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Special Education Policies and Procedures

**Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses for Determining a Specific Learning Disability**

**PATTERNS OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

**Rationale**

The proposed eligibility rubric is adapted from the Oregon School Psychologists Association and Achievement-Aptitude Consistency Model (2006, Flanagan, Ortiz, Mascolo, Alfonso). It is grounded in the CHC (Cattell-Horn-Carroll) theory of intelligence. Both CHC theory and the Achievement-Aptitude Consistency models seek to pair a pattern of cognitive strengths and weaknesses.

Research supports identification of cognitive weaknesses with associated achievement deficits. In addition, convergence of associated data (state standardized assessments, attempted intervention and results, curriculum-based measures, qualitative data) lend support to eligibility decisions.

**PSW Criteria**

* At least one cognitive weakness among the critical abilities that is <90 (Grades K-3) or <85 (Grades 4-12) (see below).
* At least three critical or non-critical cognitive abilities that are >92 and at least 12 points higher than the lowest weakness.
* Standard score in one of the six achievement areas (basic reading, reading comprehension, reading fluency, math calculation, math reasoning and written expression) that <90 (Grades K-3) or <85 (Grades 4-12).
* Student is unresponsive to general education interventions

**Critical Abilities**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Reading** | **Math** | **Written Expression** |
| Phonological awareness | Fluid intelligence  (Thinking about relationships among concepts, deduction and induction, higher order algebra) | Intelligence  Verbal abilities and working memory.  Processing speed |
| Verbal intelligence (Crystallized – knowledge acquired through environment) including vocabulary | Comprehension/Knowledge-Verbal reasoning (using language to solve math problems | Visual-motor Integration |
| Rapid automatic naming | Working memory, processing speed & oral language (counting strategies and number sense) | Attention measures |
| Processing speed | RAN (rapid automatized naming or fluent number identification) | Working memory |
| Working memory | Quantitative reasoning  (magnitude comparison, our first task as mammals) | Executive functioning |
| Associative memory |  | Writing and spelling skills |
| Double, triple, quadruple deficit |  | Phonological awareness skills |
|  |  | Retrieval Fluency measures |

**Other Considerations**

* Performance on state and district assessments
* Systematic behavioral and academic observations such as behavior rating scales, time on task analysis, classroom observations by a teacher consultant, rate of learning, academic fluency, for example.
* File review: developmental history, report cards, attendance records, outside reports