

## Dyslexia Frequently Asked Questions

### **Key:**

*AAC -- Alabama Administrative Code*

*ARI -- Alabama Reading Initiative*

*IEP -- Individual Education Plan*

*PD -- Professional Development*

*PST -- Problem Solving Team*

*RtI -- Response to Instruction*

*SDE -- State Department of Education*

**\*\*\*Questions and answers are arranged in order of the Dyslexia Resource Guide.**

**\*\*\*NOTE: The information provided in the Dyslexia Resource Guide is suggested, not required. LEAs have autonomy over HOW they implement dyslexia support. All resources provided are samples and examples ONLY.**

### **Introduction/Overview:**

- **What is the implementation timeline?** According to a December 11, 2015, memorandum from Dr. Bice, State Superintendent, a **sample** timeline is provided for LEA/school guidance.
- **Does everyone need to attend the Simulation Training?** Simulation training is recommended as part of dyslexia awareness. According to the AAC 20 (b) PD regarding dyslexia and implications for the classroom teachers, will be provided. This PD should target dyslexia awareness training, dyslexia screening, dyslexia-specific classroom strategies, academic accommodation, and use of assistive technology. Concerning any type of the PD listed, ARI is NOT the ONLY professional development source. For teachers who do not work directly with struggling students in reading, their awareness training may take a form other than the ARI offered simulation training. Per the AAC, the SDE will provide PD. The decisions about who receives dyslexia-specific PD, when, how much, and to what degree of intensity are local.
- **Why is the Simulation Training offered first at Grades K-2, and when will it be offered to other grades?** One of the options for simulation training was regional opportunities. To promote effective conversations, regional offerings typically target grade bands beginning with K-2 and moving up when regionally possible. This may not be the case if LEAs schedule trainings for their schools. Training schedules are subject to ARI regional staff availability.
- **Can we send a representative to attend the simulation training who can then train the rest of the school?** No. The material in this training is copyrighted, and ARI is not

authorized as “trainers of trainers.” If LEAs/schools want a “train-the-trainer” model, they must research and secure one.

- **Response to Instruction:**

- **How do we help schools restructure RtI?** The webinar located at this link is a helpful first step.  
<http://assets.alsde.edu/sites/videos/ALSDE%20Video%20Storage/Forms/Video/videoplayerpage.aspx?ID=768&FolderCTID=0x0120D520A80800FAB4F9EA05928B429679F5F51C05BD56&List=41bfd2d9-df57-4cd1-8a5e-5f6d878e9c6b&RootFolder=%2Fsites%2Fvideos%2FALSDE%20Video%20Storage%2FCSPCorrection%2FAdditional%20Content&RecSrc=%2Fsites%2Fvideos%2FALSDE%20Video%20Storage%2FCSPCorrection>
- **Can schools use the spring data for the universal screener so that the dyslexia screeners can be administered in the summer and already have the students identified when school starts?** This practice could be used for early identification, scheduling, and resource/personnel planning for the school AND the FEEDER SCHOOLS for the entering grade.
- **What if students fall below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile during the school year since we give our universal screener throughout the year? Do you only look at beginning of the year data?** According to the AAC (19)(c), “The Problem Solving Teams will analyze screening and **progress-monitoring data** to assist teachers in planning and implementing appropriate instruction and evidence-based interventions for all students with academic and/or behavioral difficulties, including students who exhibit the characteristics of dyslexia.” This language refers to a cyclical process of reviewing data and making adjustments. LEAs have complete autonomy when this data-driven process is followed.

### **Dyslexia Specific Screening:**

- **Why was the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile taken out of the screening process?** There was no language in the AAC regarding the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. The language is “below benchmark expectations.” This language is then accurate for whatever an LEA determines is “below benchmark expectations” or whatever language an assessment uses to mean “below benchmark expectations.”
- **If a student has an IEP in place, should schools administer the dyslexia screeners?** Please direct IEP questions to the Office of Special Education.
- **Do EL students receive the screeners?** It is important to remember that all EL students are not the same. They are at different academic levels much like English speaking students. Initial screening data should be used to determine the instructional and

intervention needs of EL students. The dyslexia-specific screeners are designed to provide further information regarding reading interferences such as phonemic decoding skills, accuracy of word reading, and sight word recognition. If the EL students show that they are struggling with reading based on the initial screening process, additional dyslexic-specific screening could pinpoint the problem and provide guidance regarding what intervention is needed.

- **What if a student has tested above the LEA/school’s determined “below benchmark expectations” and a parent requests screening tests be given?**

No student support should be based solely on the response to one assessment. A screening process would include multiple assessment data, class performance, teacher and parent recommendations, etc. According to the AAC (20)(e), “Independent dyslexia evaluations provided by a parent or guardian to the PST must be considered by the members of the PST.”

- **Can testing for dyslexia characteristics stop if the student passes the first two screeners?** The dyslexia-specific screening may stop, BUT the student is still on the RADAR FOR SUPPORT because he/she gave a red flag in the universal screener. Comprehension is likely the issue. The PST needs to explore other intervention/support options. For example, the student will likely need intervention, but possibly not dyslexia-specific intervention.
- **Please explain the process regarding first grade reading passages.** Concerning the dyslexia-specific screening following the universal screener at the beginning of first grade, schools may consider screening assessments like mid-year kindergarten because first graders may not enter reading at the passage level. Also, a consideration at the midyear screening for first grade might be to assess in a different order than is listed in the guide. Begin with phoneme segmentation and sight word efficiency.
- **What does screening look like in the higher grades?** It is reasonable to begin with reading accuracy on grade-level text and progress to spelling. IF the student passes both of these screenings, the issue may likely be comprehension. IF the student fails 3 of 4 screeners, the PST will determine the appropriate dyslexia-specific intervention.

### **Classroom Strategies:**

### **Accommodations and Assistive Technology:**

### **Dyslexia-Specific Intervention:**

- **How does the LEA pay for this intervention?** This is part of RtI; therefore, it is not a new financial consideration for LEAs and schools. First look closely at Tier 1 needs/trends/gaps to make sure intervention is not over used when revisions to Tier 1 delivery are needed.

- **What specifically is the intervention program?** There is no suggested one intervention program or method. Explore the resource guide for examples of interventions.
- **What exactly is a Dyslexia Specific Interventionist? How are they trained?**  
According to the AAC 20 (g) Dyslexia interventionist refers to the teacher or individual who provides dyslexia-specific intervention. The dyslexia interventionist shall have successfully completed a certification training course or shall have completed training in the appropriate implementation of the evidence-based, dyslexia-specific intervention being provided.
- **How will teacher/student scheduling be adjusted for intervention? Screening?**  
These are local decisions.
- **When do students exit the intervention program? Is it when they are above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on the universal screener or when they reach a certain level in the intervention program? If it is based on being higher than the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, we foresee a revolving door – in and out of the programs. Can LEAs/schools set our own criteria for exiting the intervention program – such as reaching a set level in the program to ensure they are solid?** Local systems have complete autonomy in deciding on exit criteria for interventions based on their data. This exit criteria should be based on intervention goals that were established at the onset of the intervention and progress monitoring data being collected during the intervention. The revisions made to the Alabama Dyslexia Resource Guide on January 7, 2016, removed language regarding the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and broadened it to “below benchmark expectations” to align with the AAC giving LEAs the autonomy to set the “expectations” based on their specific data.