**Guidance for Nonpublic Schools**

**Nonpublic School Requirements:**

1. Be accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) as a special purpose nonpublic school;
2. Use licensed dyslexia therapists or individuals participating in an approved training program (resulting in MDE licensure) to provide dyslexia therapy to students diagnosed with dyslexia;
3. Use daily Orton-Gillingham-based therapy;
4. Have school leadership trained in dyslexia; and
5. Have a current School Program Verification and Assurances form on file with the MDE Office of Curriculum and Instruction.

**Nonpublic School Application Process:**

1. Student must have a diagnosis of dyslexia, which can be made by a licensed psychologist, psychometrist, or speech language pathologist, as stated in House Bill 1031 (2012).
2. Student must have been accepted for enrollment at a state accredited special purpose nonpublic school that meets all the requirements listed above.
3. Parent completes the Dyslexia Therapy Program / Scholarship Application and submits to the MDE no later than July 15th for the upcoming school year.
4. Application packet includes the completed application, proof of enrollment, verification of diagnosis, and a tuition/fee schedule.
5. The MDE verifies that the student was enrolled in a public school during the previous school year. Note that the student must have been enrolled at the time that average daily attendance (ADA) was determined for the public school systems.
6. The MDE, through the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, notifies the Office of School Financial Services of the number of students by district who will be receiving the dyslexia therapy scholarship. Funds are then transferred to the state accredited special purpose nonpublic school based on a twelve-month payment schedule. Funds are not sent directly to parents.
7. State accredited special purpose nonpublic schools may receive the dyslexia therapy scholarship for students enrolled in a public school during the previous school year.
8. Dyslexia therapy scholarship funding for students who were enrolled in a state accredited special purpose nonpublic school during the previous school year will be requested in the legislative budget request for the next fiscal year. Funding for students enrolled in a state accredited special purpose nonpublic school during the previous school year will be based upon the student count submitted by the state accredited special purpose nonpublic school by June 1st of the previous calendar year and is contingent upon legislative appropriation.

Questions related to the application process should be directed to the Office of Elementary Education and Reading at 601.359.2586. Questions related to the accreditation of nonpublic schools should be directed to the Office of Accreditation at 601.359.3764. Questions related to IDEA and Section 504 should be directed to the Office of Special Education at 601.359.3498.

**Guidance for Public Schools**

**Serving Dyslexic Students Transferring from a Public School**

**Requirements for ALL Public Schools:**

1. Adopt a local board policy regarding screening students for dyslexia;
2. Screen all students during the 2nd semester of Kindergarten and during the 1st semester of First Grade;
3. Administer a screener that addresses the following components:
* Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness
* Sound symbol recognition
* Alphabet knowledge
* Decoding skills
* Encoding skills
* Rapid naming;
1. Notify parents if a student fails the dyslexia screener; and
2. Accept dyslexia evaluations administered by a licensed psychologist, psychometrist, or speech language pathologist, as stated in House Bill 1031 (2012).

**Requirements for Public Schools Accepting Transfers of Dyslexic Students:**

1. Use licensed dyslexia therapists or individuals participating in an approved training program (resulting in MDE licensure) to provide dyslexia therapy to students diagnosed with dyslexia;
2. Use daily Orton-Gillingham-based therapy;
3. Have school leadership trained in dyslexia; and
4. Have a current School Program Verification and Assurances form on file with the MDE Office of Curriculum and Instruction.

**Public School Application Process:**

1. Student must have a diagnosis of dyslexia, which can be made by a licensed psychologist, psychometrist, or speech language pathologist, as stated in House Bill 1031 (2012);
2. Parent requests a transfer from the previous public school to the public school that will be providing the dyslexia therapy;
3. School must have available space to receive students;
4. Parent completes the Dyslexia Therapy Program / Scholarship Application and submits to the MDE Office of Curriculum and Instruction; and
5. The receiving school district reports the student for the purpose of the district’s funding under the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP). Funds are not sent directly to parents.

Questions related to the application process should be directed to the Office of Elementary Education and Reading at 601.359.2586. Questions related to IDEA and Section 504 should be directed to the Office of Special Education at 601.359.3498.