

Further Clarification on Organic Dysfunction

The following definitions are from a Virginia Dept. of Education Superintendent's Memo dated January 9th, 2015. The complete memo, Superintendent's Memo #004-15, can be found online at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2015/004-15.shtml Some examples of organic dysfunction from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke are also included.

Organic Dysfunction:

Organic dysfunction means the cause of the reading disability is physically based and it does not include reading difficulties that are caused by social or environmental factors, or educational deficiencies. Examples of an organic dysfunction may include conditions such as **dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and aphasia**. The requirement for a physician's certification as indicated in Superintendent's Memo #174-13 could include the physician's review of a student's educational record that provides documentation from assessments that show characteristics of the above conditions, such as dyslexia.

Dyslexia:

Dyslexia is distinguished from other learning disabilities due to its weakness occurring at the phonological level. Dyslexia is 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.

Some examples of organic dysfunction are:

- **ADHD**
- **Asperger syndrome**
- **Autism**
- **Cancers**
- **Chronic pain**
- **Developmental Disorders**
- **Dyscalculia**
- **Dyslexia**
- **Dysgraphia**
- **Dyspraxia**
- **Epilepsy**
- **Gerstmann's syndrome**
- **Head/Brain injuries**
- **Headache/Migraine**
- **Huntington's disease**
- **Learning disabilities**
- **Motor System Disorders**
- **Neurological Issues (including ataxia, degeneration, dementia, palsies, encephalitis)**
- **Overuse disorders / Repetitive motion disorders**
- **Paralysis**
- **Seizure Disorders**
- **Stroke**
- **Tumors**