

160-4-2-.39 DYSLEXIA IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(a) **Aphasia** – a condition characterized by either partial or total loss of the ability to communicate verbally or through written words. A person with aphasia may have difficulty speaking, reading, writing, recognizing the names of objects, or understanding what other people have said. The condition may be temporary or permanent and shall not include speech problems caused by loss of muscle control.

(b) **Dyscalculia** – the inability to understand the meaning of numbers, the basic operations of addition and subtraction, or the complex operations of multiplication and division or to apply math principles to solve practical or abstract problems.

(c) **Dysgraphia** – difficulty in automatically remembering and mastering the sequence of muscle motor movements needed to accurately write letters or numbers.

(d) **Dyslexia** – a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and 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.

(e) **Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook (Handbook)** - an informational handbook, developed by the Georgia Department of Education, that includes guidance, technical assistance, and training to assist all local educational agencies (LEA) in the implementation of evidence-based practices for instructing students with characteristics of Dyslexia.

(f) **Other Disorders** – aphasia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia.

(g) **Parent** – parent, legal agent, legal guardian, or kinship caregiver.

(h) **Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool** – an assessment that measures a student’s ability to demonstrate phonological awareness skills, phonemic decoding efficiency skills, sight word reading efficiency skills, rapid automatic naming skills, and accuracy of word reading on grade-level text.

(i) **Universal Screening** – the administration of an assessment to all students in a grade level to identify students who may be at risk for low learning outcomes.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Universal Screening

1. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, LEAs shall, at a minimum, annually conduct a Universal Screening of all students in kindergarten through grade 3 for characteristics of Dyslexia and may screen students for Other Disorders.

(i) The following students should be exempted from the Universal Screening of all students in kindergarten through grade 3 for characteristics of Dyslexia and Other Disorders:

(I) A student who transfers from another school or system in Georgia who had a Universal Screening in the current school year; or

(II) A student from another state who enrolls for the first time in Georgia in kindergarten through grade 3 and presents documentation that he or she had the Universal Screening or a similar screening in the current school year.

(III) A student whose intellectual disability precludes the presence of dyslexia.

2. This Universal Screening must be conducted utilizing a Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool. The Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool(s) must include, at a minimum, the following components:

(i) Phonological and phonemic awareness;

(ii) Sound symbol recognition;

(iii) Alphabet knowledge;

(iv) Decoding skills;

(v) Rapid naming or reading fluency for students with some reading ability; and

(vi) Encoding skills.

3. A list of Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tools that were approved by the State Board of Education and meet these minimum requirements is available in the Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook. LEAs may use any of the Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tools in the Handbook to conduct their Universal Screening.

(i) If an LEA chooses a screening tool that is not included in the Handbook, the LEA must submit that tool to the State Board of Education for review and approval prior to use in the Universal Screening.

(b) Interventions and Supports

1. If the Universal Screening data and additional information support that the student has characteristics of Dyslexia or Other Disorders, the LEA will begin or continue academic intervention.
2. Upon the start of academic intervention for students who have characteristics of Dyslexia or Other Disorders, the LEA must monitor the student's progress at least once per month, or more often as determined by school personnel.
3. LEAs should refer to the Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook for guidance, technical assistance, and resources to assist with their implementation of evidence-based practices for instructing students with characteristics of Dyslexia. The Handbook includes, at a minimum:
 - (i) Evidence based practices designed specifically for students with characteristics of Dyslexia;
 - (ii) Characteristics of targeted instruction for Dyslexia;
 - (iii) Guidance on developing instructional plans for students with characteristics of Dyslexia;
 - (iv) Best practices toward meaning-centered reading and writing; and
 - (v) Suggested training programs.

(c) Parental Consent and Support

1. LEAs must notify Parents of the Universal Screening prior to the implementation of the screening.
2. Parental consent is not required for the administration of the Universal Screening.
3. If the LEA determines that additional screening is necessary for a student who exhibits characteristics of Dyslexia or Other Disorders, parental consent must be obtained prior to the administration of the additional screening. The parental consent or refusal documentation shall remain on file as a part of the student's education record.
4. For students who exhibit characteristics of Dyslexia or Other Disorders, LEAs must provide Parents with resources, information, and materials regarding Dyslexia (e.g., Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook and the International Dyslexia Association Dyslexia Handbook).

(d) Reporting

1. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, by June 30 of each year, LEAs shall provide the following data to the Georgia Department of Education:

(i) The number of students in kindergarten through grade 3 who were identified as having characteristics of Dyslexia;

(ii) The number of students in kindergarten through grade 3 who participate in additional screening for characteristics of Dyslexia in a school year;

(iii) The number of students in kindergarten through grade 3 who were newly identified as having characteristics of Dyslexia in a school year;

(iv) The process or tool used to evaluate student progress;

(v) The number of students in kindergarten through grade 3 who participated in interventions; and

(vi) The number of trained LEA personnel or licensed professionals used to administer the Qualified Dyslexia Screening Tool.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.6.

Adopted: August 25, 2022

Effective: September 14, 2022