LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN

TITLE:	Identification and Educational Support of Students with Characteristics of Dyslexia	**ROUTING** All Employees All Locations
NUMBER:	BUL-045788.1	
ISSUER:	Jose Soto, Ed.D. Executive Director Division of Special Education	
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POLICY:

The purpose of this Bulletin is to update guidelines, promote continued awareness, and increase the use of effective interventions for struggling readers who have characteristics of dyslexia. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for addressing dyslexia in the general education program are updated. Guidance on the assessment of students referred for a suspected disability, including dyslexia, is provided, and the responsibilities of Special Education providers are outlined.

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 are expected to utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). They will use phonological processing assessment measures to determine the unique educational needs of students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia.

MAJOR CHANGES:

Guidelines are updated based on new research and practices used in the District.

GUIDELINES:

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 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.*

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 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. It 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. Students with characteristics of dyslexia require a structured literacy approach to intervention. See the Resources section for additional information on structured literacy.

Required supports may include various accommodations and assistive technology. Students with dyslexia sometimes require the support of a 504

Plan. 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).

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, and 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 words (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.
- 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, appears to lack motivation).

2. English Learners (EL) and Dyslexia

Dyslexia is found in all student populations and people within all cultures and in all languages. It is important to distinguish between English reading difficulties 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, English Learners who enter school with a limited vocabulary in English and limited literacy in their native language lack the prerequisite skills that facilitate reading development and require educational approaches that address these needs. The difficulties that English Learners may demonstrate should not be confused with the reading difficulties of dyslexia.

It is also important to remember that English Learners are often learning to read a language 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 primary language and, therefore, challenging to distinguish.

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.

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

Careful evaluation at the earliest stage possible is necessary with English Learners, just as it is for native English speakers. Measures of critical pre-literacy skills, such as phonological awareness and rapid naming (two major predictors of early reading ability and dyslexia), should be assessed in both the primary and English languages when possible, as these are strong indicators of later literacy outcomes. Additionally, early literacy skills can transfer across languages, meaning that English Learners with strong pre-literacy skills in their first language are likely to also have those skills in English.

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 significantly impact 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 an 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. Based on universal screening and progress monitoring data, students move fluidly through the 3 Tiers of interventions and supports.

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.

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 structured literacy interventions which provide direct, multisensory, explicit, cumulative, 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 address the needs of students who are not making progress or are 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, the 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 using various sources of information and data-gathering tools by a multidisciplinary team to address student strengths, areas of need, and special education eligibility criteria. When considering special education 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 words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar and/or nonsense words
- Reading comprehension
- Spelling (including orthographic processing and memory for letter or symbol sequences)
- Written language
- Reading fluency

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 the 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 and 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 a 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, special education eligibility should not be determined when assessment findings indicate a language acquisition trajectory typical for English Learners.

Please refer to the LAUSD Master Plan for English Learners and Standard English Learners 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 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 evidence:

- 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.

5) Supports and Services within Special Education Programs

Students with characteristics of dyslexia are served in a continuum of placements. Their IEP team, rather than their eligibility, determines their placement based on the Least Restrictive Environment.

IEP teams are encouraged to add a foundational reading goal to the IEP for any student struggling with decoding. A foundational reading goal should be in the area of phonemic awareness, phonics, or fluency based on student needs. Educators are reminded that word-level reading needs drive fluency delays, so fluency challenges are often best addressed through phonemic awareness and phonics.

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

RELATED RESOURCES: 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

District Considerations for Universal Dyslexia Screening: Ensuring Appropriate Implementation and Instruction for English Learners, Fall 2022 https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/35/publication%20 docs/ CGCS_Universal%20Dyslexia%20Screening_.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

Definition of Structured Literacy. https://dyslexiaida.org

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

Reference Guide 43782, Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework, dated July 1, 2018.

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment A: Performance and Assessment Tools
Attachment B: MTSS and Foundational Reading Development Table

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

Area	General Education Program/Initial Screenings	Resource Specialist Teacher	School Psychologist
Phonological & Phonemic Awareness	**DIBELS:** Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) (K-1) **PAST**: Phonological Awareness Screening Test (K-3) **mCLASS Lectura Spanish Assessment** **Phonological Awareness Skills Screener for Intervention (PASI)**: (K-2 & Struggling Learners) **CORE: Assessing Reading Multiple Measures:** Phoneme Deletion (K-3), Phonological Segmentation (K-1), Phoneme Segmentation (2-12), Spanish Phonemic Awareness (K-2)	**Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement - 3rd edition (KTEA-3)** **Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Oral Language-4th edition (WJ-IV)**: Segmentation and Sound Blending	**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. **Test of Auditory Processing (TAPS-3):** Word Discrimination, Phonological Segmentation, Phonological Blending **WJ-IV**: Segmentation, Sound Blending, Sound Awareness
Alphabet Knowledge	**DIBELS:** Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (K-1) **Reading A to Z Alphabet Naming Assessment** https://www.readinga-z.com/assessments/alphabet-letter- naming/	**WJ-IV:** Spelling of Sounds (Phoneme Knowledge)	**Developmental Tasks of Kindergarten Readiness (DTKR)**
Sound Symbol Recognition	**DIBELS:** Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) LETRS Spelling Screeners Basic Spelling Screeners (K-12) Instructions for Administration of the LETRS Spelling Screener		
Decoding	**DIBELS:** Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (K-2) **DIBELS:** Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) (1-6) **Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR):** Oral Reading Fluency Passages (7-12) http://rti.dadeschools.net/pdfs/ORF- OPM_grs1-5.pdf	**KTEA-3:** Nonsense Word Decoding **WJ-IV Ach:** Word Attack	

Area	General Education Program/Initial Screenings	Resource Specialist Teacher	School Psychologist
Encoding	**Basic Spelling Screener LETRS** [Basic Spelling Screener (K–2) | Learn71Instructions for Administration of the LETRS Spelling Screeners | Learn71](#) **LETRS**		
Word Recognition	**CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures**: Graded High-Frequency Word Survey (K-4)	**KTEA-3:** Letter & Word Recognition **WJ-IV Ach:** Letter-Word Identification	
Fluency/ Rapid Naming	**CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures**: MASI Oral Reading Fluency Measures (1-6)	**KTEA-3:** Word Recognition Fluency, Associational Fluency, Silent Reading Fluency **WJ-IV** Ach: Oral Reading Fluency, Sentence Reading Fluency **KTEA-3** - Rapid Automatized Naming, Letter Naming Facility, Object Naming Facility	**CTOPP-2**: Rapid Symbolic Naming Composite, Rapid Digit Naming and Rapid Letter Naming, Rapid Non-Symbolic Naming Composite (Alternative for Ages 4-6), Rapid Color Naming and Rapid Object Naming **CAS2:** Planned Codes and Matching Numbers **Test of Information Processing TIPS** **WJ-IV**: Rapid Picture Naming, Retrieval Fluency
Memory Span & Working Memory			**Test of Auditory Processing (TAPS-3**): Numbers Forward (MS) and Reversed (WM), Word and Sentence Memory (MS) **CTOPP-2:** Phonological Memory Composite, Memory for Digits (MS), and Non-word Repetition **Cognitive Assessment System – Second Edition (CAS2):** Supplemental Composite, Working Memory, and Executive Function with Working Memory **Test of Information Processing TIPS WJ-IV:** Sentence Repetition

Area	General Education Program/Initial Screenings	Resource Specialist Teacher	School Psychologist
Spelling	**CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures**: Core Spanish Spelling Inventory (K-6) Grade level/classroom Spelling Tests **Words Their Way:** Primary Spelling Inventory (K-3) **Words Their Way:** Elementary Spelling Inventory (1-6) **Words Their Way:** Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (Upper Elementary, Middle, High School, Postsecondary)	**KTEA-3:** Spelling, Orthographic Processing Cluster - Spelling, Letter Naming Facility, and Word Recognition Fluency **WJ-IV** Ach: Spelling of Sounds (Spelling Nonsense Words)	
Reading Comprehension	**CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures**: San Diego Quick **CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures**: Assessment of Reading Ability (K-11), Reading Maze Comprehension Test (2-10) **TRC** (Text Reading Comprehension)	**KTEA-3:** Reading Comprehension **WJ-IV** Ach: Passage Comprehension	

MTSS and Foundational Reading Development Table

MTSS & Foundational Reading Development		
Student reading skills develop on a continuum, and there are a variety of reasons a student might struggle to develop word reading fluency. A research-guided approach to RTI/MTSS serves all students, including students with characteristics of dyslexia.		
Tier	Definition	Components of a Research-Guided Approach for Foundational Literacy Instruction
1	***Core Curriculum:*** *All students, including students who require curricular enhancements for acceleration. Least frequent data collection. Broadest curriculum coverage.* *When employing an evidenced-based approach, approximately 70-80 percent of students will have their reading needs met in Tier I.*	● Foundational reading instruction at the word level (phonemic awareness, phonics, morphology) for our youngest learners 　○ 30-40 minutes for K-1 　○ 20-30 minutes for 2-3 　○ Continued support in developing morphological knowledge and multisyllabic reading skills for older students 　○ Integration of practice/application opportunities for fluency building 　○ *This instruction should be in addition to knowledge and vocabulary-building activities that engage students with complex text.* ● Assessment of foundational skills 　○ Benchmark assessments in early literacy for our youngest learners Continued monitoring of fluency development for our older learners

MTSS & Foundational Reading Development

Student reading skills develop on a continuum, and there are a variety of reasons a student might struggle to develop word reading fluency. A research-guided approach to RTI/MTSS serves all students, including students with characteristics of dyslexia.

Tier	Definition	Components of a Research-Guided Approach for Foundational Literacy Instruction

2	***Strategic/Supplemental Interventions:** Small groups of students who need more support in addition to the core curriculum and more minutes than Tier I.*
	
	15-20 percent of students will likely require Tier II support to develop fluent reading skills.
		● Foundational reading instruction with increased explicitness and practice opportunity paced based on student mastery
		● In addition to Tier I instruction, students receive targeted intervention for a minimum of 10 weeks addressing gaps in their foundational reading developing
		  ○ 3-5 times a week for 20-40 minutes based on student needs
		  ○ 1:3-1:5 student-to-teacher ratios
		● The progress of these students is monitored during this intervention

3	***Intensive Interventions:** Individual and very small groups of students who need intensive individualized interventions. Most frequent assessment and narrowest focus of the curriculum.*
	
	5-10 percent of students will likely require Tier III support to develop fluent reading skills.
		● Highly explicit and systematic instruction in foundational reading
		● Instruction paced based on student mastery
		  ○ Daily for 40-60 minutes
		  ○ 1:1-1:3 student-to-teacher ratios
		  ○ Extended intervention period-- due to intensive needs, Tier III students will require long-term supports to develop foundational reading skills, particularly if they are older
		● Regular progress monitoring (weekly or biweekly, depending upon the skills)
		● Attention to accommodations and supports in Tier I setting that ensure access to content knowledge.

MTSS & Foundational Reading Development		
Student reading skills develop on a continuum, and there are a variety of reasons a student might struggle to develop word reading fluency. A research-guided approach to RTI/MTSS serves all students, including students with characteristics of dyslexia.		
Tier	Definition	Components of a Research-Guided Approach for Foundational Literacy Instruction
		● *Students with IEPs and characteristics of dyslexia that require long-term access to Tier III intervention may be referred to the Intensive Diagnostic Educational Centers program (IDEC).*