Conducted by a school psychologist, using the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing – Version 2 (CTOPP-2) or other appropriate instruments, to ensure phonological processing is assessed in the areas of:

- Phonological memory;
- Phonological awareness; and
- Rapid automatic naming/processing speed.

B. Academic Assessment

Conducted by a special education teacher and the student’s classroom teacher using multiple measures, including formal and informal methods to evaluate academic areas associated with basic reading and reading fluency skills and written expression:

- Reading fluency
- Letter knowledge (name/associated sounds)



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- Reading words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar and/or nonsense words
- Reading comprehension
- Spelling (including orthographic processing and memory for letter or symbol sequences)
- Written language

Standardized tests should not be considered the sole indicators of academic achievement; consideration of curriculum based measures, classroom performance, writing samples, grade level measures, periodic assessments, universal screenings, and progress monitoring data of targeted interventions under MTSS should also inform an evaluation of a student's academic strengths and needs.

Additional assessments by other providers may be conducted, as appropriate, based on the areas related to student's suspected areas of disability, as documented on the assessment plan (e.g. language or speech and motor skills). (Attachment A – Performance and Assessment Tools)

C. English Learners (EL)

When considering characteristics of dyslexia and/or special education eligibility for EL students, assessments should document the results of phonological awareness and rapid naming which should be assessed in English as well as in the student's primary language, as appropriate. Furthermore, assessors should attempt to rule out that the reading difficulties are not related to the student being an EL, through thorough analysis of error patterns that may be associated with a disability versus a student being a second language learner. Strategies to rule out a language difference from a disability should include documentation of any difficulties associated with learning to speak, organizing spoken language, and receptive vocabulary that exist in both the student's primary language and English. Informal and formal measures should be considered, however a determination of special education eligibility should not be made when assessment findings indicate a language acquisition trajectory typical for English Language Learners.

Please refer to the LAUSD English Learner Master Plan for further information.

D. IEP Team Eligibility Determination

Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 3030(b)(10) defines specific learning disabilities and dyslexia as follows: "Specific learning



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disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may have manifested itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The basic psychological processes include attention, visual processing, auditory processing, phonological processing, sensory-motor skills, cognitive abilities including association, conceptualization and expression. SLD does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.”

Based on the results of the assessments, an IEP team may consider that a student meets the eligibility for SLD presenting with the unique profile of dyslexia if the student evidences:

- Average cognitive abilities.
- Unexpected lack of appropriate academic progress (in the areas of reading, spelling/written expression).
- Phonological processing deficits.
- Academic deficits not primarily due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage, limited English proficiency, limited school experience, poor attendance, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, or visual, hearing or motor impairment.

Should a student be found eligible under the category of SLD with or without dyslexia, the IEP Team will ensure that the present levels of performance identify the student’s unique learning profile and needs, appropriate educational goals will be developed based on the aforementioned needs, and the IEP team will complete the SLD Certification page to indicate appropriate areas of processing and academic deficits.

Should the student not meet the criteria for SLD, the IEP team should consider the student’s unique learning profile and appropriate interventions to address their learning challenges, including whether the student may be referred for a Section 504 Plan when appropriate.

AUTHORITY: This is a policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

RELATED RESOURCES: BUL-6269.1: Multi-Tiered System (MTSS) of Behavior Support for Students with Disabilities, Issued March 6, 2017



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**RELATED
RESOURCES
(Continued):**

Assembly Bill 1369, relating to special education Frazier. Special education: dyslexia, approved by the Governor October 8, 2015

Board Resolution 101-16/17: *Recognizing and Addressing the Educational Implications of Dyslexia in LAUSD Schools*, Passed June 20, 2017

California Education Code Section 56337.5: Eligibility Criteria for Special Education and Related Services on the Basis of a Specific Learning Disabilities

California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Division 1, Chapter 3, Individuals with Exceptional Needs, sections 3000-3100. § 3030. Eligibility Criteria.

California Dyslexia Guidelines California Department of Education, Issued October 13, 2017

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/documents/cadyslexiaguidelines.pdf>

Definition of Dyslexia International Dyslexia Association. <http://eida.org/>

Definition of MTSS, California Department of Education. (July 23, 2015)
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscomprti2.asp>

IDEA 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs

ASSISTANCE:

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ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A: Performance and Assessment Tools

PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT TOOLS

ATTACHMENT A

This list of performance and assessment measures is not exhaustive

AREA	General Education Program/Initial Screenings	Resource Specialist Teacher	School Psychologist
Phonological & Phonemic Awareness	<p>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS): First Sound Fluency (FSF) (K)</p> <p>DIBELS: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) (K-1)</p> <p>Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL): DIBELS in Spanish</p> <p>Phonological Awareness Skills Screener for Intervention (PASI): (K-2 & Struggling Learners)</p> <p>CORE: Assessing Reading Multiple Measures: Phoneme Deletion (K-3), Phonological Segmentation (K-1), Phoneme Segmentation (2-12), Spanish Phonemic Awareness (K-2)</p>	<p>Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement - 3rd edition (KTEA-3)</p> <p>Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Oral Language-4th edition (WJ-IV): Segmentation and Sound Blending</p>	<p>Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing-2 (CTOPP-2): Phonological Awareness Composite - Elision, Blending Words and Phoneme Isolation or Sound Matching subtests make up this composite</p> <p>Test of Auditory Processing (TAPS-3): Word Discrimination, Phonological Segmentation, Phonological Blending</p> <p>WJ-IV: Segmentation, Sound Blending, Sound Awareness</p>
Alphabet Knowledge	<p>DIBELS: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (K-1)</p> <p>Reading A to Z Alphabet Naming Assessment https://www.readinga-z.com/assessments/alphabet-letter-naming/</p>	<p>WJ-IV: Spelling of Sounds (Phoneme Knowledge)</p>	<p>Developmental Tasks of Kindergarten Readiness (DTKR)</p>
Sound Symbol Recognition	<p>DIBELS: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)</p> <p>Reading A-Z: Alphabet Naming Assessment https://www.readinga-z.com/assessments/alphabet-letter-naming/</p> <p>Quick Phonics Screener http://www.wovsed.org/RtI%20Forms/Other%20RtI%20Forms/QuickPhonicsScreener.pdf</p>		

PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT TOOLS ATTACHMENT A
This list of performance and assessment measures is not exhaustive

AREA	General Education Program/Initial Screenings	Resource Specialist Teacher	School Psychologist
Decoding	<p>DIBELS: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (K-2)</p> <p>DIBELS: Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) (1-6)</p> <p>Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR): Oral Reading Fluency Passages (7-12) http://rti.dadeschools.net/pdfs/ORF-OPM_grs1-5.pdf</p>	<p>KTEA-3: Nonsense Word Decoding</p> <p>WJ-IV Ach: Word Attack</p>	
Encoding	<p>Words Their Way: Primary Spelling Inventory (K-3)</p> <p>Words Their Way: Elementary Spelling Inventory (1-6)</p> <p>Words Their Way: Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (Upper Elementary, Middle, High School, Postsecondary)</p>		
Word Recognition	<p>CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures: Graded High-Frequency Word Survey (K-4)</p>	<p>KTEA-3: Letter & Word Recognition</p> <p>WJ-IV Ach: Letter-Word Identification</p>	
Fluency/ Rapid Naming	<p>CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures: MASI Oral Reading Fluency Measures (1-6)</p>	<p>KTEA-3: Word Recognition Fluency, Associational Fluency, Silent Reading Fluency</p> <p>WJ-IV Ach: Oral Reading Fluency, Sentence Reading Fluency</p> <p>KTEA-3 - Rapid Automatized Naming, Letter Naming Facility, Object Naming Facility</p>	<p>CTOPP-2: Rapid Symbolic Naming Composite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Digit Naming and Rapid Letter Naming • Rapid Non-Symbolic Naming Composite (Alternative for Ages 4-6) • Rapid Color Naming and Rapid Object Naming <p>CAS2: Planned Codes and Matching Numbers</p> <p>Test of Information Processing TIPS</p> <p>WJ-IV: Rapid Picture Naming, Retrieval Fluency</p>

PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT TOOLS

This list of performance and assessment measures is not exhaustive

AREA	General Education Program/Initial Screenings	Resource Specialist Teacher	School Psychologist
Memory Span & Working Memory			<p>Test of Auditory Processing (TAPS-3): Numbers Forward (MS) and Reversed (WM), Word and Sentence Memory (MS)</p> <p>CTOPP-2: Phonological Memory Composite, Memory for Digits (MS), and Non-word Repetition</p> <p>Cognitive Assessment System – Second Edition (CAS2): Supplemental Composite, Working Memory and Executive Function with Working Memory</p> <p>Test of Information Processing TIPS</p> <p>WJ-IV: Sentence Repetition</p>
Spelling	<p>CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures: Core Spanish Spelling Inventory (K-6) Grade level/classroom Spelling Tests</p> <p>Words Their Way: Primary Spelling Inventory (K-3)</p> <p>Words Their Way: Elementary Spelling Inventory (1-6)</p> <p>Words Their Way: Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (Upper Elementary, Middle, High School, Postsecondary)</p>	<p>KTEA-3: Spelling, Orthographic Processing Cluster - Spelling, Letter Naming Facility, and Word Recognition Fluency</p> <p>WJ-IV Ach: Spelling of Sounds (Spelling Nonsense Words)</p>	
Reading Comprehension	<p>CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures: San Diego Quick</p> <p>CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures: Assessment of Reading Ability (K-11), Reading Maze Comprehension Test (2-10)</p>	<p>KTEA-3: Reading Comprehension</p>	

PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT TOOLS ATTACHMENT A
This list of performance and assessment measures is not exhaustive

AREA	General Education Program/Initial Screenings	Resource Specialist Teacher	School Psychologist
Reading Comprehension	TRC (Text Reading Comprehension)	WJ-IV Ach: Passage Comprehension	
Sources for additional screeners:	https://dibels.org/dibelsnext.html http://www.rti4success.org/resources/tools-charts/screening-tools-chart http://www.sedl.org/reading/rad/chart.html http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/cali/elementary_assessments_4-9-12.pdf http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/cali/secondary_assessments_4-9-12.pdf		