



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE
Commissioner

February 23, 2016

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Lead Persons
Directors of Special Education
Administrators of a State Facility
Administrators of an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities
Administrators of a College-Operated Program
Statewide Special Education Advisory Council
Agencies or Organizations Concerned with Special Education

FROM: John Worthington, Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

SUBJECT: Dyslexia Definition Correction

I am writing to inform you of an administrative update to Chapter 14, Special Education. As you are likely aware, on February 2, 2015, the Department adopted a definition of "dyslexia" at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3. This definition aligned with the definition which appeared on the International Dyslexia Association's (IDA's) website, eida.org, at the time of proposal, as that adopted by the IDA Board of Directors on November 12, 2002.

The Department recently learned that the definition appearing on the IDA's website, upon which the adopted definition was based, contained language not conforming to the definition adopted by the IDA Board. The discrepancies include: the use of "neurological," instead of "neurobiological" in the definition's first sentence; the second sentence beginning "It can be," instead of "It is" and the third sentence beginning "Difficulties," instead of "These difficulties." As the Department was required by legislation to adopt the definition in conformance with the IDA definition, an administrative change to the definition was made effective February 3, 2016. The corrected definition appears on the Department's website here:
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/>.

Districts may have printed copies of Chapter 14 that do not contain the corrected definition. Districts are asked to include a copy of the insert attached to this memorandum to any versions of Chapter 14 which do not contain the corrected definition. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

JW/KE

Attachment

c: Members, State Board of Education
Commissioner David C. Hespe
Senior Staff
Diane Shoener
Kathleen Ehling
Executive County Superintendents
Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
Executive County Business Officials

County Supervisors of Child Study
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group
Receiving Schools

Effective February 3, 2016, the Department of Education adopted the following definition of dyslexia at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3:

“Dyslexia” means a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition 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 growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

This definition supersedes the definition in the regulations adopted February 2, 2015.