

MA Dyslexia Guidelines

What do they mean for the Public Schools of Brookline?

What are the state guidelines regarding Dyslexia screening? What do they mean?

SECTION 1. [Chapter 71 of the General Laws](#) is hereby amended by inserting after section 57 the following section:-

Section 57A. The department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the department of early education and care, shall, subject to appropriation, issue guidelines to assist districts in developing screening procedures or protocols for students that demonstrate 1 or more potential indicators of a neurological learning disability including, but not limited to, dyslexia.

The Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines serve three purposes:

- To provide a set of screening **guidelines** for all students, including students demonstrating one or more potential signs of a neurological learning disability including, but not limited to, dyslexia;
- To **provide a framework of intervention** for students at risk of dyslexia and other learning difficulties that is timely and responsive; and
- To provide **a comprehensive resource** of evidence-based practices aimed at all educators to support students at risk of dyslexia and those identified as having dyslexia, consistent with and linked to other guidance from DESE.

Dyslexia Defined

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or 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.

In Massachusetts, dyslexia can be understood as one type of a specific learning disability (SLD) which is defined in 603 CMR 28.02(7)(j):

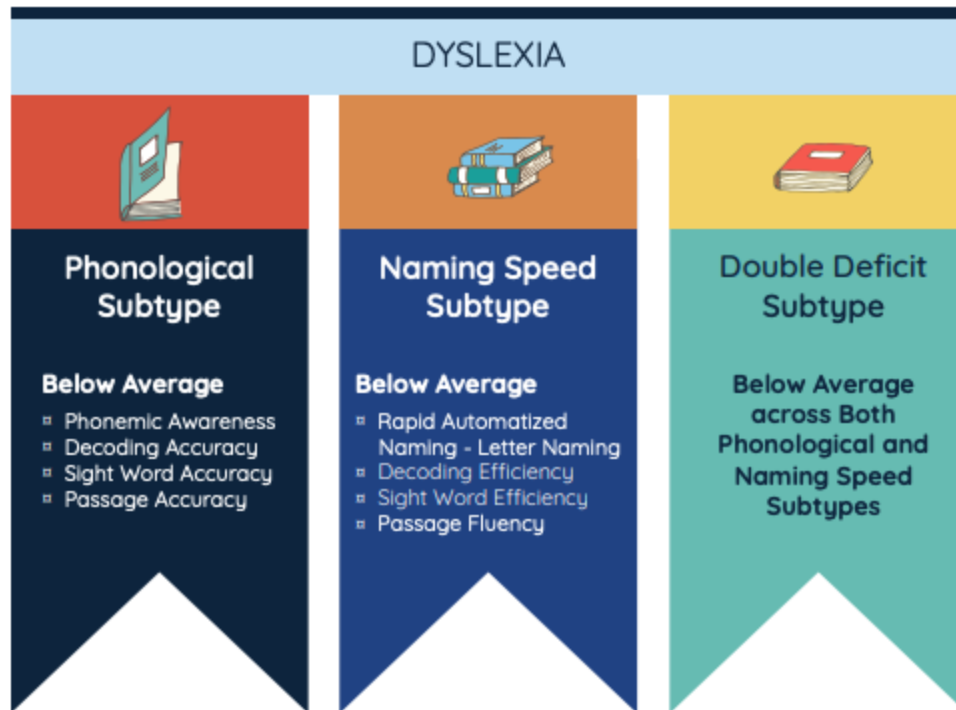
Specific Learning Disability - The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language,

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spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. Use of the term shall meet all federal requirements given in federal law at 34 CFR §§300.8(c)(10) and 300.309. Although this definition of SLD does not list particular types of specific learning disabilities, dyslexia is considered to fall into this category of learning disability. More information is located here on DESE's website.

Guiding Criteria



*Subtype determination is based on individualized analysis of patterns of weaknesses. Qualifying students may not score below average on all subtest in a particular category (Wolf & Bowers, 1999)

Purpose of the screener is to determine:

- Who is at risk?
- How significant is the risk?
- Which skill areas need support?

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Guiding Criteria Continued

An effective universal screening process for risk of dyslexia across three grade levels (K-2) will involve a team of practitioners who hold various roles within the school and district. A screening team often includes:

- General educators who have established relationships with the students and are committed to offering targeted instruction and educational supports across the MTSS tiers.
- An administrator or district leader responsible for understanding and allocating the financial, personnel, and professional development resources needed to implement universal early literacy screening.
- Instructional experts in evidence-based reading instruction (especially the foundational components in phonemic awareness and phonics) who also have an understanding of the current screener and instructional systems for literacy. Reading specialists and special educators are often trained in these areas.
- Other specialists, such as school psychologists and English language development (ELD) or English as a second language (ESL) teachers, whose expertise and knowledge are relevant.

Timeline for Implementing a Dyslexia Screener

September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify working group to interpret and implement the Dyslexia Guidelines
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Understand the purpose of the State Dyslexia Guidelines● Determine criteria for identification of a district screener
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use criteria to identify 3 screeners for further review
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Engage stakeholders in literature review and product review of selected screeners Reading Specialists, Educators, Special Educators
January-March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify screener based on feedback● Create implementation plan<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Identify protocols to implement based on student outcomes○ Identify supports for students who are identified at risk● Identify pilot CST Teams, self selected teachers
April-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Update Curriculum Sub Committee● Train pilot teachers and identified school stakeholders on use of tool and protocols form supporting students● Collect data on implementation outcomes
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Report to Curriculum Subcommittee on outcomes from pilot● Provide teachers and