



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](http://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.