



## MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA, DYSGRAPHIA, AND DYSCALCULIA

According to various reports<sup>1</sup>, as many as 5-20 percent of students are affected by dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia. Students with learning disabilities, which may include students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia, demonstrate unique educational strengths and disability-related needs. All students with disabilities, including students with specific learning disabilities, must receive an appropriate education that meets their unique needs.

When determining eligibility for special education programs and services and developing an individualized education program (IEP) for such students, information about the student's specific learning difficulties related to reading, writing, and/or mathematics is essential in determining the nature and extent of the student's disability and educational needs. The committee on special education (CSE), which includes the student's parents and other qualified individuals, should include information about the student's dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia, when applicable, in evaluation results to describe how that condition relates to the student's eligibility for special education. Although dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia, alone, are not disability classifications under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or NYS Commissioner's Regulations, there is nothing in federal or NYS law and regulations that prohibits the inclusion of the terms dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia in a student's special education evaluation materials or in his/her IEP. The use of specific terms, as appropriate, along with detailed descriptions of the student's learning characteristics, supports the development of an IEP that enables the student to make progress on individualized annual goals and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

### Learning Disabilities in New York State

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New York State (NYS) Commissioner's Regulations define learning disability to mean 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 section 200.4(j).

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The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of an intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

8 NYCRR§200.1(zz)(6)

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<sup>1</sup> Horowitz, S. H., Rawe, J., & Whittaker, M. C. (2017). *The State of Learning Disabilities: Understanding the 1 in 5*. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities. Retrieved on May 25, 2018 from: <https://www.ncl.org/the-state-of-learning-disabilities-understanding-the-1-in-5>

## CONSIDERATIONS WHEN IDENTIFYING AND PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA, DYSGRAPHIA, AND DYSCALCULIA

### Understanding the Terms

The terms dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia refer to specific learning challenges related to reading, writing, and mathematics. However, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia **do not** imply that a student cannot read, write, or develop math skills. Students with these learning challenges can develop such skills given appropriate instruction, supports and accommodations.

### Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, or dyscalculia may be effectively supported through **targeted assistance, which includes research-based, specific reading, writing, and/or math instruction** within an MTSS framework (e.g., Response to Intervention, or RtI).

### Evaluations

The CSE determines a student's eligibility as a student with a disability based on the results of an individual evaluation. The evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability **must**:

- include assessments in all areas related to the suspected disability;
- include input from the student's parent; and
- be completed by a multidisciplinary team or group of persons, including at least one teacher or other specialist with certification or knowledge in the area of the suspected disability.

### Social-Emotional Needs

Identify the social-emotional supports needed by individual students to manage anxiety, frustration, depression, etc. related to their disability.

### Referral

- Schools must make a referral for an evaluation for students who do not make adequate progress after an appropriate period of time within an MTSS framework (e.g., RtI).
- Parents may request an initial evaluation from the school district's CSE **at any time**.

### IEPs for Students with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and/or Dyscalculia

- Must be developed in consideration of the student's individual needs
- Describe the concerns of the parent(s) for the education of their child
- Include consideration of any assistive technology devices and/or services needed by the student
- Specify appropriate classroom instructional supports/modifications and testing accommodations

### Specially-Designed Instruction

Districts must ensure that students with learning disabilities resulting from dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia receive appropriate specially-designed instruction with appropriate frequency, duration, and instructional grouping specific to the student's individual needs.

## Characteristics of:

### DYSLEXIA

A condition affecting reading skills often characterized by difficulties in areas including (but not limited to) phonological processing, decoding, fluency, and/or spelling

### DYSGRAPHIA

A condition impacting writing skills often characterized by difficulties in areas including (but not limited to) legibility and automaticity

### DYSCALCULIA

A condition impacting math skills often characterized by difficulties in areas including (but not limited to) working memory, spatial/quantity concepts impacting number sense, and symbol recognition/use

### Questions?

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