**Hughes Springs ISD**

**District Dysgraphia Plan**

 Hughes Springs ISD

 871 Taylor St.

 Hughes Springs, TX

 75656



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Last reviewed 4/2022

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**Definition of Dysgraphia**

Texas Education Code §38.003 requires school districts to consider and evaluate for dyslexia and dysgraphia:

*“Related disorders”* include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific development dyslexia, **developmental dysgraphia,** and developmental spelling disability. <http://www.statues.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003>

For purposes of identification and assessment, HSISD will use the following definition of “dysgraphia” in the following way:

*“Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder that involves handwriting. It is a written language disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter and involves not only motor skills but also language skills – finding, retrieving and producing letters, which is a sub-word level language skill. The impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling and/or composing, but individuals with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading.”*

**Primary Characteristics of Dyslexia**

• Variably shaped and poorly formed letters

• Excessive erasures and cross-outs

• Poor spacing between letters and words

• Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing

• Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip

• Heavy pressure and hand fatigue

• Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting (Andrews &

 Lombardino, 2014)

**Additional consequences of dysgraphia may also include:**

• Difficulty with unedited written spelling

• Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

**Assessment for Dysgraphia**

The process of identifying dysgraphia will follow Child Find procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. These procedural processes require coordination among the teacher, campus administrators, diagnosticians, and other professionals as appropriate when factors such as a student’s English language acquisition, previously identified disability, or other special needs are present.

● student being assessed,

● evaluation instruments being used, and

● interpretation of the collected data.

Additionally, the committee members should have knowledge regarding

● the handwriting processes;

● dysgraphia and related disorders;

● dysgraphia instruction; and

● district or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for assessment.

**Review and Interpretation of Data and Assessments**

To appropriately **understand** evaluation data, the committee of knowledgeable persons must **interpret** test results in light of the student’s educational history, linguistic background, environmental or socioeconomic factors, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

The ARD committee must first determine if a student’s difficulties in the areas of writing and spelling reflect a pattern of evidence for the primary characteristics of dysgraphia with unexpectedly low performance for the student’s age and educational level in some or all of the following areas:

● Handwriting

● Writing fluency (accuracy and rate)

● Written Expression

 ● Spelling

**Review and Interpretation of Data and Assessments continued**

Based on the above information and guidelines, should the ARD committee determine that the student exhibits weaknesses in writing and spelling, the committee will then examine the student’s data to determine whether these difficulties are **unexpected** in relation to the student’s other abilities, sociocultural factors, language different, irregular attendance, or lack of appropriate and effective instruction. For example, the student may exhibit strengths in areas such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, math reasoning, or verbal ability yet still have difficulty with writing and spelling. Therefore, it is **not** one single indicator but a preponderance of data (both informal and formal) that provide the committee with evidence for whether these difficulties are **unexpected**.

**Dysgraphia Identification**

 If the student’s difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, the ARD committee must then determine if the student has dysgraphia. The list of questions in Figure 5.3 below must be considered when making a determination regarding dysgraphia.

See figure 5.3 for a list of questions to be considered when making a determination.



**Dysgraphia Identification Continued**

The ARD committee will determine whether the student who has dysgraphia is eligible under IDEA as a student with a specific learning disability. The student is eligible for services under IDEA if he/she has dysgraphia and, because of the dysgraphia needs special education services. The October 23, 2015 letter from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) (Dear Colleague: Dyslexia Guidance) states that dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia are conditions that could qualify a child as a child with a specific learning disability under IDEA. The letter further states that there is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents. For more information, please visit <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>.

If the student with dysgraphia is found eligible for special education, the student’s IEP must include appropriate writing instruction, which might include instruction from a related services provider.

If the student is identified with dysgraphia but is not considered a student with a disability under the IDEA (because the student does not need specially designed instruction), then the student may receive appropriate accommodations and services under Section 504. Students are protected under Section 504 if the physical or mental impairment (dysgraphia) substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as the specific activity of writing. Additionally, the Section 504 committee, in determining whether a student has a disability that substantially limits the student in a major life activity (writing), must not consider the ameliorating effects of any mitigating measures that student is using.

Revision of the Section 504 Plan will occur as the student’s response to instruction and to the use of accommodations, if any, is observed. Changes in instruction and/or accommodations must be supported by current data (e.g., classroom performance and dyslexia program monitoring).

**Referral Process**

**Notification and Permission**

 When formal assessment is recommended, the school completes the evaluation

 process as outlined in IDEA.

Through the IDEA process, the school completes the evaluation as outlined using the following procedures:

1. Notify parents/guardians of the proposal to assess student for dysgraphia.

2. Inform parents/guardians of their rights under IDEA.

3. Obtain permission from parents/guardians to assess the student for

 dysgraphia.

4. Assess student, being sure that individuals/professionals who administer assessments have training in the evaluation of students for dysgraphia and related disorders (19 TAC §74.28).

**Referral Process continued**

Once assessment for dysgraphia is recommended, the procedures for Section IDEA must be followed:

1. Begin gathering data for the committee decision.

a. School Records – history of writing difficulties, vision and hearing, medical history, other assessments, any other difficulties besides handwriting

2. Collect samples of the student’s written work.

a. Worksheets or answers to question in a textbook

b. Spelling tests and Journal writing

c. Short classroom assignments (3-4 paragraphs)

d. Reports or essays (more than one page)

e. Examples of note-taking & homework assignments

3. Obtain information from the student’s parents and teachers. Areas to assess:

a. Legibility of handwriting – letter formation, size and proportion, spacing, slant, alignment, line quality, repetitive figures

4. Obtain information from the student about their handwriting (continued).

 a. Automaticity (rate), keyboarding abilities

b. Orthographic processing

c. Spelling

Test instruments and other evaluation materials must meet the following criteria:

• Be used for the purpose for which the evaluation or measures are valid or reliable

• Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely

 materials that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient

• Be selected and administered to ensure that, when a test is given to a student with

 impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the

 student’s aptitude, achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to

 measure, rather than reflecting the student’s impaired sensory, manual, or speaking

 skills

• Be selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally

 Discriminatory

• Include multiple measures of a student’s writing abilities such as informal

 assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings,

 progress monitoring data, criterion-referenced evaluations, samples of written

 work, classroom observations)

• Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions

 provided by the producer of the evaluation materials

• Be provided and administered in the student’s native language or other mode of

 communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information regarding

 what the child can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is

 clearly not feasible to provide or administer

**Domains to Assess**

Academic Skills Hughes Springs ISD administers measures that are related to the student’s educational needs. Difficulties in the areas of letter formation, orthographic awareness, and general handwriting skills may be evident dependent on the student’s age and writing development. Additionally, many students with dysgraphia may have difficulty with spelling and written expression.

Cognitive Processes The process of handwriting requires the student to rely on memory for letters or symbol sequences, also known as orthographic processing. Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses. When spelling, a student must not only process both phonological and orthographic information, but also apply their knowledge of morphology and syntax (Berninger & Wolf, 2009).

**English Language Learners**

Much diversity exists among English Language Learners (ELLs). The identification and service delivery process for dysgraphia must be in step with the student’s linguistic environment and educational background. In Hughes Springs ISD, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee, (LPAC) will be involved in the decision-making process.

Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Language Learners include:

● Home Language Survey

● Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency (oral language proficiency test and norm-referenced tests – all years available)

● Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) information for four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)

● Instructional interventions provided to address language needs

● Information regarding previous schooling inside and/or outside the United

States

● Type of language program model provided and language of instruction

**Students Presenting Outside Independent Evaluation for** **Dysgraphia**

For students who present outside independent evaluations addressing dysgraphia, the following should be considered.

The outside evaluation (assessment) should:

● Have been administered by an individual who is knowledgeable about the characteristics of dysgraphia;

● Be considered valid and comparable to the evaluation standards that Hughes

 Springs ISD would conduct.

**Student Identified Outside the District**

Students identified as having dysgraphia from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the Hughes Springs ISD program. Hughes Springs ISD may choose to accept the outside assessment or may re-assess the student. In either situation, a duly constituted campus ARD committee will determine the identification status of a student enrolled in Hughes Springs ISD.

**Programming**

Once it has been determined that a student has dysgraphia, HSISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student. The following procedures will be followed:

● The ARD committee will make instructional decisions for a student with dysgraphia.

● HSISD shall purchase a writing program or develop their own writing program for students with dysgraphia.

● Parents/guardians of students eligible under IDEA, will be informed of all

 services and options available to the student under that federal statute.

● The instructional program will be offered in a small class setting and include handwriting and spelling as appropriate.

**Program Exit Criteria**

The dysgraphia instructional program exit criteria are based on a thorough consideration of a preponderance of student data. The ARD committee will make the decision to exit a student from the District’s dysgraphia instructional program if such evidence is available to support the decision. The data may include:

● Completion and/or mastery of all the objectives in the District’s dysgraphia instructional program

● Data gathered shows consistent progression of improvement in student’s handwriting abilities.

● Lack of progress due to factors such as behavior and/or absenteeism prevent the student from benefitting from the District’s dysgraphia instructional program. **This lack of progress must be documented in either the student’s ARD minutes along with documentation indication District remediation.**

**Contacts for Dysgraphia:**

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| **Location** | **Name** | **Phone Number** |
| HSISD Admin. Building | Kristina Gardner, CurriculumAnd Special Programs | 903.639.3810 |
| Hughes Springs Elementary | Brenda Fincher, Principal | 903.639.3881 |
| Hughes Springs Junior High | John Duke, Principal | 903.639.3812 |
| Hughes Springs High School | Brian Nation, Principal | 903.639.3841 |