

CHAPTER 210

AN ACT concerning reading disabilities among public school students and supplementing chapter 40 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.18A:40-5.1 Definitions relative to reading disabilities.

1. As used in this act:

“Potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities” means indicators that include, but shall not be limited to, difficulty in acquiring language skills; inability to comprehend oral or written language; difficulty in rhyming words; difficulty in naming letters, recognizing letters, matching letters to sounds, and blending sounds when speaking and reading words; difficulty recognizing and remembering sight words; consistent transposition of number sequences, letter reversals, inversions, and substitutions; and trouble in replication of content.

C.18A:40-5.2 Distribution of information on screening instruments.

2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall distribute to each board of education information on screening instruments available to identify students who possess one or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities pursuant to section 3 of this act. The commissioner shall provide information on the screening instruments appropriate for kindergarten through second grade students and on screening instruments that may be suitably used for older students. A board of education shall select and implement age-appropriate screening instruments for the early diagnosis of dyslexia and other reading disabilities.

b. The commissioner shall develop and distribute to each board of education guidance on appropriate intervention strategies for students diagnosed with dyslexia or other reading disabilities.

C.18A:40-5.3 Screening for dyslexia, other reading disabilities.

3. a. A board of education shall ensure that each student enrolled in the school district who has exhibited one or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities is screened for dyslexia and other reading disabilities using a screening instrument selected pursuant to section 2 of this act no later than the student’s completion of the first semester of the second grade.

b. In the event that a student who would have been enrolled in kindergarten or grade one or two during or after the 2014-2015 school year enrolls in the district in kindergarten or grades one through six during or after the 2015-2016 school year and has no record of being previously screened for dyslexia or other reading disabilities pursuant to this act, the board of education shall ensure that the newly-enrolled student is screened for dyslexia and other reading disabilities using a screening instrument selected pursuant to section 2 of this act at the same time other students enrolled in the student’s grade are screened for dyslexia and other reading disabilities or, if other students enrolled in the student’s grade have previously been screened, within 90 calendar days of the date the student is enrolled in the district.

c. The screening shall be administered by a teacher or other teaching staff member properly trained in the screening process for dyslexia and other reading disabilities.

C.18A:40-5.4 Comprehensive assessment for the learning disorder.

4. In the event that a student is determined through the screening conducted pursuant to section 3 of this act to possess one or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities, the board of education shall ensure that the student receives a comprehensive assessment for the learning disorder. In the event that a diagnosis of dyslexia or other reading disability is confirmed by the comprehensive assessment, the board of education shall provide appropriate evidence-based intervention strategies to the student, including intense instruction on phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the 2014-2015 school year; provided, however, that the Commissioner of Education shall take any anticipatory actions that the commissioner determines to be necessary and appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this act prior to the 2014-2015 school year.

Approved January 17, 2014.