

Becker School District Board of Education

Dyslexia Overview

November 2018

What is Dyslexia?

- Clinical Diagnosis
- Dyslexia is a learning disorder that involves difficult reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). Dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language.
- An ‘unexpected’ difficulty in reading. It is present in a ‘sea of strengths’ – child has at least average intelligence and the challenge in reading cannot be attributed to lack of educational opportunity or any other disability.

Background Information on Dyslexia

- The brain is wired to automatically develop oral language. This is not the case with reading.
- In the early 1990s Functional MRI helped scientists discover the parts of the brain responsible for reading. They discovered that poorer readers use inefficient neural pathways.
- This occurs along a continuum – no precise cut-point indicated a reading disability or dyslexia – there are not two distinct groups (Shaywitz, p. 28).

Signs of Dyslexia

- **Early:** delay in speaking – difficulty getting to the sounds of words - less sensitive to rhyme
- **Later:** not using a decoding strategy to identify words - rely heavily on context – using substitutions that might make sense but do not ‘match’ (car for automobile) - slow choppy reading - poor spelling
- **Myths:** no evidence that dyslexic children ‘see’ letters reversed or backwards (problems in naming, not copying letters)

Becker School District Approach

- School staff cannot diagnose ‘dyslexia’ – clinical diagnosis
- However in our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) we can and do:
 - Screen all students with the type of assessment that indicates potential for challenges in reading
 - Ensure highly trained reading specialists oversee all reading intervention
 - Provide intervention programs to address all reading disabilities
 - Monitor student response

Screening

- Screen all students – three times a year - details in our [MTSS handbook](#)
- **PreK & K:** Beginning sounds, letter names, letter sounds, rhyming, concepts of print
- **Grade 1:** letter naming fluency, nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency
- **Grades 2 – 5:** Oral reading fluency, NWEA, state assessments
- **Grades 6 – 10:** NWEA, state assessments

Highly Trained Staff

- In the last few years all licensed teachers responsible for intervention were either hired with a K-12 reading license or required to begin working on obtaining this
- Responsible for:
 - Placement of students in appropriate intervention program
 - Diagnostic assessments to determine precise need of a student
 - Providing intervention services to students
 - Monitoring fidelity of intervention program implementation

Effective Intervention Programs

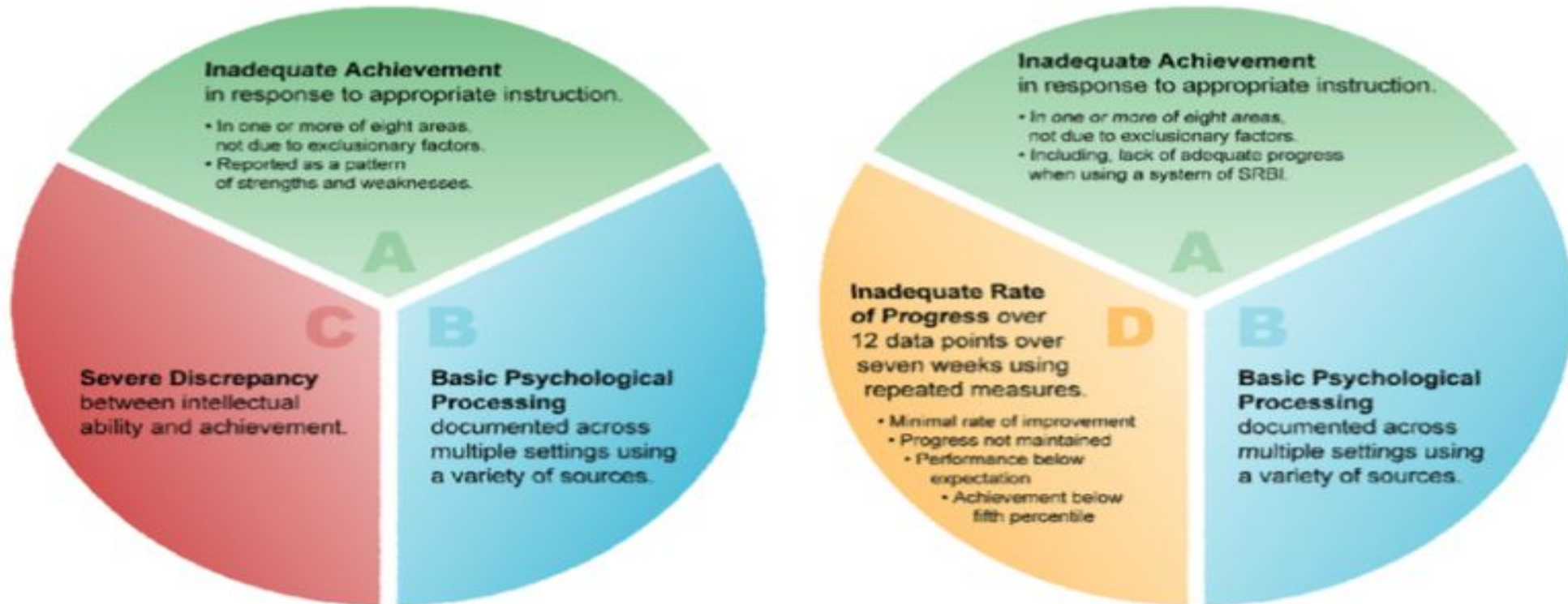
- The school district has established a rigorous standard for selecting intervention programs and training of staff in these and other effective instructional practices
- Programs on the selected list address: Phonological Awareness (sounds in language), Phonics (decoding), Fluency, Comprehension, & Vocabulary
- The Sonday Reading System is an Orton Gillingham Multi-Sensory Program – recommended for dyslexia

Monitor Student Response

- Tier 2 – every two week – additional diagnostics (problem-solving) if a student is showing very inadequate response
- Tier 3 –weekly
- Referral to special education for more specialized instruction

Changes in Specific Learning Disability qualification processes beginning 18-19

The figure below illustrates the two evaluation criteria options and the corresponding types of data required.



Resources: Staffing and Funding

- **ADSIS** funding: 3 FTE Reading Specialists
- **Title 1:** 1 FTE Reading Specialist
- **General Fund:** 3.38 FTE Para- Professionals, 1 Reading Specialist
- **Achievement & Integration Grant:** 1.3 FTE Reading Specialists

Resources: Staff Allocation to Buildings for Reading Intervention

- PS – 1.5 Licensed, 3.88 non-certified = 4.88
- IS – 3.5 FTE Licensed
- MS – 1.5 FTE Licensed
- HS – 1 FTE Licensed

Resources: Students and Schedule

- **Grades K – 2:** 25% of students served
- **Grades 3 – 5:** 18% of students served
 - Tier 2: 5 times a week for 30 mins – small group (4-6 students)
 - Tier 3: intensified – smaller group, longer duration
- **Grades 6 – 8:**
 - Tier 2 – 20 mins a day for one trimester
 - Tier 3 – 60 mins a day
- **Grades 9 & 10:** Reading class for 1 trimester (Tier 2) 2 trimesters (Tier 3)

Parent Experience

We are committed to parent involvement and collaboration. What can parents do?

- Meet with reading specialist in the appropriate building to obtain information on both the program and student progress. Contact building principal if you are not sure who this is.
- This can be done on a school conference night – request that interventionist attend - or at another time.
- Speak to principal if questions remain.
- This can be a stressful and heartbreaking experience for parents.
- We often take the approach of having the parent work on keeping the reading experience positive – read aloud and have students read and reread books at their independent level.

Questions? Comments?
