

---

## Editors' Note

### The Reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA 2004)

The speculation about the changes in the reauthorization of IDEA is over. On December 3, the President signed the reauthorized *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004*, Public Law 108-446. This is now the law of the land.

There are many changes in this new law for students with all disabilities, from changes in the IEP, to the elimination of short-term objectives, to three-year evaluations, to funding patterns, and to matters regarding attorney fees. The article by Bev Johns in this issue describes some of the changes.

One of the most dramatic changes in IDEIA 2004 regards the process of determining eligibility for learning disabilities services. IDEIA 2004 states that:

1. When determining a child's eligibility for services for learning disabilities, schools shall *not* be required to take into consideration whether the child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics reasoning, and
2. When determining a child's eligibility for services for learning disabilities, a school *may* use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation process. This procedure is called *Response-to-Intervention*.

In effect, IDEIA 2004 permits two approaches for determining eligibility for learning disabilities services.

The next step in this law-making process involves writing the regulations to implement the new law, (IDEIA 2004). This process takes about one year and the U.S. Department of Education is asking for ideas on what the IDEIA 2004 regulations should include. This is where LDA members and organizations can play a crucial role. Suggestions can be e-mailed to: [comments@ed.gov](mailto:comments@ed.gov). Be sure to put on the subject line: *Comments on IDEIA 2004*.

### Articles in this Issue

*Congress Dramatically Changes IDEA* by Bev Johns describes the procedures used by the Congress to pass the new Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The reauthorized IDEIA was signed into law (Public Law 108-446) by President Bush on December 3, 2004. The author reports on many manifestations of the new law and her perception of its impact on children with disabilities.

*Improving Students with Learning Disabilities Ability to Acquire and Generalize a Vocabulary Learning Strategy* by Sue Spencer and Kent Logan. Instruction in vocabulary is recognized as a vital component of reading instruction for students with learning disabilities. This study examines the effects of providing explicit metacognitive instruction prior to cognitive strategy instruction of the ability of students with learning disabilities to generalize a vocabulary strategy learned in a general education setting.

*The Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement in Foreign Language Course Substitution Decisions for University Students with Learning Disabilities: An Exploratory Analysis* by Joseph W. Madaus reports on an exploratory study of college students who received course substitutes for the institution's foreign language requirement. These students scored significantly lower on several tests of the Woodcock Johnson III tests than students with learning disabilities who passed the foreign language courses.

*Parents' Perspectives on Coping with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and Concomitant Learning Disabilities* by Carol L. Webb describes the general recognition that individuals with related disorders have a concomitant learning disability. This article addresses parental perspectives and coping strategies related to Duchenne muscular dystrophy and learning disabilities.

*Book Review: Laughing Allegra by Anne Ford with John-Richard Thompson: Book Review* by Rosa A. Hagin. The author of this book, Anne Ford, has been a strong and visible advocate for the field of learning disabilities. This book relates how she came to know about learning disabilities through her struggle with her daughter, Allegra.

*Book Review: Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz* by Nancy Mather. In this book, Dr. Shaywitz explains current scientific brain research and relates it to scientific reading research. Dr. Sally Shaywitz has been a productive researcher in the field of learning disabilities, and she is a frequent speaker about brain research.

Janet W. Lerner  
Frank Kline  
Co-editors