

Reading Success Plan

Addressing Dyslexia and Specific Learning Disabilities

In Grain Valley Schools, we are committed to developing reading skills in our students based on the latest research and evidence-based practices for the teaching of reading. We have a strong focus on building phonemic and phonological awareness in the early years. We use a systematic phonics program in Kindergarten, first, and second grades that aligns with the core reading curriculum as well as a systematic phonics program for advanced principles in third, fourth, and fifth grade. Teachers provide instruction and support for foundational reading skills through guided reading small groups and individual instruction in the elementary grades. Students build their reading and writing skills through a workshop approach.

Our process of screening for specific reading deficiencies and responding to students' individual needs through a process of tiered interventions (MTSS or Multi Tiered Systems of Support) began in 2016. This initiative was part of a partnership with the University of Missouri and Dr. Matthew Burns, a nationally recognized researcher in literacy. When a student is identified as struggling, we utilize a menu of evidence-based interventions in small groups or individually and monitor the progress weekly. When a strategy doesn't show sufficient rate of improvement, we respond by making adjustments to the intervention and/or adding a tier 3 intervention.

The contents of this plan outline the components in more detail, but may not fully explain the extent of the work in Grain Valley Schools to ensure all students can read. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's building principal or classroom teacher if you have any questions.

Answers to Frequently-Asked Questions from Parents Regarding Reading

What does dyslexia look like?

Dyslexia is a disorder that is neurological in origin, characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities that typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language, often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction, and of which secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

Characteristics of dyslexia vary depending on students' strengths and weaknesses. Key features of dyslexia may include but are not limited to:

- Difficulty in phonological awareness skills (e.g., rhyming, segmenting, and blending sounds)
- Difficulty learning the names and sounds of letters
- Confusion of letters and words with similar appearance
- Reversals of letters and words beyond the age of seven
- Difficulty arranging letters in the correct order when spelling
- Spelling the same word in different ways on the same page
- Persistent deficits in reading despite adequate instruction

How is a Specific Learning Disability identified?

In Grain Valley schools, special education eligibility is based on the Missouri (DESE's) criteria for special education standards. Eligibility determination is two-pronged: The evaluation must show 1) An inadequate response to intervention and/or significant discrepancy from cognitive abilities and 2) An adverse effect on educational performance which necessitates specialized instruction.

What is the difference between dyslexia and a Specific Learning Disability?

Both terms identify deficits in basic reading skills and reading fluency skills. Historically, the medical field has used the term dyslexia to refer to this learning profile, and DESE has used the term Specific Learning Disability. Individuals with a medical diagnosis of dyslexia may also meet DESE criteria for a Specific Learning Disability if their deficits have an adverse effect on educational achievement which necessitates specialized instruction. Not all students with dyslexia meet DESE criteria for a Specific Learning Disability.

How does the Grain Valley School District identify and support students with reading concerns?

Grain Valley works proactively by universally screening all students to identify students at risk for reading difficulties. Students are screened at a minimum of three times per year, starting in first grade. Kindergarten students are also screened beginning mid-year. When a student's reading progress is identified as at-risk, multiple sources of data are used to confirm the need for supplemental instruction. Once students receive supplemental instruction, frequent progress monitoring data are used to determine the effectiveness of instruction.

My child has a private evaluation that identifies dyslexia. What happens next?

Parents are encouraged to share the results of their evaluation with the school team (e.g., school principal, school counselor, classroom teacher). Next steps will be determined through careful consideration of multiple sources of data, with each student's needs in mind.

What is a universal screener and what is the purpose?

A universal screener is an initial, brief assessment which focuses on critical reading skills and is predictive of future reading growth and development. FastBridge is the universal screening tool in Grain Valley.

A universal screener is:

- conducted at the beginning of the school year (or mid-year for kindergarten) to identify students who need additional support and/or alternative forms of instruction.
- followed by benchmark assessments completed mid-year and end of the year using same, comparable, and/or multiple test forms to determine reading development.

The purpose of the universal screening is:

- to identify children as *at-risk* or *not at-risk* for reading failure
- to form small groups for instruction and intervention
- to plan instruction and intervention

- to set individual goals for student achievement, and
- to set exit criteria for intervention window(s).

Who is screened?

- All students in first through eighth grade will be administered a universal screener for reading performance within 30 days from the start of school each year;
- All kindergarten students will be administered a universal screener by January 31st each year;
- Any student in K-3 who transfers and records do not include documents of a previous screening for reading.

[Click HERE for Universal Screening Assessments by Grade Level](#)

How is data obtained from the universal screener analyzed?

Grade-level or content teams of teachers along with building administration and other support staff, meet monthly as part of a systematic process to review screening data, plan for intervention, and monitor progress.

Identification of Students who are At-Risk:

Upon receipt of screening results, teachers, with the support of their team, will determine if they have a classwide need for intervention. Ten school days will be utilized for implementation of classwide interventions prior to the identification of individual students as “at-risk”.

Students identified as “at-risk” in reading, following the implementation of classwide interventions (if needed), will move to tier 2 in the Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Parents are notified by letter when this occurs (see Appendix for sample).

What is progress monitoring?

Progress monitoring is ongoing assessment performed/administered to determine student progress toward targeted goals. It is focused on specific skill deficits aligned to the needs identified through diagnostic measures. Progress monitoring is typically administered weekly or bi-weekly for Tier II and once per week or every other week for Tier III interventions.

What is the purpose of progress monitoring?

- to identify students who are not making adequate rate of improvement
- to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in order to close the achievement gap
- to compare the efficacy of different forms of instruction and/or programs

What Training do our Teachers Receive about Dyslexia and Responding to Reading Concerns?

- The Grain Valley School District provides dyslexia training to all teachers in grades Kindergarten through twelve annually as needed.
- Multi Tiered Systems of Support - teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grades and all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teachers of English Language Arts receive on-going training in the implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) including interventions for specific reading deficits, problem solving teams, and progress monitoring strategies. This training is through partnership with Dr. Matthew Burns of the University of Missouri.
- LETRS - The Science of Reading (individual teachers as needed)
- Orton-Gillingham - (individual teachers as needed)
- Sonday System - Orton-Gillingham based Reading Intervention (individual teachers as needed)
- Other resources from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:
 - [Dyslexia - The Myths and the Science](#)
 - [Dyslexia - Characteristics and Supports Pre-K through 5](#)
 - [Dyslexia - Characteristics and Supports 6 through 12](#)

IDEA/504 Considerations

If school staff suspect a student has a disability a referral should be made under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (504). Disability is a term that indicates the school district has completed a process to determine a student has a condition that substantially limits a major life activity. Students identified as having a disability are protected from discrimination, and are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) which includes provision of necessary support and services to allow access, participation and progress in the school curriculum. Under the IDEA, the condition must also be determined to adversely affect (significantly impact) educational progress and result in a need for special education (specialized instruction). To suspect a disability, there should be observable evidence. Weak academic foundational skills alone are not a reason to suspect disability. Screening which indicates such will trigger instruction and targeted intervention as part of the general education program. Lack of sufficient response to increasing intensity of intervention, or determination that the student requires ongoing specialized instruction to progress in the curriculum is reason to suspect disability. Students with characteristics of Dyslexia who are determined eligible under the IDEA would be under the category of Specific Learning Disabilities. NOTE: Dyslexia is not an Other Health Impairment.

Are students who have an outside diagnosis of Dyslexia automatically eligible under 504 or the IDEA?

No. Eligibility must be determined by the school district through an evaluation. Information collected as part of the diagnosis may be used in the district evaluation. On the website for the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) there is a frequently asked questions document which directly relates to this question.

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html

Here are a few of the questions on this site:

Are there any impairments which automatically mean that a student has a disability under Section 504?

- No. An impairment in and of itself is not a disability. The impairment must substantially limit one or more major life activities in order to be considered a disability under Section 504.

Can a medical diagnosis suffice as an evaluation for the purpose of providing FAPE?

- No. A physician's medical diagnosis may be considered along with other sources in evaluating a student with an impairment or believed to have an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity.

What is reasonable justification for referring a student for evaluation for services under Section 504 (same applies to IDEA)?

- School districts may always use regular education intervention strategies to assist students with difficulties in school. Section 504 requires recipient school districts to refer a student for an evaluation for possible special education or related aids and services or modification to regular education if the student, because of disability, needs or is believed to need such services.

APPENDIX A
Parent Notification Letter

Student: _____ Grade: _____
Teacher: _____ Date of Screening: _____

Universal screening of essential reading skills and risk factors was completed as part of the Grain Valley District Assessment Plan and indicates your child needs more instruction in the following skill area(s):

- _____ Phonemic awareness: Students identify individual sounds in spoken words (i.e. beginning sound, sounding out words orally, blending words together, etc.).
- _____ Phonics: Students learn the sounds of letters in the alphabet that lead to word reading
- _____ Fluency: Students begin to read at a quicker speed, making reading sound more like natural speech
- _____ Vocabulary: Students learn the meanings of words in their reading materials
- _____ Comprehension: Students use their ideas and experiences as well as careful reading to understand the text.

To help improve your child’s foundational reading skills, targeted intervention will be provided four times per week. Each intervention session will last approximately twenty minutes. Interventions will be provided by teachers or district staff under teacher supervision.

Progress monitoring will be completed once a week to measure your child’s response to intervention and to guide instructional decisions.

Principal

Date

NOTE: This is a plan for intervention and not a special education or a related service under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Screening was completed in accordance with the Missouri requirement to identify children who may be at risk for dyslexia.

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian of:

At Grain Valley South Middle School, we work hard to make sure that every student receives the most effective mathematics instruction possible. We look at data from classroom work as well as screening data (see attached report). When data shows us that a student could use extra support to reach grade-level goals, we work to meet this student's needs.

Our universal screening indicates that your child needs more instruction/practice in mathematics. Students who are in need of additional mathematics instruction will be given mathematics intervention during our SOAR (advisory) time four days a week. Math intervention time will be focused on math fluency (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, fractions, and decimals). The fifth day is used for character building. Your student will be placed with his/her math teacher to become a capable mathematician.

Teacher: _____

Date of Screening: _____

Progress monitoring assessment will be completed once a week for fluency. Monitoring assessments will help teachers to measure growth, to plan for instruction, and to make decisions for additional support as needed.

Principal

Date

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