

# Students with Disabilities Resulting from Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia

## Questions and Answers

August 2018

1. What is the definition of a learning disability in New York State ?

As defined in section 200.1(zz)(6) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which manifests itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, as determined in accordance with

Dyslexia refers to a learning disorder affecting a student's reading skills. It is often

Other students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia may need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment. This may be done effectively through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), such as response to intervention (RtI) or positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). MTSS is a schoolwide approach that addresses the needs of all students, including struggling learners and students with disabilities, and integrates early and ongoing assessment and intervention within a multi-level instructional and behavioral system to maximize student achievement and reduce problem behaviors. Some students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia may be effectively supported if they are provided targeted assistance, which includes research-based, specific reading, writing, and/or math instruction within an MTSS framework. However, if a student does not make adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided with instruction within an MTSS framework, the school district must make a referral for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education programs and services. Additional information and resources related to MTSS is available at the New York State Response to Intervention Technical Assistance Center website. (<https://nysrti.org/>)

4. What are some considerations when determining eligibility for special education programs and services for students with (or suspected of having) dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/ or dyscalculia?

The CSE must determine a student's eligibility as a student with a disability based on the results of an individual evaluation. The individual evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to identify the nature and extent of the student's disability and educational impact. Individual evaluations must be conducted by a multidisciplinary team or group of persons, including at least one teacher or other specialist with certification or kertlistns, 3eheb (nl)2 (exi)2 (a,)2 ( d)-5 i822s



A student who has been identified as having a disability, including a learning disability resulting from dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia, must receive special education programs and services in accordance with the recommendations in the student's IEP to meet his or her unique needs at no cost to the student's parent. The IEP of such students must be developed to ensure the student has meaningful access to the general education curriculum and is provided the appropriate special education programs and services including, as appropriate,

IEP. This instruction may be provided in the classroom or in another educational setting structured to meet the needs of the individual student.

9. Is there a specific type of specially designed instruction that must be provided to students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia?

The specially designed instruction that is appropriate to the unique needs of each student with a disability resulting from dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia may vary across individual students with each of these specific learning disabilities. Because of this, there is no single approach, product, or method of delivering specially designed instruction to such students that is required in federal or State law and regulations. The specially designed instruction provided to each student should be based on the information documented in the present levels of performance and tailored to his or her individual, disability-related needs. The recommendations of the programs and services a student needs cannot be based solely on the category of the student's disability. When discussing a student's present levels of performance, the CSE should review what prior instructional methods and strategies have been utilized with the student to avoid reinstituting programs that have not proven effective in the past.

Specially designed instruction must be provided with appropriate frequency, duration, and instructional grouping specific to the student's individual, disability-related needs. Effective instruction for students with disabilities resulting from dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia should be explicit and systematic. This means that information is presented in a clear and straightforward way, and the student is provided with step-by-step examples during each lesson. Instruction should follow a logical order where easier concepts are taught before harder concepts, and each lesson should be scaffolded building upon skills that the student has previously been taught. Instruction in this manner should also reflect the principles of universal design for learning<sup>3</sup> (i.e., providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression during instructional activities) through the use of multisensory strategies that engage more than one sense (e.g., touch, movement, sight, hearing) at a time. There should be many opportunities for the student to practice skills in the context of meaningful activities, and the student should be provided with ongoing and specific corrective feedback.

Specially designed instruction for students with dyslexia should incorporate and build on the overall domains of effective reading instruction (i.e., phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, JTT-0.006R /P <</ke(d)



that the testing accommodations indicated in a student's IEP are consistently implemented.

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initial CSE meeting and at least annually during the review of each student's IEP. Accommodations, along with assistive technology devices and services, provide students with the ability to demonstrate skills and attainment of knowledge without being limited or unfairly restricted due to the effects of a disability. A student with a disability who has dyslexia, for example, may need instructional and testing accommodations to mitigate a significant difficulty with decoding, and these accommodations are aligned with the student's assistive technology needs (e.g., use of text-to-speech software programs). This type of accommodation will allow the student to access grade-level text to complete assignments and take both classroom and State assessments without being unfairly restricted by his/her disability. However, the provision of such accommodations does not replace the need for appropriate

school attendance and improved test scores and grades.<sup>5</sup> Providing appropriate support, encouragement, and behavioral supports helps to ensure that students with disabilities are best able to access and benefit from instruction. New York State's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan includes a goal for ensuring that all students have access to support for their social-emotional well-

Parents have valuable information about their child. They know their child's interests, how their child expresses feelings, and how their child responds to problems. Parents are familiar with their child's background and can relate reading to their child's life experiences. Schools need to capitalize on parents' capabilities to support instruction.

Schools should create environments conducive to active involvement of families by planning ways to establish rapport, by responding to opportunities to connect families with needed services and by providing a variety of options for parents to become partners with the schools. Schools and teachers should share information about effective strategies and activities that parents can use at home to support reading, writing, and mathematics development. In addition to scheduling parent-teacher conferences, schools can engage parents as partners in the education of their child through the use of strategies, such as:

- helping parents understand what dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia are, dispelling common myths, and explaining how these conditions impact their child's education;

- hosting parent workshops or seminars that provide parents with information and strategies to support their child's literacy and mathematics skills;

- providing lists or suggestions of developmentally-appropriate reading, writing, and mathematics materials

students with learning disabilities resulting from dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. This policy guidance document is available on