Dyslexia FAQ

A student is diagnosed with dyslexia. What does that mean?
It is important to recognize that students with dyslexia have individual strengths. Dyslexia does not impair students’ ability to think creatively and critically or reason abstractly. Recognizing, celebrating, and linking to students’ strengths is critical in working with students with dyslexia. Many people who have dyslexia are highly intelligent and become very successful as adults. Value their gifts.

Minnesota Statute 125A.01 states: "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent recognition of words and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Should the student be in Special Education?
Dyslexia is a medical diagnosis. The diagnosis of dyslexia alone does not assure eligibility for Special Education Services (MDE, 2011). Nor should it indicate that a student needs specific intervention for reading or other academic supports. Students eligible for Special Education Services have a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) that significantly adversely impacts educational performance. Students with dyslexia perform at a range of levels, and a student with dyslexia may not meet the criteria for SLD established by state guidelines.

How do students with dyslexia learn? With instruction and support, students can experience academic success at school. Dyslexia has varying impacts on students - some students may experience success in the classroom with very little differentiation, just effective classroom instruction, while others may need a more comprehensive system of support. For students whose educational performance is at an extremely low level, Special Education Teachers may use a variety of instructional strategies that have been shown to be successful for students with dyslexia. It has not been proven that any specific intervention will work with all students or even all students with dyslexia. Building leaders, Park Fast LANE Teachers, and Special Education Teachers in our school building collaborate together to ensure individual student’s needs are met.

What other support can I give the student?
It is important to recognize that students with dyslexia have a hard time reading. Reading print is a laborious task and understanding letter-sound correspondence takes repeated practice. Providing a supportive, nurturing environment is essential. Check in with the student often and stay in close contact with the teachers and family members to know how learning is going for the student.

Where can I find more information on dyslexia?
http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/SpecEdClass/DisabCateg/SpecLearnDisab/