

PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Donald Evans, Interim Superintendent
Dr. Cheryl Wozniak, Assistant Superintendent

DATE: February 8, 2023

SUBJECT: **DYSLEXIA SCREENING PROCESS AND RESULTS**

PURPOSE: To provide updated information about the dyslexia screening process for grades K-3

BACKGROUND:

Dyslexia involves deficits in one or some of the following literacy skills: phonological awareness (sound structure), phonemic awareness (sound manipulation), phonological memory (coding in short term memory), rapid naming (from long term memory), and expressive and receptive language which can negatively impact a student's self-concept. Most students with dyslexia are educated in the general education environment. School personnel are not expected to be experts in dyslexia, nor are they authorized to diagnose it. Instead, districts are expected to create a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) that addresses the needs of a wide range of students with reading difficulties.

MTSS is an instructional framework through which schools can identify students who are suspected to have a specific learning disability, such as dyslexia. Once identified as at-risk, students are provided with evidence-based interventions and their reading progress is monitored regularly. Although California school districts have been told that there will be direction from the California Department of Education on a state dyslexia screener, no concrete information has been provided to date; therefore, PUSD purchased a dyslexia screener, DIBELS 8th edition, and developed a process of screening students in grades K-3.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) 8th edition

DIBELS is a set of skills tests that assesses students' acquisition of literacy skills. They are designed to be short fluency measures used to monitor the development of early reading skills and detect students at risk for a reading disability. Each subtest has been researched and demonstrated to be a reliable and valid indicator of early literacy development. DIBELS results can be used to evaluate individual student development,

provide grade-level feedback for all students' progress toward instructional objectives, and indicate whether a student is at-risk for a reading disability, including dyslexia.

How will PUSD use DIBELS results?

DIBELS results will be used to identify students who are at-risk for dyslexia. Students with an overall composite score of "well below benchmark" on the main components of DIBELS will be administered two additional screening tests, Spelling and Rapid Automatized Naming. A score of "well-below benchmark" on either of these screenings automatically flags a student in the online system as being at-risk for dyslexia. Information about students identified as at-risk will be shared with families by a member of the school's response to intervention team. If a student has an individualized education plan already in place, DIBELS results will support the special education teacher in providing targeted instruction towards IEP goals. For general education students, a reading intervention plan will be put into place if one does not exist already.

Students who do not have an overall composite score of well-below benchmark will receive targeted intervention as well. Not only have we been able to identify students at-risk for a reading disability, DIBELS provides classroom teachers with information about each child's areas of strength and areas for growth in the following areas: letter naming fluency and phoneme segmentation fluency (kindergarten and first grade), nonsense word fluency and word reading fluency (kindergarten through third grade), oral reading fluency (first through third grade), and basic reading comprehension (second and third grade). For each of the subtests, teachers receive a score indicating whether a student is well below, below, at, or above benchmark. Regardless of a student's composite score, targeted instruction will be provided to students in any area of reading that they are not "at benchmark." This targeted intervention could be provided by the classroom teacher or a trained paraeducator during small group instruction in the classroom, or by a reading intervention teacher inside or outside of the classroom.

In collaboration with teachers, administrators will establish a yearly DIBELS administration calendar for three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. Discussions with upper grade teachers will take place later in the year to determine whether to administer DIBELS to students in fourth and fifth grade. It is important to note that the additional screening tests for dyslexia are not available for fourth and fifth grade—only oral reading fluency and basic comprehension.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost for 610 students in grades K-3 = \$9,089.