



## Dyslexia FAQ

### What is Dyslexia?

Minnesota Statute 125A.01 states: (125A.01) states: "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent recognition of words 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 the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. [What is Dyslexia?](#)

### How is dyslexia identified?

Identification of students with characteristics consistent with dyslexia begins with screening efforts to evaluate and monitor over time through our process of RtI. [Indicators of Dyslexia \(pgs. 3-6\)](#)

Indicators of Dyslexia:

- Struggle with Phonemic Awareness
- Struggle with Decoding
- Struggle with Spelling (encoding)
- Have poor Orthographic Memory and Recall
- Have a Family History

These and additional signs of dyslexia can be found at:

- [Understood.org](#)
- [Reading Rocket Website](#)
- [Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity](#)

## **How does ISD 624 Screen for Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties**

White Bear Lake Area Schools screen students using the following assessment outlined in the chart below:

White Bear Lake Area Schools screen students using multiple measures to determine students' level of grade level proficiency in reading:

- **FAST Literacy Assessments** are used by classroom teachers in Grades K-5 to identify strengths and areas for growth in letter identification, letter sounds, word decoding, and reading fluency. FAST assessments are administered to elementary students in the fall, winter, and spring.
- **Kindergarten Summer Assessments** - in August, prior to the start of the school year, all kindergarten students meet one-on-one with a Kindergarten teacher to assess their reading readiness skills (rhyme, initial sounds, word awareness, book skills)
- **Oral Reading Record** is used by classroom teachers in Grades K-5 to determine their instructional reading level. Reading accuracy and comprehension are measured to determine an appropriate reading level.
- **Grade Level Assessments** are used by classroom teachers in Grades K-2 assess reading proficiency in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, word analysis, fluency, vocabulary development and comprehension.
- **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)** is used by classroom teachers in Grades 1-5 to assess and monitor students growth in key areas of reading development.
- **ACCESS Test** is administered to English learners in order to measure progress toward meeting Minnesota's standards for English language development.

Scores from screening **DO NOT** identify which students have dyslexia. However, an effective screening process is a first step in identifying students who:

- Are not making adequate progress toward reaching grade-level expectations of proficiency.
- Need additional systematic and explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, decoding/encoding, morphology, fluency and comprehension to achieve grade-level expectations.

**A student is diagnosed with dyslexia. What does that mean?** Having a child diagnosed with dyslexia can be an overwhelming experience. While dyslexia can make reading more difficult, with the right instruction, almost all individuals with dyslexia can learn to read. It is important to recognize that students with dyslexia have individual strengths. Dyslexia does not impair students' ability to think creatively and critically or reason abstractly. Recognizing, celebrating, and linking to students' strengths is critical in working with students with dyslexia. Many people who have dyslexia are highly intelligent and become very successful as adults.

- Learn all you can about dyslexia - understanding your child's challenges is key to getting the best help.
- Investigate dyslexia treatments and therapies - talk to your child's doctor about treatment or therapy options.
- Discuss dyslexia supports and services with your child's school - schedule a meeting with the school and bring copies of any reports from doctors and specialists.
- Talk with your child about dyslexia and help them learn how to self-advocate when they need extra help.
- Learn what you can do at home - find ways to provide multisensory experiences, which are very helpful for struggling readers.
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher - staying in contact with them can keep you on the same page about whether supports and services are working.

**Should the student be in Special Education?** Dyslexia is a medical diagnosis. The diagnosis of dyslexia alone does not assure eligibility for Special Education Services (MDE, 2011). Nor should it indicate that a student needs specific intervention for reading or other academic supports. Students eligible for Special Education Services may have a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) that significantly adversely impacts educational performance. Students with dyslexia perform at a range of levels, and a student with dyslexia may or may not meet the criteria for SLD established by state guidelines.

**How do students with dyslexia learn?** With instruction and support, students can experience academic success at school. Dyslexia has varying impacts on students - some students may experience success in the classroom with very little differentiation, just effective classroom instruction, while others may need a more comprehensive system of

support. For students whose educational performance is at an extremely low level, teachers may use a variety of multisensory instructional strategies that have been shown to be successful for students with dyslexia. It has not been proven that any specific intervention will work with all students or even all students with dyslexia. Building leaders, intervention teachers, and special education teachers in our school buildings collaborate together to ensure individual student’s needs are met. Teaching well requires being able to plan and provide instruction that is responsive to what students know and are able to do across the many aspects of literacy learning.

**Approaches to Support Students with Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties**

| School  | Home   | Community   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Core Instruction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interventions within literacy block</li> <li>• Multisensory instruction</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction</li> <li>• Curricular Modifications</li> <li>• Alternate Educational Materials</li> <li>• Assistive technology</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read-a-Louds</li> <li>• Encouraging word play</li> <li>• Asking open-ended questions</li> <li>• Homework help</li> <li>• Involvement in text</li> <li>• Technology supports</li> <li>• Alternate Educational Materials</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring services</li> <li>• Library programs</li> <li>• Psychologists</li> <li>• Speech Pathologists</li> <li>• Medical Doctors</li> <li>• Alternate Educational Materials</li> <li>• State Services</li> </ul> |

**What other support can I give the student?** It is important to recognize that students with dyslexia have a hard time reading. Reading print is a laborious task and understanding letter-sound correspondence takes repeated practice. Providing a supportive, nurturing environment is essential. Check in with the student often and stay in close contact with the teachers and family members to know how learning is going for the student.

### Where can I find more information on dyslexia?

- [Decoding Dyslexia: MN](#) - a site dedicated to raising awareness of Dyslexia in Minnesota and to empower families to support their children and improve resources for Minnesota students with Dyslexia
- [Dyslexic Advantage](#) - offers a community where people with knowledge and experiences can share and learn about Dyslexia
- [International Dyslexia Association](#) - the IDA is an organization that provides information about Dyslexia for families and educators.
- [Minnesota Department of Education](#)
- [Navigating the School System When a Child is Struggling with Reading or Dyslexia](#)
- [Orton-Gillingham MN](#)

### Who do I contact in the district if I have questions?

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