



## Dyslexia Screening and Intervention in PGUSD

*Dyslexia is a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). Also called a reading disability, dyslexia is a result of individual differences in areas of the brain that process language. - Mayo Clinic*

### **Universal & Individual Dyslexia Screening - A Tiered Approach**

PGUSD has a systematic approach to dyslexia screening which begins in kindergarten and continues through elementary school. The Universal Dyslexia Screening Tool used in PGUSD is **DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)**. DIBELS subtests offer efficient measures of processing speed, phonological awareness, and the alphabetic principle for dyslexia screening purposes. **All elementary students** take the DIBELS screening assessment three times per year beginning in kindergarten.

**Nessy Dyslexia Screener** is also used by our Reading Intervention teachers for **individual** students who may not be making adequate progress prior to referral for special education assessment.

**Special Education Evaluation** is conducted for **individual** students who have received general education intervention but have not made reasonable and adequate progress. A School Psychologist uses several highly standardized assessments to test the student in private, one-to-one testing sessions to determine whether the student has dyslexia as a learning disability meeting eligibility criteria determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

### **Dyslexia Intervention - A Tiered Approach**

When DIBELS testing identifies a gap in literacy development, our educators take a tiered approach to intervention.

- **Tier 1-General Education Classroom.** Our teachers use a small group format to differentiate instruction based on the needs of our students. Teachers use direct, explicit instruction in small groups to address the learning needs of our students who struggle with reading. Students receive this small group instruction as part of daily classroom routines.
- **Tier 2-General Education Intervention Teachers.** If students are not making reasonable progress toward literacy, then students receive intensive general education intervention. This pull out small group instructional model uses evidence based curriculum to provide explicit, structured, and sequential instruction which the

International Dyslexia Association has identified as an effective model for students with dyslexia. The pull out programs are staffed by a certificated teacher and multiple instructional aides, so the small group model can be implemented to fidelity. The intervention groups meet 4-5 days per week for 30 minutes.

- **Tier 3-Special Education Intervention Teachers.** When students do not make reasonable progress in the general education intervention program, then they are referred for special education assessment to determine if they have a disability that qualifies for special education services. Dyslexia is one of the disabilities identified as a learning disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). When students are identified as having a learning disability, the service provider shifts to the special education intervention teachers. Structured literacy is provided by resource specialist program (RSP) or special day class (SDC) teachers depending on the unique needs of each student. The duration and frequency of specialized academic instruction is based on individual student needs and determined by the IEP team.

## Intervention Curriculum

Both general and special education teachers have access to and use several curricula to provide intervention and data driven progress monitoring for students identified to receive services.

### Lexia

The efficacy research on Lexia is unparalleled, with 20 peer reviewed and research studies that meet the standards of evidence required under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Lexia received the highest ranking available from evidence from ESSA and the National Center for Intensive Interventions.

Lexia provides a systematic and structured approach to six areas of reading: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, structured analysis, automaticity/fluency and comprehension. Lexia creates a personalized learning path for each student through an adaptive placement and scaffolded activities that align to rigorous state standards. The Lexia educator platform provides student performance data to the educator for progress monitoring.

### Nessy Reading and Spelling Program

Nessy Reading and Spelling was developed at the Bristol Dyslexia Centre by a team of specialists. Students benefit from Structured Literacy based upon the Science of Reading. The program begins with systematic synthetic phonics, as literacy skills develop, students advance to instruction in spelling, morphology, vocabulary and comprehension. Independent research has shown the program to be effective even for those learning English as an additional language.

### SIPPS

Our general education intervention program uses the *SIPPS*® (*Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words*) curriculum. It is a research-based foundational skills program proven to help both new and struggling readers in grades K–12, including English learners and students identified with dyslexia. The program's systematic scope and sequence provides a structured-literacy approach to instruction through explicit routines focused on phonological awareness, spelling-sounds, and sight words. When used as Tier 2 intervention, *SIPPS* accelerates progress so that students are able to efficiently close the gap

and engage in grade-level reading. *SIPPS* aligns with the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) framework and can be used across all three tiers of instruction.

## **System 44**

*System 44* provides the elements of a *Structured Literacy* instruction model that are recommended by the International Dyslexia Organization. Phonological support, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics are woven throughout the program guided by principles of how these critical elements are taught and enhanced with support for students' non-cognitive needs.

*System 44* accomplishes this by providing systematic and cumulative instruction, ensuring that the organization of material follows the logical order of the language with each step being based on concepts previously learned. Explicit instruction also drives student learning by requiring deliberate teaching of all concepts with continuous student-teacher interaction, as does diagnostic teaching that ensures that instruction meets each students' individualized needs by basing the instruction on careful and continuous assessment. Students are continuously encouraged to work hard to achieve long-term goals throughout the program.

*System 44* Next Generation is designed as an intensive intervention for daily use by a small class. The components of the *System 44* model include: Whole-Group direct instruction, Small-Group differentiated instruction, individualized instruction on the *System 44* Software, and independent and modeled reading of leveled texts. The software provides daily data for the purpose of progress monitoring. Once students have mastered *System 44* they graduate to the Read 180 Program.

## **Read 180**

Read 180 is used for students in grades 4 through high school in PGUSD. When possible, students receive Read 180 instruction before school, so they can still receive the full grade level instructional program for English Language Arts.

READ 180 is a reading program designed for struggling readers who are reading two or more years below grade level. It provides blended learning instruction (i.e., combining digital media with traditional classroom instruction), student assessment, and teacher professional development. READ 180 is delivered in 45- to 90-minute sessions that include whole-group instruction, three small-group rotations, and whole-class wrap-up. Small-group rotations include individualized instruction using an adaptive computer application, small-group instruction with a teacher, and independent reading. READ 180 is designed for students in elementary through high school.

## **Specially Trained Staff**

### **Orton Gillingham Training**

*The Orton-Gillingham Approach* is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling does not come easily to individuals, such as those with dyslexia. It is most properly understood and practiced as an approach, not a method, program, or system. In the hands of a well-trained and experienced instructor, it is a powerful tool of exceptional breadth, depth, and flexibility.

- *Orton-Gillingham official website.*

PGUSD has offered this training to our special education and intervention staff. Currently, we have five teachers who have completed the training, serving our students in the general education intervention and special education programs.

### **Conclusion**

Pacific Grove Unified School District addresses the needs of students with dyslexia by providing ongoing assessment, tiered intervention services, specific curriculum, and specialized training to staff. Student progress is monitored in every tier of intervention, and when reasonable progress is not being made, the student receives more services. Student data is collected and analyzed by the intervention teams at both elementary schools, and this data is used to design the supports that are appropriate for all children, not only those with dyslexia.