Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation Analysis

2021–2022: Year 2 of Implementation

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The purpose of this brief is to provide information about the second year of implementation of the three-year Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program. This 2021–22 brief is the third brief produced. It follows the *Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation Analysis: 2019–2020*, which provided information on how pilot districts approached the planning year of the pilot, and the *Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation Analysis: 2020–2021: Year 1 of Implementation*, which provided information on the first year of implementation.

The Region 6 Comprehensive Center (RC6) and its partner, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), developed this brief at the request of, and in collaboration with, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

The Region 6 Comprehensive Center (RC6) is operated by the SERVE Center at UNC Greensboro and provides technical assistance to Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Assistance is tailored to the needs of the individual states while addressing the priorities of the U.S. Department of Education.

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A copy of this publication can be downloaded from the Region 6 Comprehensive Center website at: https://www.region6cc.org/resources.

Contents

I. Introduction

The purpose of this brief is to provide information about the second year of implementation of the three-year Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program. The Region 6 Comprehensive Center (RC6) at the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the RC6 partner, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), conducted this descriptive work on the Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program at the request of, and in collaboration with, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

This 2021–22 brief is the third brief produced. It follows the *Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation Analysis: 2019–2020*, which provided information on how pilot districts approached the planning year of the pilot, and the *Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation Analysis: 2020–2021: Year 1 of Implementation*, which provided information on the first year of implementation. (For a history of the Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program, see Appendix A.)

This brief summarizes information gathered from seven virtual interviews conducted with a total of 15 key Dyslexia Pilot Program leaders in each of the seven pilot districts in May and June 2022. Content analysis was conducted by the first two report authors. Figure 1 and Table 1 on the following page show the seven pilot districts participating in Year 2 (2021–22) of the three-year pilot program.

Part II provides an overview of the pilot district interview findings from the second year of implementation, organized into five areas:

1) Successes and Challenges
2) Resources Used to Support the Pilot
3) Support Needed from the GaDOE
4) Expected Changes to Implementation in 2022-23
5) Looking Ahead to 2024-25: Lessons Learned from the Pilot

Part III provides details about the second year of implementation as reported in the district interviews. Implementation efforts in 2021–22 are described in five areas:

1) Pilot Structure
2) Reading Instruction
3) Screening for Reading Difficulties and Characteristics of Dyslexia
4) Intervention
5) Data-Based Decision Making and Progress Monitoring

Appendices A-H contain a short history of the Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program, a summary of how the GaDOE structured its leadership of the pilot, information about pilot-related professional learning opportunities the GaDOE offered in 2021-22, descriptions of successes and challenges districts identified in 2021-22, and details about professional development offerings in 2021-22, as well as lists of the screening and progress monitoring tools and interventions the pilot districts used that year.

Seven districts participated in the Pilot Program in 2021–22, as seen in the figure and table below.

Figure 1. 2021–22 Participating Pilot Districts

1	Marietta City Schools
2	Jackson County Schools
3	City Schools of Decatur
4	DeKalb County Schools
5	Muscogee County Schools
6	Ware County Schools
7	Charlton County Schools
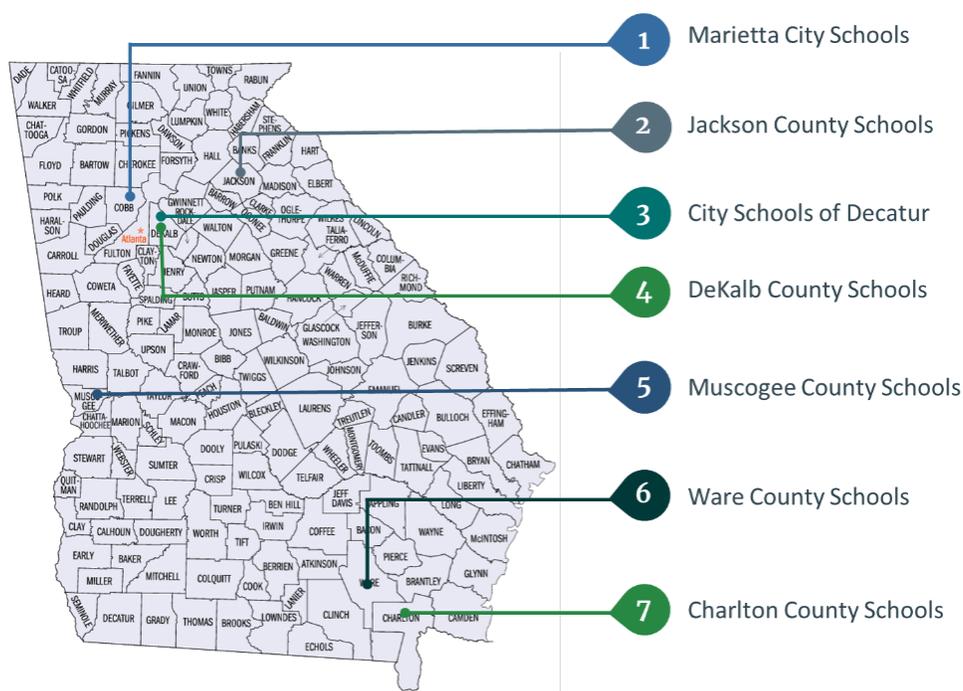
A total of 45 schools were reported by the districts to be involved in the pilot in 2021–22.

Table 1. Pilot District Location, Student Enrollment, and Number of Pilot Schools

District	Location	Student Enrollment 2021–22	Number of Schools in Pilot
1. **Marietta City Schools**	Atlanta (Urban)	8,696	4
2. **Jackson County Schools**	Near Athens (Non-Rural)	9,245	3
3. **City Schools of Decatur**	Atlanta (Urban)	5,645	7
4. **DeKalb County Schools**	Atlanta (Urban)	93,293	13
5. **Muscogee County Schools**	Columbus (Non-Rural)	29,774	15
6. **Ware County Schools**	South GA (Rural)	6,010	1
7. **Charlton County Schools**	South GA (Rural)	1,693	2

The next section, Part II of this brief, contains a summary of information reported by the pilot districts about their Year 2 implementation: the successes and challenges they experienced, resources they used to support the pilot, support they need from the GaDOE in the future, and expected changes to implementation in 2022-23. It also contains some key takeaways that emerged from the interview findings and implications for the GaDOE and for districts across the state as they look toward statewide implementation of S.B. 48 in 2024-25.

II. The Second Year of Implementation: Findings Overview

The pilot districts developed plans and laid the foundation for the pilot in the planning year—2019-2020—and worked through the initial challenges of familiarizing themselves with new tools and processes in Year 1 of the pilot, 2020-21. Their experiences in the 2021–22 school year, the second year of implementation, provide important insights into how the rollout of S.B. 48's requirements may proceed and the supports that need to be in place for districts across the state to successfully implement dyslexia screening in 2024-25. Key findings from seven interviews with a total of 15 staff in the seven pilot districts about their experiences in 2021–22 are grouped into five areas:

1) Successes and Challenges.
2) Resources Used to Support the Pilot.
3) Support Needed from the GaDOE.
4) Expected Changes to Implementation in 2022-23.
5) Looking Ahead to 2024-25: Lessons Learned from the Pilot.

1. Successes and Challenges

Figure 2 outlines some key implementation successes districts reported experiencing in the 2021–22 school year, grouped by how they related to the local context, staff and resources, and how the pilot intersected with ongoing efforts to implement Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students (MTSS). In sum, the successes districts discussed indicate that they were building on what they learned in Year 1 of implementation and finding ways to continue what worked well and change what did not. (*See Appendix C: Successes for additional details.*)

Figure 2. Successes Districts Identified in 2021-22

Context	• The flexibility to implement the pilot in different ways was valuable for three districts as they staged their efforts, examined differences in implementation across their schools, and in some cases prepared to expand the pilot districtwide. • A few districts reported seeing improved literacy outcomes for students in 2021-22 as compared to previous years.
Staff & Resources	• Several districts spoke of the value of motivating staff to grow professionally and shift their mindsets regarding how reading instruction and intervention should be provided. • Within-district training and professional development on reading instruction generally, as well as on specific approaches to instruction and intervention, were reported as instrumental to the work of the pilot by more than half of the districts.
MTSS	• All seven districts talked positively about their experiences with screening tools. For example, most said the tools provided them with valuable, high-quality data that helped them make better instructional decisions. • Two districts cited intervention as a specific success in 2021-22, saying their processes and intervention strategies worked well. Two more districts mentioned successes with progress monitoring, noting that it had become routine for school staff and progress monitoring processes were being followed.

Districts also reported a variety of challenges (Figure 3) in implementing the dyslexia pilot in 2021–22, again grouped by how they related to the local context, staff and resources, and how the pilot intersected with ongoing MTSS efforts. A common theme of the challenges reported were difficulties experienced as the pilot districts adjusted their practices and focused on providing reading instruction in new ways. (*See Appendix D: Challenges for additional details.*)

Figure 3. Challenges Districts Identified in 2021-22

Context	• All but one district described contextual factors as challenges (e.g., their large size, staff turnover). • Getting buy-in from school and district staff and school boards for screening, teaching the science of reading, and updating curriculum resources were challenges for four districts. • Four districts described district-to-school communication and collaborating across district offices and between schools as challenging. • A few districts reported challenges from the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron wave.
Staff & Resources	• Six districts pointed to logistical hurdles they faced in implementation, including finding the time, staff, or space to provide intervention and the difficulty of balancing pilot implementation with other initiatives. • A majority of districts found that gaps in their core instructional materials and/or the implementation of new core materials presented challenges to pilot implementation. • Six districts reported that the need to build the knowledge of school and district staff was a challenge to implementing the pilot. They specifically mentioned the need to build knowledge of MTSS, dyslexia, the science of reading and structured literacy, and the pilot itself.
MTSS	• Almost every district identified using data well as a particularly difficult challenge. The main struggles they cited revolved around interpreting screening and progress monitoring data, combining data from different sources, and using it to make decisions about instruction, intervention, and the need for further assessment.

2. Resources Used to Support the Pilot

The pilot districts used a variety of resources from the state, commercial publishers, and other external sources to support their pilot work in 2021-22, as shown in Figure 4. All districts relied heavily on and reported finding great value in resources provided by the GaDOE.

Figure 4. Resources Districts Used in 2021-22

GaDOE Resources
• *On-demand tools:* Every district said that GaDOE-created resources were key to supporting their implementation efforts. They specifically named the Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook, four-part Dyslexia Video Series, MTSS trainings and guidance, and professional development from the GaDOE.   • *Staff expertise:* Five districts named specific GaDOE staff as key supports who provided professional development, answered questions, and created resources. A few districts also utilized GaDOE regional MTSS coaches to support their pilot work and collaborated with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) on Pre-K implementation.   • *Pilot supports:* Five districts said the pilot's support structures were helpful to their implementation efforts. They mentioned the value of pilot Professional Learning Community meetings, implementation chats, and meetings and communication in general.

Grants and Funding
Most districts reported the benefits of receiving extra funds that could support implementation in 2021-22. These funds were largely used for training. Funds came from several different sources: • *State Grants:* Three districts received extra funding from state grants—the Readiness in Literacy Grant, GEER II, and Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading in Georgia (L4GA). • *Private Grants:* Two districts received a total of three grants funded by four external organizations. Funding for the three grants came from the International Dyslexia Association, the United Way and The Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the Whitehead Foundation. These grants paid for training and an initiative to increase teachers' knowledge of the science of reading. • *Federal Funds:* One district said CARES Act funds were very helpful.

External Organizations
• Three districts received support from external individuals or organizations, including the International Dyslexia Association, the Schenck School, and the Student Support Team Association of Georgia Educators (SSTAGE).

Regional Agencies
• Two districts mentioned receiving support from regional agencies in Georgia. The Georgia Learning Resource System funded a staff member in one district to earn the dyslexia endorsement, and the local RESA provided coaching on Fundations in another district.

3. Support Needed from the GaDOE

Districts agreed on a number of ways in which the GaDOE could help them continue to improve—and in some cases expand—their implementation of the pilot in the coming years (Figure 5).

Figure 5. District-Identified Needs for Support in 2021-22

Technical Assistance and Guidance
Four districts described a need for technical assistance or guidance on topics including: • What implementation should look like and how it will benefit students. • Using screening and progress monitoring data to inform instruction and intervention. • Using data to identify students with characteristics of dyslexia. • When to request parent consent for screening or other assessments. • Expectations for how reading should be taught—both for schools and for RESA and GLRS staff and the staff who are part of the Growing Readers program.

Professional Learning
Three districts requested more professional learning opportunities, including: • Trainings on pilot implementation aimed at both district-level and school-level administrators. • Face-to-face and live webinar trainings for all staff on the science of reading and the connections between MTSS, the pilot, and special education. • Better local access to the Dyslexia Endorsement.

Information for Parents
• Three districts cited a need for more support from the GaDOE in providing information to parents. They specifically mentioned a need for parent consent form templates and information they could provide parents about dyslexia, including a parent dyslexia handbook.

Funding
• Two districts said that it would be helpful to have access to funding they could use to pay for additional staff to provide intervention or serve as a district liaison for parents who have dyslexia-related concerns about their students.

4. Expected Changes to Implementation in 2022–23

Districts anticipated making an array of changes in the final year of the pilot, 2022-23. These changes reflect the lessons they had learned in the first two years and the many ways in which they were still fine-tuning implementation (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Expected Changes Pilot Districts Reported for 2022-23

Context	• Two districts planned to expand to district-wide implementation of the pilot in 2022-23. • An additional district planned to maintain its current pilot schools but also invite other elementary schools districtwide to implement pilot practices on an informal, voluntary basis.

Staff & Resources	• Five pilot districts reported a number of anticipated changes to staff involved in pilot implementation, including adding additional staff, getting more district-level staff involved in implementation, and developing a district-level dyslexia team.
	• Districts planned to expand professional development offerings, including those on:
	  ○ The science of reading and effective instructional practices for reading.
	  ○ Specific programs (e.g.,LETRS, Orton-Gillingham, Kagan engagement strategies, and using Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention in a structured literacy manner).
	  ○ Progress monitoring and data analysis and use.

MTSS	• *Core Instruction:* At least half of the districts planned to add to or change their core instructional materials. Four districts had plans to adjust their use of existing instructional materials and instructional practices by:
	  ○ Focusing on fidelity of implementation.
	  ○ Using curriculum mapping and pacing guides to "pull the best of the best resources" and "reframe what we have."
	  ○ Moving toward research-based science of reading practices.
	• *Screening:* Four districts expected changes to their screening processes, including changing tools, clarifying expectations across schools, and changing the frequency of screening.
	• *Intervention:* Districts planned various changes to intervention:
	  ○ Several districts planned to help their schools provide intervention to students by encouraging or requiring a dedicated intervention block.
	  ○ Three districts planned to streamline intervention selection by reducing the options available and clarifying how to match available interventions to students' needs.
	  ○ Three districts planned to add or change commercial intervention programs.
	• *Progress Monitoring:* Four districts planned changes to progress monitoring. One was implementing a districtwide progress monitoring tool. Three planned to make progress monitoring expectations clearer for school staff, including when to initiate progress monitoring, which tool(s) should be used, and when data should be collected and analyzed.
	• *Data Analysis and Management:* Districts described a need to strengthen guidance and expectations for data management and analysis by (for example):
	  ○ Creating schedules and expectations for the frequency of data review meetings.
	  ○ Creating a step-by-step guide for analyzing data and pairing students with supports.
	  ○ Determining which pieces of data all schools should examine for decision-making.
	  ○ Using a data management platform instead of multiple reports and spreadsheets.
	  ○ Requiring staff who conduct progress monitoring to upload reports into a data management platform.

5. Looking Ahead to 2024–25: Lessons Learned from the Pilot

The successes, challenges, resources, and needs of districts as reported in 2021-22 and the changes districts expected to make in the final year of the pilot can do much to inform the statewide rollout of dyslexia screening in 2024-25. Below are four key takeaways based on the information collected from districts and summarized in the section above. For non-pilot districts, taking these lessons into consideration early means being better prepared for implementation of S.B. 48's requirements in 2024. For the GaDOE, these takeaways represent important considerations for support for districts statewide.

MTSS provides a critical foundation and infrastructure for the requirements of S.B. 48.

The pilot districts repeatedly described dyslexia pilot implementation as fitting into and working alongside the framework of MTSS, whose key elements are strong core instruction, screening, intervention, and data-based decision making—exactly those actions the dyslexia pilot requires. MTSS staff played key roles at both the school and district levels in many of the pilot districts. Some districts are still working to better align existing MTSS processes and the requirements of SB 48, but all acknowledge that these processes must stand together. "*I don't know if [schools] understand how baked in MTSS is with this process of the dyslexia pilot,*" said one interviewee.

District Takeaways

- Begin or advance MTSS implementation if MTSS is not already in place or is in an early stage of implementation.
- Evaluate current MTSS processes, expectations, and supports for schools and identify any areas of implementation that could be strengthened, including ensuring that processes and decision rules are documented clearly.
- Reference the document *MTSS Snapshot: Are you Implementing with Fidelity?* and consult with GaDOE MTSS staff for assistance, if needed.

GaDOE Takeaways

- Review and update MTSS resources to clearly show how S.B. 48 requirements intersect with the Georgia MTSS framework.
- Consider expanding current support for MTSS cohort districts to districts across the state.
- Widely disseminate MTSS resources that are already available, including recorded professional learning sessions, and consider offering new professional development sessions using these materials to provide an opportunity for districts to ask questions and receive more individualized assistance.

Accurately identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia requires that all students receive strong core instruction in reading.

The pilot districts found that when they looked closely at student screening data and instructional practices, they often found shortcomings in foundational skills instruction. Gaps in core reading instruction can result in many students being flagged as "at risk" by screeners, especially in schools where large proportions of students enter school without strong oral language and pre-reading skills. This larger number of students at risk for reading problems, in turn, makes it more difficult for schools to provide intervention to all students in need and to identify those who may have characteristics of dyslexia or other related disorders that impact reading.

District Takeaways

- Ensure that core instructional materials support teachers in providing explicit, systematic reading instruction.
- Identify any gaps in core instructional materials that may need to be filled with other materials. Phonological awareness was a component of reading that several pilot districts noted could be better supported.

GaDOE Takeaways

- Provide resources to aid schools in evaluating their core instructional materials.
- Continue to provide statewide professional learning opportunities on evidence-based reading instruction.
- Consider developing a state vision for early literacy instruction that includes evidence-

- Ensure that K-3 teachers receive training on evidence-based reading instruction, including strategies for explicitly teaching all five components of reading.

based methods for teaching foundational reading skills.

Fulfilling the requirements of S.B. 48 requires time, training, and a clear process for identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia.

By the end of Year 2 of the dyslexia pilot, some pilot districts felt they had a firm grasp on their screening processes, but others were still working to acquire screening tools that gave them the data needed to identify students with characteristics of dyslexia. Across the board, it was clear that screening students and using the screening data well—to make decisions about intervention and identify students who may have characteristics of dyslexia—would require additional time and training for school and district staff. In some cases, the pilot districts were still adjusting their screening processes, and there was variability in terms of when students with characteristics of dyslexia were identified in those processes and how identification impacted their instruction and intervention.

District Takeaways

- Review current literacy screening tools to see if they align with the requirements of S.B. 48.
- Begin to consider a process for identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia and what it means for students if they are identified.
- Consider data reporting requirements associated with S.B. 48 and how the data will be collected and managed.
- Train staff on interpreting literacy screening data and using it for instructional decisions.
- Consider providing support for key staff members to earn a Georgia PSC-approved Dyslexia Endorsement so they can serve as resources for colleagues in 2024-25 and beyond.

GaDOE Takeaways

- Develop guidance on the expected process for the identification of students with characteristics of dyslexia.
- Provide statewide professional learning opportunities on using screening and progress monitoring data to inform instruction and intervention.
- Provide guidance on the intervention students with characteristics of dyslexia should receive.
- Consider providing flexibility in the implementation of S.B. 48 to allow new districts the ability to start small and scale up their processes.

Pairing students with strong instruction and the right intervention for their needs is the goal for all students, whether they have characteristics of dyslexia or not.

The pilot districts were focused on—and sometimes struggled with—pairing students with the right intervention for their needs. This matching of support to need required not just collecting data, but also knowing how to interpret it and accurately identifying specific skill gaps, then accessing the right intervention support for those gaps. The pilot districts described an increase in the use of non-commercial intervention strategies in 2021-22, reflecting a greater focus on equipping teachers to provide teacher-designed intervention support.

District Takeaways

- Review existing intervention programs and strategies to ensure they can meet the skill-specific needs of students and that dyslexia-specific interventions are available for students who need them.
- Provide teachers with training on using existing evidence-based intervention programs and strategies with fidelity.

GaDOE Takeaways

- Provide support to districts and schools as they review their existing intervention programs and strategies and select new ones as needed.
- Provide statewide professional learning opportunities on identifying and using effective, evidence-based intervention programs and non-commercial strategies.

The next section, Part III of this brief, contains details about pilot district implementation in Year 2 of the pilot, from overall structure and key staff to instruction, screening, intervention, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making. (Note: For more considerations for the GaDOE and for legislators, see the December 2022 report to the legislature authored by the GaDOE, which will be posted on the GaDOE's Dyslexia web page.)

III. The Second Year of Implementation: Details

In the 2021–22 school year, the pilot districts reported their focus shifting from establishing screening processes to using data to make decisions about intervention and the need for further assessment. Improving core reading instruction continued to be a major focus as well. The reporting in this section reflects a summary of data collected from seven interviews involving a total of 15 key staff in the pilot districts. Selected quotes from across the interviews are provided to add depth. Based on these interviews, implementation efforts in 2021–22 are described below in five areas:

1) Pilot Structure.
2) Reading Instruction.
3) Screening for Reading Difficulties and Characteristics of Dyslexia.
4) Intervention.
5) Data-Based Decision Making and Progress Monitoring.

1. Pilot Structure

S.B. 48 gave pilot districts flexibility to establish an implementation design that best fits their local contexts. Districts could start small and scale up over time, start district-wide from the beginning, or choose another design in between. Table 2 shows how districts initially implemented the pilot and their plans for maintaining that approach or scaling up by the end of the three years of implementation.

Table 2. Pilot Districts and Their Implementation Approaches

District	Initial Implementation	Growth Plan for Pilot
1. Marietta City Schools	Three schools	Schools can elect to join
2. Jackson County Schools	Three schools	Maintain same schools
3. City Schools of Decatur	Districtwide	Maintain same schools
4. DeKalb County Schools	Subset of schools	Scale up districtwide
5. Muscogee County Schools	Three schools	Scale up districtwide
6. Ware County Schools	One school	Maintain same school
7. Charlton County Schools	Districtwide	Maintain same schools

Key District Staff

When asked which district staff roles were key to their pilot implementation, most districts named staff with titles placing them within offices overseeing special education or exceptional students and staff with MTSS in their titles. MTSS-related staff monitored implementation of the pilot, created protocols

and decision rules for screening, provided training and coaching on the pilot and on MTSS, and assisted with data analysis.

These roles included:

- Program Manager of MTSS Implementation
- District MTSS Coordinator
- District MTSS Director and RTI Coordinator

In four districts, school psychologists played a key role in implementing the dyslexia pilot. Other key district staff mentioned by two districts were leaders in the following areas:

- ELA or Reading (e.g., K-5 ELA Coordinator, District Elementary Reading Content Specialist)
- Assessment (e.g., Director of Assessment, Assessment Specialist)
- Curriculum and Instruction (e.g., Curriculum & Instruction Coordinator)
- Assistant Superintendent (e.g., Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning)

Other key roles mentioned were:

- District Dyslexia Pilot Coordinator
- Director of School Improvement
- K-5 ESOL Coordinator
- Roles within Academic Achievement (e.g., Executive Director of Academic Achievement)

Key School Staff

Classroom teachers were identified as key school staff for pilot implementation in six out of seven districts. They were generally involved in conducting screening, reviewing student data, and providing intervention.

School staff with MTSS in their titles were also considered key by almost every district. They tended to support teachers and other staff with the MTSS process as a whole and facilitate communication between the school and the district; but they also supported teachers with intervention and data analysis, communicated with families, and sometimes served as interventionists as well. Titles mentioned included:

> " I would say this… when this goes into effect in 2024, you're going to have to have whoever's running this be dyslexia endorsed… I would not want to put anybody over RTI that has not had the Dyslexia Endorsement. "

- MTSS Lead
- MTSS Specialist
- MTSS Facilitator
- School MTSS Coordinator

School administrators (mostly principals) were considered key staff in five of the seven districts. Their roles included reviewing and approving screening procedures, overseeing screening, and gathering staff teams together.

Instructional or academic coaches were considered key staff by more than half of districts, as were special education teachers. Coaches might create the screening schedule, provide teachers with training

on the use of screening tools, and assist with interpreting data. Special education teachers helped with screening and data review and analysis.

Other key school staff named by more than one district were:

- School psychologists (2 districts)
- Interventionists (2 districts)

Paraprofessionals and the school counselor were named by one district each.

Key Teaming Structures

When asked about teams that were key to implementing the pilot, school-based teams were mentioned by most of the pilot districts. These consisted of three types:

- MTSS team (3 districts)
- School Wide Assessment Team (SWAT) (2 districts)
- School leadership team (1 district)

School-based team membership often varied from school to school, but the MTSS teams described most commonly involved an administrator, classroom teacher, interventionist, and the school's MTSS leader. These teams reviewed student data to make decisions about intervention needs and managed the overall MTSS process in their schools.

The School Wide Assessment Teams that districts described included instructional coaches, interventionists, and sometimes special education teachers in one district and the MTSS leader, interventionists, special education teachers and paraprofessionals in another. As their name implies, these teams were tasked with administering screenings and analyzing screening data to help make decisions about intervention needs.

The school leadership teams in one district involved an administrator, academic coach, and teacher and sometimes other staff as well. One representative from the teams was expected to attend district meetings about the pilot and convey information to the K-3 faculty at their school.

Overall, administrators, classroom teachers, interventionists, and school-based MTSS leaders were the most common members of school-based teams the pilot districts said were key to implementing MTSS.

> " I think as a part of Tier 1 good instruction, my dream world would be for our staff not to totally depend on a program, but to be able to just identify which little stepping stone in their development did [a student] miss and go back and intervene. In my big vision I hope that we'll be able to guide the program instead of a program guiding us. "

2. Reading Instruction

District interviewees shared that participating in the Dyslexia Pilot Program revealed to them the need for their districts to focus more on improving core reading instruction for all students. Core reading

instruction is not addressed by S.B. 48. However, interviewees reflected that strong core reading instruction provided by well-trained teachers who are supported by quality reading curricula and other instructional materials is the critical foundation for reading and the first step in preventing reading difficulties. All students receive core reading instruction, so interviewees described that it is important that the reading curricula and instructional materials being used equip teachers to address the learning needs of as many students as possible.

Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students (MTSS) is the framework the GaDOE recommends districts and schools adopt to provide a comprehensive, data-based approach to teaching and learning. The framework consists of three tiers of support intended to encourage positive educational outcomes for all students. The first, Tier I, is core instruction, provided to all students and considered the primary level of prevention of academic difficulties. Students cannot be adequately supported with intervention if the core curriculum does not provide a strong instructional foundation.

Core/Tier I Curricula and Instruction

Curriculum Programs. A curriculum consists of the lessons and content students are taught in a given grade or program of study, and multiple curricula may be used. Districts reported using a total of 14 different reading programs in 2021–22. There was little overlap in the curricula districts reported using. Five—Fundations, Heggerty, Journeys, Lexia, and Saxon Phonics—were used by two districts each; all others were only used by one district each. A majority of districts used more than one curriculum—as many as five, in some cases—which reflects districts' recognition that gaps in one curriculum required supplementation with another. (For a list of curricula districts used in 2020–21, see Appendix E.)

Instructional Resources and Strategies. A curriculum can be taught using different instructional frameworks, resources, and strategies. Three districts reported using instructional frameworks from various sources to guide instruction in 2021-22. Three districts also reported using specific types of texts in instruction: decodable, fiction, and non-fiction texts. Specific strategies districts said were used in core instruction included Orton-Gillingham strategies, science of reading strategies, and read-alouds. (For a list of instructional resources and strategies districts used in 2020–21, see Appendix E.)

Improving Reading Instruction. Beyond changes to curricula, the pilot districts reported efforts that were underway to improve reading instruction in 2021–22 as important context for their dyslexia pilot work. These efforts are summarized in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7. Efforts to Improve Tier I Reading Instruction in 2021–22

Professional Development
• Five districts described conducting professional development that would improve staff's capacity to provide strong core instruction in reading. Three of these districts noted training on the science of reading generally, and two mentioned Orton-Gillingham. • Professional development on Lexia Core5, Saxon Phonics and Spelling, and Top Ten Tools was mentioned by one district each.

Core Curriculum and Instruction
• Three districts made changes to their core instructional materials to strengthen Tier I reading instruction in 2021-22.
• Two districts engaged in curriculum mapping and worked to improve the usability and alignment of the materials they had.
• Three districts were working to ensure that instructional strategies and literacy practices were aligned to the science of reading. Two of these districts specifically mentioned improving instruction in phonemic awareness.

3. Screening for Reading Difficulties and Characteristics of Dyslexia

Six pilot districts reported conducting K-3 universal screening for the pilot in 2021–22, as required by S.B. 48. One of these districts also screened Pre-K students. The seventh district screened students in kindergarten through second grade.

Staffing

Staff Involved in Screening and Analyzing Data. A variety of school staff were involved in conducting screening in the pilot districts. Classroom teachers were the most common type of staff, reported by four of the seven pilot districts. Special education teachers and EIP teachers/interventionists were involved in three districts each. Other staff named as involved in screening were paraprofessionals, MTSS staff, and coaches. Three districts said their schools had school-based teams, such as School Wide Assessment Teams (SWAT), that conduct or assist with universal screening. These assessment teams included instructional coaches, interventionists, and sometimes special education teachers in one district, and the MTSS leader, interventionists, special education teachers and paraprofessionals in another.

> S.B. 48 requires that all kindergartners and students in grades 1-3 who have been identified through the Response to Intervention process be screened for characteristics of dyslexia. The bill specifies that this screening must include phonological awareness and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, encoding skills, and rapid naming.

Timing of Screening Process

All districts reported conducting universal screening for K-2 students three times per year: in fall, winter, and spring. Six districts also screened third graders three times per year. In one district, universal screening for third graders was conducted only twice a year, in the fall and winter. In another district, some screening tools were used three times per year and some were used only in the fall and spring.

Districts described varying approaches to timing the screening windows. The screening window length ranged from one week to eight weeks. Districts reported that screening took varying amounts of time, from 20 minutes per student to 1-15 days in total.

Screening Tools

Pilot districts described the use of two types of screeners in 2021–22: universal screeners given to all students, and additional assessments given to specific students identified as at risk for reading problems using universal screeners.

Universal Screeners. A total of 14 different universal screening tools were identified by the pilot districts. There was little overlap across districts, with only two tools used by more than one district: Acadience and MAP Growth. Five of the seven pilot districts used more than one universal screener. The most common number of universal screening tools was two, while the district with the most named seven. (For a full list of universal screening tools districts used in 2021–22, see Appendix F.)

Additional Assessments. Additional assessments were usually called screeners by the pilot districts but were sometimes considered diagnostic assessments. Whatever districts called them, their purpose was to collect more detailed data on the skills of students identified as at risk on a universal screener, which could then be used to make decisions about intervention, identifying characteristics of dyslexia, or the need for even more detailed assessment. A total of 10 different additional assessments were identified by the pilot districts. The KTEA-3 was named by two districts; the rest were used by only one district each. (For a full list of additional assessments districts used in 2021–22, see Appendix F.)

> " I would say that our challenge is just embracing the fact that we learn, we've learned more, and as Rita Pierson says, 'When you know better, you do better,' and so that's what we're doing in our district. "

Screening Process

Districts approached the screening process in different ways. Nearly all used one or more assessments beyond the universal reading screener(s) to inform intervention and make decisions about the need for further assessment. The pilot districts had established different decision rules for identifying students for further assessment based on universal screening results, as listed below:

- Below the 20th percentile.
- Below the 25th percentile.
- Between the 20th and 40th percentiles.
- Below a screening tool's benchmark level or target score, as determined by the publisher.

In general, districts reported that students who were identified for further assessment also received intervention.

Identifying Students With Characteristics of Dyslexia

Current GaDOE guidance does not specify cut scores or decision rules for identifying students for additional screening or as having characteristics of dyslexia. As such, each pilot district developed a process and decision rules for itself. Weighing the many considerations involved in identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia—as opposed to students with reading difficulties generally—was a task some districts identified as a challenge in 2021-22. The complexities involved in teasing out English

learners who might have characteristics of dyslexia from those whose screener results just reflected their growing mastery of English also continued to be a concern.

> " We can say, we have identified this learning profile and they have deficits in these areas, these skills, but we intervene to get them where they need to be. And the diagnosis is not really important in that sense. It's the outcome. It's the learner outcome that we're after. "

The point in the MTSS process at which students were identified as having characteristics of dyslexia varied and was sometimes unclear. In two districts, identified students were generally receiving Tier 3 intervention. In two more, they were identified at the Tier 2 level, and in two others, they might have been receiving either Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention according to their needs when they were identified. The level of intervention reflects the perceived level of need of these students, with Tier 3 representing the most intensive and individualized intervention.

Several districts reflected that their focus in 2021-22 was less on being able to definitively label students as having characteristics of dyslexia than on identifying students' individual needs and pairing them with appropriate interventions to address those needs. They observed that the enhanced screening they implemented due to the pilot helped them better target intervention for all students, whether or not those students were identified as having characteristics of dyslexia.

Approaches to Screening for Characteristics of Dyslexia. The pilot districts' approaches to screening and, ultimately, to identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia can be summarized using three different visualizations, as shown in Figure 8 on the following page.

One district used a single-stage screening approach, visualized as Approach 1, and identified students as having characteristics of dyslexia based on universal screening and other data. Five of seven districts' processes can be characterized as Approach 2, which represents a two-stage screening process where districts collected additional data on a group of students identified by universal screening, then based identification as having characteristics of dyslexia on all available data. One district used a three-stage screening process to increasingly narrow the group of students identified for additional assessment until they identified students as having characteristics of dyslexia based on data from the third round of assessment. (Note: "Identification" in the figure below means identification as having characteristics of dyslexia.)

Figure 8. District Screening Processes for Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia in 2021–22

Note: "Identification" means identification as having characteristics of dyslexia
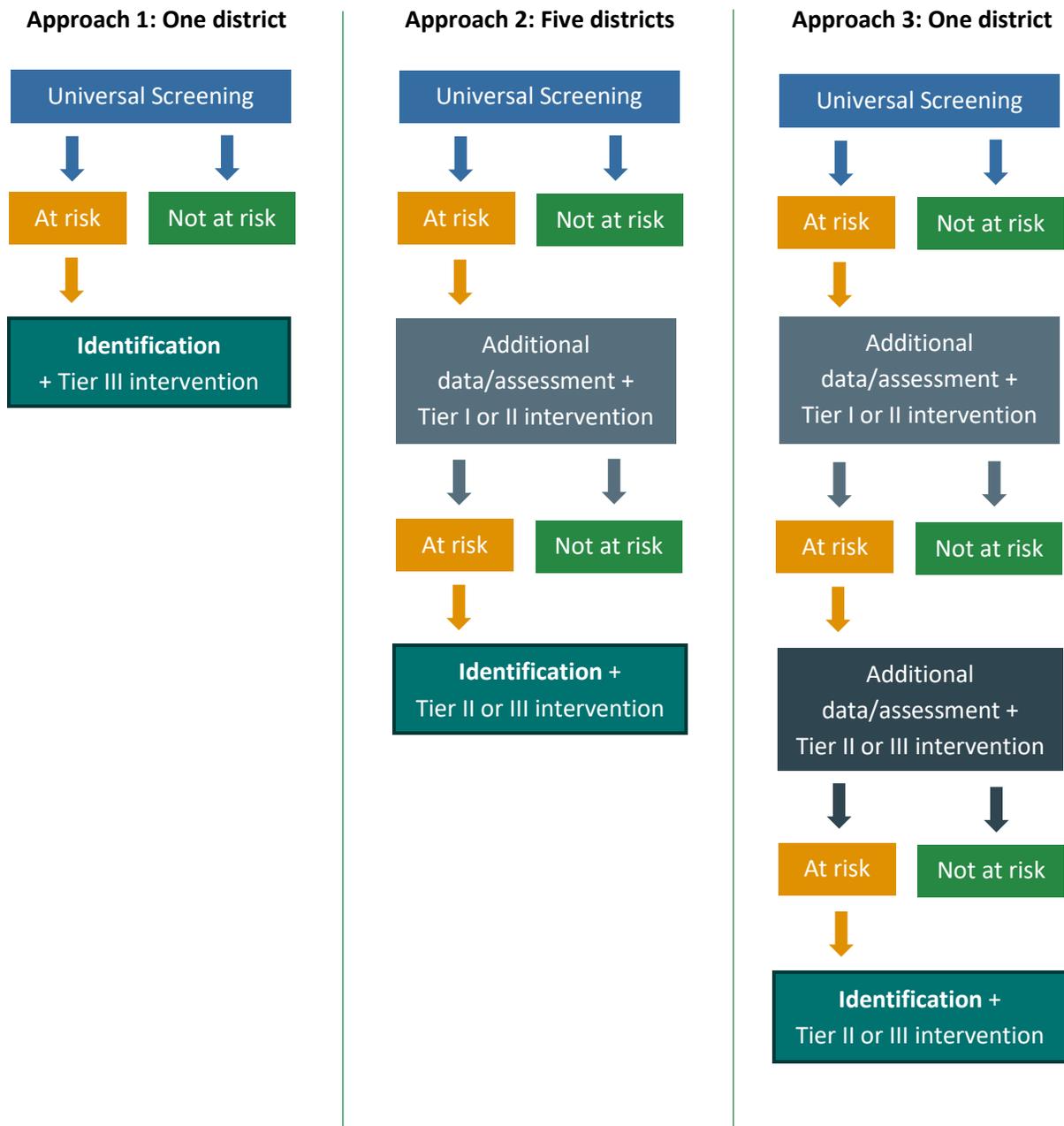
4. Reading Intervention

Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students (MTSS) is the framework the GaDOE recommends districts and schools adopt to provide a comprehensive, data-based approach to teaching and learning. The framework consists of three tiers of support intended to encourage positive educational outcomes for all students. The first, Tier I, is core instruction, provided to all students. Students who need support beyond core instruction receive either targeted Tier II or intensive Tier III intervention in addition to Tier I instruction. Effective intervention for students who need support beyond core instruction is key to addressing students' difficulties in the MTSS framework.

The boundaries between Tier II and Tier III intervention can be determined in different ways based on school and district contexts and student needs, but Tier III intervention is by definition more intensive and individualized than Tier II. Commercial intervention programs are sometimes used at each tier. However, evidence-based instruction from teachers who are responsive to students' specific needs is the best way to ensure that students receive the support they require. For more information about MTSS in Georgia, visit the GaDOE's [MTSS web page](#).

> S.B. 48 requires that districts participating in the pilot program provide for *"the enrollment of students with characteristics of dyslexia in an International Dyslexia Association (IDA)-approved reading program staffed by teachers trained in structured literacy programs as outlined in IDA's Knowledge and Practice Standards"* (S.B. 48, p.4).

General Intervention Support in Reading

In interviews conducted in June 2020 for the *Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation Analysis: 2019-2020*, pilot districts noted that, contrary to the requirement for International Dyslexia Association (IDA)-approved reading programs in S.B. 48, the IDA does not approve or endorse reading programs designed for students with dyslexia. Thus, districts have had to do their own research on potential interventions each year.

> " I believe that us educating the teachers on the actual science of reading and what research says is going to be more beneficial than any intervention program that we buy into. "

For 2021-22, the seven pilot districts together listed a total of 33 intervention tools and strategies used across tiers of intervention. The actual number is higher; one district has an intervention bank with an unspecified number of options from which schools can choose. The average number of interventions for the other six districts was seven. The district with the least interventions used three; the district with the most named 14. Seven intervention tools or strategies were used by more than one district: Orton-Gillingham (4 districts), Fundations (3 districts), Lexia Core5 (2 districts), Wilson Reading (2 districts), Heggerty (2 districts), System 44 (2 districts), and Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (2 districts).

Seventeen of the 33 intervention tools and strategies named, including all of those used by more than one district, were commercial programs. The remaining 16 were instructional strategies used outside of a specific intervention program, such as Elkonin boxes, repeated

retelling, explicit phonological awareness instruction, and the use of decodable texts. (For a complete list of interventions districts named in 2021–22, see Appendix G.)

Interventions for Students Needing Dyslexia-Specific Support in Reading. Interventions developed or marketed for students with dyslexia often use a structured literacy approach and incorporate multisensory methods. This design is beneficial for all students but can be used to identify an intervention as "dyslexia-specific." In the June 2022 interviews, the pilot districts were asked to identify the interventions they used specifically for students with characteristics of dyslexia.

The seven pilot districts reported using 17 different dyslexia-specific interventions in 2021-22. All were commercial programs, and five were used by more than one district. Orton-Gillingham was named by four districts; Fundations, Heggerty, Lexia Core5, and Wilson Reading were identified by two districts each. Six of the dyslexia-specific interventions were new to the districts using them in 2021-22.

As in the Summer 2021 interviews, districts reflected that they were still exploring how best to provide intervention for students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia within the framework of MTSS in 2021-22. Some districts were still struggling with the question of how best to serve students with characteristics of dyslexia in the general education setting and how to determine if and when students might need to be evaluated for special education eligibility.

There was less clarity in 2021-22 than the already limited clarity in 2020-21 regarding the point in the MTSS process at which students had access to dyslexia-specific interventions. One district reported providing dyslexia-specific intervention at the Tier II level, and one said it occurred at Tier III. Most districts were using interventions for students with dyslexia across multiple tiers of intervention and for students who both had and had not been identified as having characteristics of dyslexia. Overall, there was significant variation in what type of intervention specific students received and at what point in the MTSS process they had access to that support.
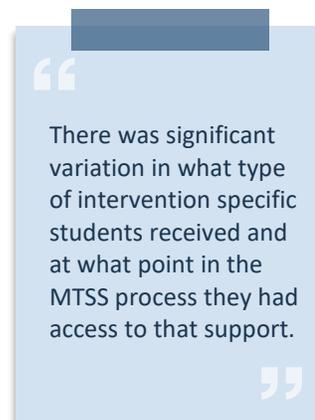
> " There was significant variation in what type of intervention specific students received and at what point in the MTSS process they had access to that support. "

Intervention Processes. In addition to the programs and strategies used, districts also shared details about how intervention was structured in their schools. Some aspects of structure include the staff who provide intervention, the timing and frequency of intervention sessions, and how students received intervention. Another important aspect was the difference between Tier II and Tier III intervention. This distinction is often reported as a challenge in terms of overall MTSS implementation. Several of the interviewees shared some details about the difference between each level of intervention in their districts. This information, and information about other key aspects of intervention, is summarized in Figure 9 on the following page. As with dyslexia-specific support, there was significant variation across the pilot districts in terms of how intervention was structured.

Figure 9. Key Aspects of Intervention for Students with Reading Difficulties in 2021–22

Staffing

- Classroom teachers were key providers of intervention in six of the pilot districts.
- Special education teachers and interventionists/EIP teachers provided Tier II or Tier III intervention in four districts each.
- Two districts each utilized MTSS teachers and paraprofessionals, and instructional coaches were involved in one district.

Time

- In four districts, a dedicated block of time in school schedules was used for intervention support.
- Three districts said intervention was provided during class—either as part of the ELA block, or during science and social studies.
- One district said the time used for intervention varied from school to school.
- Three districts provided details about the duration of Tier II and III intervention.
  - The duration of Tier II intervention sessions ranged from 20 to 30 minutes.
  - The duration of Tier III intervention sessions ranged from 30 to 60 minutes.

Frequency

- Four districts provided details about the frequency of Tier II and III intervention.
  - The frequency of Tier II intervention ranged from 1-3 times per week to daily.
  - The frequency of Tier III intervention ranged from 3-5 times per week to daily.

Format

- Districts said that both push-in and pull-out intervention were provided, often depending on the school and on student needs. A pull-out format was more likely to be used for Tier III intervention than for Tier II.
- The typical group size for Tier II intervention ranged from 1-6 students in one district and 3-5 students in another.
- The group size guidelines for Tier III intervention, provided by one district, were 1-2 students.

Intervention Decision Rules. A few districts shared information about how they made decisions about which students receive Tier II intervention and which students receive Tier III. Districts identified these decision protocols as an area in which they continue to need additional support.

- **Tools to Guide Decisions:** All seven pilot districts used tools such as spreadsheets, charts, district-created "guiding questions," and district MTSS manuals to guide intervention decisions. All of the districts described the use of data from multiple sources, and three districts explicitly required data triangulation to identify students in need of intervention at each tier.

- **District-Determined Cut Scores:** Four districts used district-determined cut scores as decision rules to differentiate between students who needed Tier II intervention and students who needed Tier III. Additional information like classroom data and informal diagnostic assessments were also considered. One district used state guidelines for the Early Intervention Program to guide its intervention decisions.

- **Publisher-Determined Score Range:** Three districts used benchmarks or cut scores determined by their screening tool publishers as decision rules to differentiate between students who needed Tier II intervention and students who needed Tier III.

- **Intensifying Intervention:** Most districts shared that their approach to intervention support generally began with Tier II and intensified to Tier III only if students did not make sufficient progress with Tier II intervention. That is, except in situations where a student was significantly below grade-level expectations—such as two grade levels behind or below the 10th percentile—students had to demonstrate a lack of response to Tier II intervention before receiving more intensive Tier III intervention. This is consistent with guidance on implementing Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students.

5. Data–Based Decision Making and Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is the collection of student data and analysis of that data to inform instruction and intervention. S.B. 48, and best practices according to the MTSS framework, hold that educators should regularly assess students receiving intervention to determine whether the intervention is providing the right type and level of support.

Tools for Progress Monitoring

S.B. 48 requires that pilot districts administer assessments to determine whether intervention services provided to students with characteristics of dyslexia improve those students' language processing and reading skills.

In 2021–22 the pilot districts used a wide variety of progress monitoring tools, the majority of which were purchased from vendors. A total of 12 commercial progress monitoring products were listed, and three were used by more than one district: Acadience (3 districts), AimswebPlus (2 districts), and Fundations (2 districts). One district said intervention program-specific tools were used for progress monitoring. Excluding that district, 2-3 progress monitoring tools were used on average in each of the pilot districts. (For a list of progress monitoring tools districts used in 2021–22, see Appendix H.)

Timing of Progress Monitoring

There was little commonality across the districts in how often they monitored the progress of students who only received Tier I core instruction. Frequency ranged from every 15 days to three times per year to as needed.

For students receiving Tier II or Tier III intervention, most of the seven districts reported conducting progress monitoring at common intervals: every two weeks at Tier II, and weekly at Tier III.

> When we showed [research on progress monitoring frequency] to our teachers, they bought into that research like, 'Wow, this is not just more work. This is the *right* work.'

Figure 10. Progress Monitoring Frequency by Tier in 2021–22

Tier I Frequency	Tier II Frequency	Tier III Frequency
- Every 15 days: 2 districts 3 times per year: 2 districts - As needed/on an ongoing basis: 2 districts	- Every 2 weeks: 4 districts - Every 2-4 weeks: 1 district - Every 15 days: 1 district - Monthly: 1 district	- Weekly: 5 districts - Every 2 weeks: 1 district

Staff Involved in Progress Monitoring

Nearly every district reported that classroom teachers were involved in conducting progress monitoring. Most districts also said that EIP teachers and interventionists assisted with progress monitoring. Other staff involved included special education teachers, instructional coaches, and paraprofessionals.

Use of Progress Monitoring Data

Data analysis and decision making can be structured in a number of different ways. Aspects of these structures include the staff involved, how frequently they meet to review data, and any decision rules they use to make data-based decisions. The pilot districts shared the following details about their approaches, which varied.

Figure 11. Key Aspects of Data Analysis and Data-Based Decision Making in 2021–22

Staff Involved		
• Classroom teachers: 7 districts • MTSS/RTI/SST leaders: 5 districts • Interventionists: 5 districts	• Special education staff: 4 districts • Administrators: 3 districts • Coaches: 2 districts	

Frequency of Data Analysis		
Tier I	**Tier II**	**Tier III**
• Every 15 days: 2 districts • Every 4-6 weeks: 1 district • 3 times per year: 3 districts • As needed: 1 district	• Weekly in PLCs: 1 district • Every 2 weeks: 1 district • Monthly: 2 districts • Every 6-8 weeks: 1 district • Quarterly or more frequently: 1 district • 3 times per year: 1 district	• Weekly: 1 district • Every 2-3 weeks: 1 district • Every 4-6 weeks: 1 district • Every 6-8 weeks: 1 district • Quarterly or more frequently: 1 district • 3 times per year: 1 district

Data Management
• Some districts used more than one tool to manage data and facilitate analysis. • Five districts used a multifunction screening and progress monitoring tool that also housed data and facilitated data analysis. These included Star tools, Acadience, and Aimsweb. • Three districts used a student information system, such as Infinite Campus or Schoology, to manage progress monitoring data. • Two districts used a proprietary spreadsheet for data management and analysis.

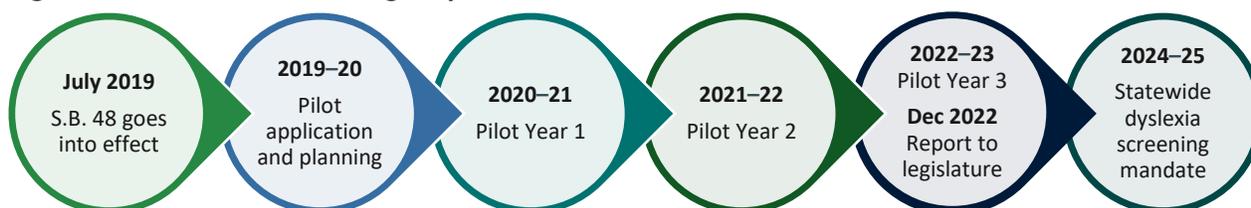| Decision Rules |
|---|
| • Every district had specific processes guiding the use of progress monitoring data.
• All seven districts' processes included examining a student's rate of improvement and looking for adequate progress, as measured by a trend line or the gap between their achievement and grade-level expectations.
• Five districts' processes specified a time period or number of data points over which progress should be measured. |

Appendix A: History of the Georgia Dyslexia Pilot

Senate Bill 48

In 2019, the Georgia Assembly passed Senate Bill 48 (Georgia Code §20-2-159.6 or S.B. 48) into law. Beginning in the 2024–25 school year, the bill requires local school systems to begin screening all kindergarten students and students in grades 1–3 who have been identified through the Response to Intervention process for characteristics of dyslexia.

To prepare for this statewide mandate in the 2024–25 school year, the bill also requires that the GaDOE conduct a three-year Dyslexia Pilot Program (2020–23). Seven districts were selected by the GaDOE to be part of the pilot. The requirements of the pilot districts, as outlined in S.B. 48, are identified at the beginning of the sections that follow in Part II of this report.

Figure 12. Timeline of the Georgia Dyslexia Pilot

| July 2019 S.B. 48 goes into effect | 2019–20 Pilot application and planning | 2020–21 Pilot Year 1 | 2021–22 Pilot Year 2 | 2022–23 Pilot Year 3 / Dec 2022 Report to legislature | 2024–25 Statewide dyslexia screening mandate |

State Infrastructure and Support for Pilot Districts

After the passage of S.B. 48 in 2019, the GaDOE began its work to support implementation of the bill's requirements and the pilot. These efforts went well beyond the requirements of S.B. 48. In the 2019–20 through 2021-22 school years, the GaDOE did the following:

- Established a lead team at the agency.
- Contracted with a dyslexia pilot consultant to provide direct support to districts.
- Developed the *Georgia Dyslexia Informational Handbook*.
- Provided various resources on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).
- Initiated a partnership with the RC6 and SREB to analyze pilot implementation.
- Reviewed pilot program progress at monthly cross-division meetings of GaDOE staff from various divisions, including English Language Arts (ELA), MTSS, and Special Education.

> S.B. 48 required the GaDOE to create a dyslexia informational handbook that includes guidance, technical assistance, and training to assist all local school systems in the implementation of evidence- based practices for instructing students with characteristics of dyslexia.

(For more details, see the *Georgia Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation Analysis 2019-20*.)

Appendix B: Professional Learning Opportunities Provided by the GaDOE in 2021–22

The GaDOE expanded its direct supports for the pilot districts beginning in 2020–21 and continued these supports in 2021-22. Supports and professional learning opportunities offered by the GaDOE in 2021-22 are described below.

Professional Learning Resources

In 2021–22, the GaDOE provided the following supports for educators:

- Professional learning, including the following:
  - A yearlong series of facilitated Cox Campus courses and "Deep Dive into Practice" sessions covering all aspects of early literacy.
  - Training sessions on MTSS implementation.
  - More than 20 informational and technical assistance sessions presented to state organizations, school districts, and teacher preparation programs offering the Dyslexia Endorsement.
- The GaDOE facilitated monthly virtual Pilot Implementation Chats to provide an informal setting for the pilot districts to discuss any questions or needs with the GaDOE and with each other.
- A Microsoft Teams' Collaboration site to enable districts to easily communicate with the GaDOE and each other.
- Monthly communications about upcoming Dyslexia Professional Learning Opportunities related to dyslexia, MTSS, and literacy instruction on the GaDOE Dyslexia web page.

The Science of Reading: A Yearlong Professional Development Journey

From July 2021 through May 2022 the GaDOE partnered with the Cox Campus for Language & Literacy to offer a comprehensive sequence of courses covering all aspects of early literacy. The GaDOE facilitated 10 sessions and Cox Campus offered 13 "Deep Dive into Practice" sessions to explore the topics further. Click here for a list of the sessions offered. Recordings of all sessions are available here.

Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students

In 2021-22, the GaDOE offered more than a dozen professional learning sessions on elements of MTSS, including overviews of the essential components of MTSS, "deeper dives" in areas frequently requested by Georgia educators, and detailed guidance on progress monitoring and the use of progress monitoring data. Click here for a complete list of MTSS professional learning sessions offered in 2021-22.

Appendix C: Successes in 2021–22

Pilot districts identified a number of successes they experienced during the 2021–22 school year. Together, these indicate that the districts were building on what they learned in Year 1 of implementation and finding ways to continue what worked well and change what did not. The successes they reported are grouped into three categories: Big Picture, Operations, and MTSS.

Figure 13. Successes Districts Identified in 2021-22

Context	**Flexible Implementation Approach**
	Three districts reflected on the ways that the flexibility to determine their pilot implementation approach worked well for them. Keeping implementation small in scale was helpful for pacing implementation and getting teacher buy-in in one district. Another district intentionally implemented across schools with diverse student bodies, which helped the district figure out how to provide intervention to students with a variety of different needs. A third district felt it was ready to expand the pilot districtwide in 2022-23 after initially developing and refining processes with fewer schools.
	Improving Outcomes
	A few districts noted improved literacy outcomes for students in 2021-22. One, which implemented in Pre-K through third grades, pointed to improved kindergarten readiness data for Pre-K students and an increased demand for Pre-K from the community. Another district reported seeing impressive student growth in reading.
Staff & Resources	**Staff**
	Several districts spoke of the value of motivating staff to grow professionally and shift their mindsets regarding how reading instruction and intervention should be provided. For example, one district focused on redefining "intervention" from something that only specific staff do, to a collective effort involving the entire school in various ways.
	Training and Professional Development
	For four districts, within-district training and professional development were instrumental to the work of the pilot. They described providing training on reading instruction generally, including the structured literacy approach; training in the Orton-Gillingham Approach, and training on screening tools and support from core curriculum publishers.
MTSS	**Screening**
	All seven districts talked positively about their experiences with screening tools. For example, many said the tools provided them with valuable, high-quality data that helped them make better instructional decisions, such as identifying specific skill gaps and matching instruction and intervention to students' needs. Several districts mentioned their screening processes as a particular implementation success.
	Intervention and Progress Monitoring
	Two districts cited intervention as a specific success in 2021-22, saying their processes and intervention strategies worked well. Two more districts felt this way about progress monitoring, both noting that it had become routine for school staff and processes were being followed.

Appendix D: Challenges in 2021–22

Districts also faced a variety of challenges in implementing the dyslexia pilot in 2021–22. A common theme of the challenges reported were difficulties experienced as the pilot districts adjusted their practices and focusing on providing reading instruction in new ways.

Figure 14. Challenges Districts Identified in 2021-22

Context	**Contextual Factors**
	All but one district named contextual factors like large size and staff turnover as challenges. • Transitions or extended absences of key staff proved difficult in four districts, in part because new staff had to be brought up to speed with district processes. • Two districts found that their large size and the many schools involved in the pilot made implementation more challenging.
	Buy–In
	Getting buy-in from school and district staff and school boards was a challenge for four districts: • Screening: Getting buy-in at the school level, including helping staff understand why they were screening and identifying students. • Science of reading: Getting staff to buy into the science of reading as an instructional goal. • Three districts said they had difficulty getting buy-in from executive-level district staff and their school boards for making changes to screening and intervention tools or curriculum resources.
	Communication and Collaboration
	Communicating information from the district level to the school level and collaborating across district offices and between schools was a challenge for four districts. They mentioned difficulties including: • Communicating roles and expectations for the pilot, information about screening procedures, and information about dyslexia to school-level staff. • Communicating with parents about the pilot and about dyslexia in general. • Establishing districtwide processes and ensuring consistency in how those processes were followed—specifically, screening and intervention processes, and processes for identifying students in the pilot. • Collaborating with different staff across the district in order to facilitate the pilot.
	COVID Impacts
	Two districts mentioned the ongoing impact of COVID in the 2021-22 school year: • Making up for missed learning and catching up with screening for students who could not be screened virtually in 2020-21. • A need for communication and coordination between a greater number of stakeholders as schools shifted from virtual to in-person instruction and more staff were involved with each student.

Staff & Resources

Logistics

Six districts pointed to several different logistical hurdles they faced in implementation:
- Finding the time, staff, or space to provide intervention.
- The difficulty of balancing pilot implementation with other initiatives, including school improvement requirements.

Instructional Materials

A majority of districts found that their core instructional materials presented a challenge to pilot implementation in 2021-22.
- Three districts found significant gaps in their core instructional materials and had to find ways to work around or supplement those materials, especially in the area of phonological awareness.
- Three districts were in their first or second year of implementing new core curriculum materials and one of these was implementing a new assessment tool as part of the new curriculum. The districts found these changes an especially heavy lift considering all the other pilot-related changes they were making to improve instruction and intervention.

Staff Knowledge

Six districts reported a need to build the knowledge of school, district, and regional educators. They specifically mentioned a need for greater knowledge in the following areas:
- The MTSS process and how the dyslexia pilot relates to it.
- Dyslexia itself, including recognizing it.
- The science of reading and structured literacy, particularly among teachers and GLRS and RESA staff.
- Teachers' understanding of how to use existing instructional resources well.
- Administrators' understanding of the pilot and how it interacted with existing school processes.

MTSS

Using Data

Almost every district identified using data well as a particularly notable challenge in 2021-22. They cited struggles with:
- Interpreting screening and progress monitoring data, combining data from different sources, and using it to make decisions about instruction, intervention, and the need for further assessment.
- Teasing apart reading difficulties and difficulties caused by a lack of English language acquisition.
- Establishing processes and guidelines to facilitate data analysis on a regular basis.

Appendix E: Reading Curricula and Instructional Resources and Strategies

Curricula districts reported using in 2020–21 included the following. "Curricula" as used here includes all named instructional materials used in core reading instruction. Each was used by one district unless otherwise indicated.

Core Reading Curricula and Instructional Resources and Strategies	
American Reading Company	Lexia Core5 (2 districts)
Benchmark Phonics	Lucy Calkins Writing
District-created curriculum	Saxon Phonics (2 districts)
Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System	Saxon Spelling
Fountas & Pinnell Word Study	Texts: Decodable, fiction, and non-fiction (3 districts)
Fundations (2 districts)	Instructional frameworks (3 districts)
Handwriting Without Tears	Orton-Gillingham strategies (2 districts)
Heggerty (2 districts)	Read alouds
Into Reading	Science of reading strategies
Journeys (2 districts)	

Appendix F: Screening Tools

Universal screeners districts reported using in 2021–22 included the following. Each was used by one district unless otherwise indicated.

Universal Screening Tools	
Acadience (3 districts)	NWEA MAP Reading Fluency
Acadience RAN	PALS
AimswebPlus Early Literacy	PPVT-4
Benchmark Phonics	Locally-developed spelling inventory
Fluharty-2	Star CBM
Growth Measure	Star Early Literacy
NWEA MAP Growth (3 districts)	Star Reading

Additional assessment tools districts reported using in 2021–22 included the following. Each was used by one district unless otherwise indicated.

Additional Assessment Tools	
AimsWebPlus	MaxScholar Diagnostic
Decoding Power Diagnostic	MindPlay
Fundations nonsense word tool	Phonological Awareness Assessment
KTEA-3 (2 districts)	Scholastic Reading Inventory
Lexia	Star CBM

Appendix G: Intervention Programs and Strategies

Commercial intervention programs districts reported using in 2021–22 included the following. Each was used by one district unless otherwise indicated.

Commercial Intervention Programs	
95 Percent	MaxScholar
Differentiated Reading Instruction	MindPlay
Fast ForWord	Orton-Gillingham Approach (3 districts)
Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (2 districts)	Read 180
Fundations (3 districts)	Sonday System
Fundations Hub	Sound Partners
Handwriting Without Tears	System 44 (2 districts)
Heggerty (2 districts)	Wilson Reading System (2 districts)
Lexia Core5 (2 districts)	

Non-commercial intervention strategies districts reported using in 2021–22 included the following. Each was used by one district.

Non–Commercial Intervention Strategies	
Click or Clunk	Main idea maps
Decodable texts	Multi-sensory instruction
District intervention bank	Oral/written retell
Elkonin boxes	Paragraph shrinking
Explicit phonological awareness instruction	Repeated reading
Explicit phonemic awareness instruction	Story mapping
Explicit phonics instruction	Strategies from "The Reading Strategies Book"
Fiction and non-fiction texts	Strategies with "Visible Actionable Steps" for using phonics rules while reading

Interventions districts reported using in 2021–22 for students with characteristics of dyslexia included the following. Each was used by one district unless otherwise indicated.

Dyslexia–Specific Interventions	
Differentiated Reading Instruction (Walpole & McKenna)	MindPlay
Fast ForWord	Orton-Gillingham Approach (4 districts)
Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention	Read180
Fundations (2 districts)	Sonday System
Fundations Hub	Sound Partners
Handwriting Without Tears	Stepping Stones
Heggerty (2 districts)	System 44
Lexia Core5 (2 districts)	Wilson Reading (2 districts)
MaxScholar	

Appendix H: Progress Monitoring Tools

Progress monitoring tools districts reported using in 2021–22 included the following. Each was used by one district unless otherwise indicated.

Progress Monitoring Tools	
Acadience (3 districts)	MaxScholar
AimswebPlus (2 districts)	MindPlay
Decoding Power Diagnostic	Phonological Awareness Assessment
easyCBM	Star CBM
Fundations (2 districts)	Star Reading
Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention	Intervention-specific tools
Lexia	