

Dyslexia Rule Review Committee

Final Report and Recommendations

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Dyslexia Rule Committee Process



Charge to the Committee

Ensure the development of a policy that provides for timely and effective referral and support for students in kindergarten and grades one through three who have been identified as having characteristics of dyslexia, other disorders, or both.

Recommendations

Rule Format

Stand Alone Rule

The new rule should provide as much clarity and precision as possible to provide consistency across the state while providing the flexibility districts need to implement the rule in their local context.

The dyslexia rule should **not** include:

- Any mention of tiers or levels.
- Any timelines or requirements for moving between tiers.
- Any mention of "individualized setting." Some have concerns about "small groups," as that might suggest placing students in another room. If "small groups" is used, then there should be a statement that this can occur in the students' general education class. Also, "small group" should not be defined.

Definition and Characteristics of Dyslexia and Related Disorders

The definitions of dyslexia and other disorders contained in S.B. 48 are sufficient and can be included as-is in the new rule.

List of “Approved Qualified” Dyslexia Screening Tools

The Georgia Department of Education should publish a list of valid and reliable screening tools that meet the requirements of S.B. 48 in the Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook or other guidance outside the board rule.

The GaDOE should convene a task force of experts to assist in developing a process for initial screening that can also be used by districts. This task force should be responsible compiling and maintaining this list. As part of the initial screening process, clear criteria including psychometric measures of quality should be developed to aid in state and local processes.

Districts should be required to use a tool from the list, or if districts use a tool that is not on the list, they should submit the alternate tools to GaDOE for review and approval.

Final list of tools meeting the requirements of S.B. 48 be narrowed using a clear, rigorous process of identification.

Processes for Obtaining Parent Consent for Dyslexia Screening

The new rule should make clear that parent consent is not required for universal screening or the types of informal diagnostic assessment teachers use regularly to inform instruction, but is needed for additional, formal assessment.

The rule language regarding the information parents should receive about dyslexia should mirror the language in S.B. 48.

Process for Referring K-3 Students

Rule should require dyslexia screening for all K-3 students, including those who transfer from another district in Georgia or other state. Some students may be exempted.

The frequency of screening should be twice per year for kindergarten students — winter and spring — and once per year for students in grades 1-3.

The rule or related guidance about dyslexia screening should make clear that students who are screened do not need to be screened in every skill listed by S.B. 48. Rather, they should be screened in the skills that are most relevant to and predictive of literacy success at a given grade level.

Process for Referring K-3 Students (cont.)

Best practices for identifying students with reading difficulties would include intervention support for students who are identified as at-risk on the initial screening. Prior to conducting any additional more in-depth assessments, the school-based team should consider both screening data, and additional qualitative and quantitative data when making decisions about future assessments.

Specific recommendations from each of the three subgroups of the committee can be found in the separate appendix containing each group's revisions to the Arkansas dyslexia rule.

Process for Monitoring Progress of Students Identified as having Characteristics of Dyslexia

The committee believes that it should be made clear in the rule that progress monitoring is a requirement which mirrors the language in S.B. 48.

The statement should say "once per month or more often as needed as determined by school personnel."

Specific recommendations from each of the three subgroups of the committee can be found in the separate appendix containing each group's revisions to the Arkansas dyslexia rule.

Further Discussion Points

The committee felt the type of instruction that best supports dyslexic students is also important to all readers. One possible method for this would be to include language in the rule that students should not be identified based on inadequate instruction.

Further Discussion Points (cont.)

There was a great deal of confusion over and discussion about the difference between screening tools and diagnostic assessment and which term(s) should be used in the rule.

This confusion seems to rest on the following points, which may require careful clarification in rule or guidance:

- i. Universal screening is conducted for all students, while dyslexia screening is required for all K-3 students per S.B. 48. In each case, these screenings are for all students and therefore do not require parental consent.
- ii. If a universal screening tool meets the requirements of S.B. 48 then universal screening and dyslexia screening may be one and the same. If not, dyslexia screening would need to occur in addition to universal screening.
- iii. If additional formal assessment — whether termed “screening” or “diagnostic assessment” — is conducted for specific students identified by universal or dyslexia screening to examine skill deficits more deeply for the purposes of identifying characteristics of dyslexia and/or fulfilling Child Find obligations, this additional assessment would require parental consent.

Further Discussion Points (cont.)

The committee felt strongly that the Handbook should be revised to provide even more guidance to districts. A few key components and issues are:

- Every attempt should be made to publish the revised Handbook as soon as possible after the rule is adopted.
- All processes included in the Handbook should be written in a way that districts can have a model to replicate in their own work.
- Where appropriate, the Handbook should show connections to other processes such as MTSS/RTI. The process for identifying and supporting students with dyslexia should naturally flow into other processes that support struggling or developing students.

Further Discussion Points (cont.)

Committee participants expressed concern about how well elementary teachers in Georgia are prepared to teach literacy.

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