

**DAVIS SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION AND PATTERN OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES**

**Abstract:** The purpose of this document is to define the components of a Response to Intervention (RTI) model with an Emphasis on Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) for the evaluation and identification of specific learning disabilities (SLD). This model will be known as RTI+PSW. The rationale for RTI+PSW over RTI alone is to reinforce the documented benefits of RTI with the empirical value of analyzing standardized assessment and utilizing these results to inform instruction and programming for students suspected of or identified as having learning disabilities. In addition, the definition of SLD in the Federal Rules and Regulations refer to a disorder in a basic psychological process, warranting formal and informal assessments inherent in a PSW model.

*Specific Learning Disabilities* means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia, that affects a student’s educational performance.

*Specific learning disability* does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Davis School District’s Definition of Specific Learning Disabilities**

For the 2016-2017 school year, all schools in Davis School District will use Response to Intervention and Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses for the identification of learning disabilities. In situations where State Education Agency (SEA) rules do not include specific limits or procedures it is the responsibility of the Local Education Agency (LEA)<sup>1</sup> to interpret rules and define policies. The definition of Specific Learning Disability in Davis School District for the 2016-2017 school year is Response to Intervention with an emphasis of Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses. This is a revision in policy. Prior to the 2016-2017 school year, the definition of Specific Learning Disability was a discrepancy calculation at the 90% confidence level plus responsiveness to intervention.

**Description of RTI+PSW Model**

The RTI+PSW model will consist of the following three key components:

- I. Specific Learning Disabilities Requirements
  - A. Identification of Basic Psychological Processes (see [Basic Psychological Processes and Academic Alignments for additional information and explanation](#))
    - 1. Phonological Awareness

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<sup>1</sup> LEA in this circumstance references the school district, not the LEA Designee or Representative.

2. Auditory Processing
  3. Verbal Reasoning
  4. Long Term Memory Storage and Retrieval (rapid automatic naming)
  5. Executive Functioning (working memory, processing speed)
  6. Associative Memory
  7. Quantitative Reasoning
  8. Fluid Intelligence
  9. Visual/Spatial Reasoning
  10. Language (receptive, expressive)
- B. Identification of the Area(s) of Specific Learning Disability
1. Oral expression
  2. Listening comprehension
  3. Written expression
  4. Basic reading skills
  5. Reading fluency skills
  6. Reading comprehension
  7. Mathematics calculation
  8. Mathematics problem solving
- C. Observation in the Learning Environment
- The LEA must ensure that the student is observed in his/her learning environment (including the regular classroom setting) to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty.
- (a) The team must decide to:
    - (i) Use information from an observation in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the student's performance that was done before the student was referred for an evaluation; or
    - (ii) Have at least one member of the team conduct an observation of the student's academic performance in the regular classroom after the student has been referred for an evaluation and parental consent is obtained. (USBE, digital p. 60)
- II. RTI components from the Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules (November 2013, <http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/Laws/Rules.aspx> digital p. 57) and the Specific Learning Disabilities Procedures [Initial Evaluation](#) and [Re-Evaluation](#) Procedures below.
- III. Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses
- Strengths and Weaknesses are identified based on the differences between standard/scaled scores evaluating different processes/skills on the measure(s).
- A. Evaluation Requirements
    1. Standardized academic evaluation
    2. Informal assessments which support the findings of the formal assessments (which could be part of the RTI data).
    3. Full and comprehensive standardized cognitive evaluation
    4. Supplementary Assessments (administered as needed for oral expression and listening comprehension)

- a. Standardized Language Evaluation
  - b. Phonologic Processing Evaluation
  - c. Sensory-motor
- B. Score Margins and Thresholds – These measures are used to define and identify the strength(s) and weakness(es)
1. Documentation of an academic weakness based on an approved academic measure. To be considered an academic weakness the value must meet the following criteria:
    - a. Obtain a standard score of 80 or below or fall below the 10th percentile OR
    - b. A standard score between 81 and 85 and have significant supplementary information which supports the existence of a specific learning disability. [See Appendix 2: Supplementary Information.](#)
  2. Documentation of cognitive processing strength. To be considered a strength, the value must meet the following criteria:
    - a. For overall average to above average cognitive profile:
      - i. Be found a statistically significant strength by the formulae within the published scoring manual, table, or scoring software (minimum .05 significance level) or,
      - ii. Obtain a standard score value of 90 or higher, or be equal to or greater than the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile.
    - b. For overall below average cognitive profile:
      - i. Be found a statistically significant strength by the formulae within the published scoring manual, table, or scoring software (minimum .05 significance) or,
      - ii. Reveal a standard score value 9 or more points higher than the lowest standard score.
  3. Documentation of cognitive processing weakness. To be considered a weakness, the value must meet one of the following criteria:
    - a. Based on a normative comparison
      - i. Be found a statistically significant weakness by the formulae within the published scoring manual, table, or scoring software (minimum .05 significance) or,
      - ii. Obtain a standard score of 80 or below or fall below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile.
    - b. Based on a relative comparison
      - i. Reveal a standard score value 12 points lower than the median cognitive processing score or overall intellectual ability or,
      - ii. Reveal a standard score value 9-11 points lower than the median cognitive processing score or overall intellectual ability with supplementary information supporting the

existence of a learning disability. [See Appendix 2: Supplementary Information.](#)

4. Documentation of the Relationship between the academic and processing weakness. The team must document the relationship between the identified academic or auditory processing weakness and the weaknesses in cognitive processing by
  - a. Using published guidelines aligning cognitive processes and academic domains or,
  - b. Including a multidisciplinary team statement detailing the impact of the cognitive processing weakness on the measured academic weakness

See [Basic Psychological Processes and Academic Alignments for additional information and explanation.](#)

**Specific Learning Disabilities Procedures Initial Evaluation\***

*\*The eligibility determination must be complete within 45 school days from the date the school team receives parental consent. The eligibility determination process for Out-of-State Move-in Students is considered an initial eligibility determination.*

1. A case manager is assigned (either by the LEA making the referral or by the school team for a move-in).
2. The case manager provides parent/guardian with the Parental Procedural Safeguards Booklet in their native language ([PPSG Booklets in other languages](#)).
3. The case manager obtains parental consent for evaluation in the areas of student need as indicated by one of the following documents:
  - A. At-risk/Pre-Referral Documentation included with the Referral signed by the LEA Designee.  
*See [Initial Evaluation Procedures](#) for a full description of the initial evaluation process.*
  - B. Re-Evaluation Data Review completed by the IEP team for the Out-of-State move in student.  
*See [Move-in Procedures](#).*
4. The case manager communicates receipt of consent with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) so all professionals are aware of when assessment can begin.

_____ Signature of Parent/Guardian/Adult Student	_____ Date
Date Sent: Date Signed Consent Form Returned to School (FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY):	

5. The MDT begins the evaluation and assessment. Regardless of the eligibility determination, the following areas of evaluation must be completed.

6. To ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having a specific learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, the group must consider, as part of the evaluation:
  - a. Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the student was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel; and
  - b. Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the student's parents.
7. Observation - The LEA must ensure that the student is observed in the student's learning environment (including the regular classroom setting) to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty. The team would either:
  - a. Use information from an observation in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the student's performance that was done before the student was referred for an evaluation; or
  - b. Have at least one member of the team conduct an observation of the student's academic performance in the regular classroom after the student has been referred for an evaluation and parental consent is obtained.
8. The team must document educationally relevant medical findings, if any.
9. Multiple measures (**formal and informal**) must be used to assess all areas of suspected deficits.
10. This will include standardized assessments for academic and cognitive processing areas at minimum, and may include standardized language assessments.  
(Documenting strengths and weaknesses)
11. The team will also use progress monitoring information (RTI). This documentation will need to include instructional strategies, duration of strategy and quantitative student centered results.
12. The team then documents:
  - a. The student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards; and
  - b. Obtains scores that demonstrate that a pattern of strengths and weaknesses between academic and cognitive processing skills; AND
  - c. Does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards in response to targeted instructional strategies (Intensity);
  - d. The determination of the team concerning the possible impact of the following on the student's achievement level: a visual, hearing, or motor disability; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or limited English proficiency.

13. After evaluation has been completed **AND BEFORE 45 school days** have passed from the date consent was received, the case manager schedules an eligibility determination meeting.
  - a. The case manager sends a written notice of meeting.
  - b. The IEP team convenes the meeting and reviews the evaluation information.
  - c. If an IEP team member will not be in attendance at the eligibility determination meeting, the [IEP Team Member not Attending Process](#) needs to be followed.
  - d. The case manager conducts the meeting with support from the LEA Designee.
  - e. The case manager reviews the Parental Procedural Safeguards Summary.
  - f. The MDT reviews all assessment information with the IEP team, with each member reviewing their portion of assessment.
  - g. The IEP team determines eligibility based on multiple measures.
  - h. Avoid predetermination of eligibility.
  - i. Document proposals for actions made by parents and team members on the meeting summary.
  - j. Document how proposed actions were addressed.
  - k. If proposed actions were not agreed upon, follow up with [Prior Written Notice of Refusal for Proposed Action](#).
  - l. All IEP team members sign eligibility determination.
  - m. If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible, an IEP needs to be written within 30 days of the eligibility determination meeting.
  - n. The IEP is typically **proposed** during the same meeting as the eligibility determination meeting. If this is the case, it is critical for IEP teams to:
    - o. Ensure meaningful parental participation in the IEP development process by documenting parental concerns.
    - p. Document proposed actions and how they were addressed by the IEP team or follow up with the [Prior Written Notice of Refusal for Proposed Action](#).
    - q. If the IEP will be proposed at a separate meeting, a separate written notice of meeting is required.
14. A [Meeting Summary](#) needs to be completed for the eligibility determination meeting and the IEP meeting if conducted on a separate date.

## Re-Evaluation

1. Convene an IEP team meeting to conduct the re-evaluation data review.

*See [Re-Evaluation Procedures](#) for a full description of the re-evaluation process. Current data (collected within the past 90 calendar days) needs to be part of the RDR documentation.*

- A. If the IEP team determines additional information is needed to determine the student' eligibility, the case manager obtains parental consent for the assessment areas specified on the RDR. **Parental consent is only valid for 180 calendar days.**
  1. The case manager documents the date of receipt of the consent form on the bottom of the form.

_____ Signature of Parent/Guardian/Adult Student	_____ Date
Date Sent: Date Signed Consent Form Returned to School (FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY):	

2. The case manager communicates receipt of consent with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) so all professionals are aware of when assessment can begin.
3. The MDT conducts evaluation. Eligibility determination is based on multiple measures both formal and informal.
4. New information about student performance must be reported in all areas to be assessed as indicated on the RDR. In other words, each area marked on the RDR needs to have corresponding information on the evaluation summary report dated **AFTER** the date of the RDR meeting. This information might be formal or informal assessment and is decided by the multi-disciplinary team.
5. The case manager schedules a meeting to review evaluation and conduct eligibility determination. A written notice of meeting is required and must show that evaluation and eligibility determination will be part of the meeting and all of the other purposes of the meeting (review and revise the IEP, determine placement, discuss transition, etc.)
6. The IEP team convenes to conduct the meeting to review the evaluation and make eligibility determination based on the data
  - a. If an IEP team member will not be in attendance at the eligibility determination meeting, the [IEP Team Member not Attending Process](#) needs to be followed.
  - b. Avoid predetermination of eligibility.
  - c. Document proposals for actions made by parents and team members on the meeting summary.
  - d. Document how proposed actions were addressed.
  - e. If proposed actions were not agreed upon, follow up with [Prior Written Notice of Refusal for Proposed Action](#).
7. All IEP team members sign eligibility determination.
- B. If the IEP team decides that additional evaluation is NOT necessary:

1. The team may complete eligibility determination in that same RDR meeting or the case manager may schedule a separate eligibility determination meeting.
2. If a separate meeting is held, it should be done within 90 days of the RDR meeting to ensure eligibility is based on that CURRENT data (current = dated within 90 calendar days of the eligibility meeting date).
3. If a separate meeting is held more than 90 calendar days after the date of the RDR, additional **current** information will need to be gathered and added to the evaluation summary and eligibility determination for all areas of student need as documented on the IEP. This information would be based on informal/curriculum based assessments.
4. In either case, the meeting and re-determination of eligibility must be held prior to the 3-year eligibility due date.
5. If the eligibility is done during a separate meeting:
  - a. The case manager sends Written Notice of Meeting.
  - b. If an IEP team member will not be in attendance at the eligibility determination meeting, the [IEP Team Member not Attending Process](#) needs to be followed.
  - c. The IEP team convenes the meeting to conduct eligibility determination.
  - d. The IEP team signs the Evaluation Summary and Prior Written Notice of Eligibility Determination.
  - e. If the student continues to meet the eligibility criteria, and if it is appropriate based on student needs, the IEP team proposes a new IEP. Include additional areas of need as warranted by the evaluation.

## Sources

Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement - Phonological Processing Model. (n.d.).

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Guardino, D, Harris, S, Hanson, J. (2007). Specific Learning Disability: What are the new requirements?

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### **Appendix 1: Basic Psychological Processes and Academic Alignments**

This section will support the team in defining the relationship between academic and psychological process weaknesses. The information below is meant to serve as examples and is not an exhaustive list. The professionals on the team are trained to interpret evaluation results and make individual analysis of the student's evaluation results to determine the alignments between basic psychological processes and academic abilities.

#### **Psychological Processes Commonly Related to Reading Skills**

1. Phonemic Awareness (Phonemic Awareness)
  2. Verbal Reasoning/Vocabulary (Vocabulary, Comprehension)
  3. Rapid Automatic Naming (Fluency)
  4. Working Memory (Decoding)
  5. Processing Speed (Fluency, Comprehension)
  6. Associative Memory (Decoding)
- ("Specific Learning Disability: What are the new requirements" 2007.)

#### ***Explanations of Psychological Processes Related To Reading Skills***

**Short-term memory** is important to reading achievement. Reading comprehension, involving long reading passages, may be affected by skills specifically related to working memory. Basic word reading may be impacted by deficits in short-term memory because it may interfere with acquiring letter and word identification skills ("Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement" n. d.).

**Long-term retrieval abilities** are particularly important for reading. For example, elementary school children who have difficulty naming objects or categories of objects rapidly may have difficulty in reading. Associative memory abilities also play a role in reading achievement (i.e., being able to associate a letter shape to its name and its sound) ("Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement" n. d.).

**Auditory processing** or "phonological awareness/processing" is very important to reading achievement or reading development. Students who have difficulty with processing auditory stimuli may experience problems with learning grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence, reading non-sense words, and decoding words due to an inability to segment, analyze, and synthesize speech sounds. Older students will usually have continued problems with decoding unfamiliar words ("Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement" n. d.).

**Perceptual speed** is important during all school years, particularly the elementary school years. Slow processing speed may impact upon reasoning skills since the basic rapid process of symbols (e.g., letters) is often necessary for fluent reading ("Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement" n. d.).

### Psychological Processes Commonly Related to Mathematical Skills

1. Quantitative (magnitude comparison)
2. Long Term Memory Storage and Retrieval including RAN (fluent number identification)
3. Working Memory, Processing Speed, & Oral Language (counting strategies and number sense)
4. Processing Speed (calculations)
5. Fluid Intelligence (thinking about relationships among concepts, deduction and induction, higher order algebra)
6. Some researchers cite Visual/Spatial Thinking (higher order geometry); some don't ("Specific Learning Disability: What are the new requirements" 2007.)

### *Explanations of Psychological Processes Related To Mathematical Skills*

**Crystallized Intelligence:** Crystallized abilities, including language development, vocabulary knowledge, and listening abilities are important to math achievement at all ages. These abilities become increasingly more important with age. Low crystallized abilities may hamper an individual's ability to comprehend word problems due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge. They may hamper one's ability to learn basic math processes, such as long division, due to impairments in one's ability to listen to and follow sequential directions ("Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement" n. d.).

**Visual Processing** may be important for tasks that require abstract reasoning or mathematical skills. ("Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement" n. d.).

**Short-term memory** is important to math computation skills. For example, deficits in short-term memory may impact one's ability to remember a sequence of orally presented steps required to solve long math problems (i.e., first multiply, then add, then subtract) ("Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement" n. d.).

**Long-term retrieval** abilities are important to math calculation skills. For example, students with deficits in long-term retrieval may have difficulty recalling basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and/or division facts when encountered within a math problem.

**Processing speed** is important to math achievement during all school years, particularly the elementary school years. Slow processing speed leads to a lack of automaticity in basic math operations (e.g., addition, subtraction, and multiplication).

### Psychological Processes Commonly Related to Written Language Skills

1. Phonemic Awareness (Phonemic Awareness)
2. Verbal Reasoning/Vocabulary (Vocabulary, Comprehension)
3. Rapid Automatic Naming (Fluency)
4. Working Memory (Decoding)
5. Processing Speed (Fluency, Comprehension)
6. Associative Memory (Decoding)
7. Working Memory, Processing Speed, & Oral Language
8. Processing Speed (fluency)

9. Fluid Intelligence (thinking about relationships among concepts, deduction and induction)

Based on content cited in “Specific Learning Disability: What are the new requirements” 2007.

***Explanations of Psychological Processes Related To Oral Expression and/or Listening Comprehension***

**Crystallized Intelligence:** Crystallized abilities, such as language development, vocabulary knowledge, and general information are important to writing achievement primarily after age seven (7). These abilities become increasingly more important with age (“Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement” n. d.).

**Phonological awareness** provides students with an important tool for understanding the link between written and spoken language. Phonological memory impairments can constrain the ability to learn new written vocabulary (“Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement” n. d.).

**Short-term memory** is important to writing. Memory span is especially important to spelling skills, where working memory has shown relations with advanced writing skills (e.g., written expression) (“Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement” n. d.).

**Long-term retrieval** abilities and naming facility in particular have demonstrated relations with written expression, primarily with the fluency aspect of writing (“Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement” n. d.).

**Psychological Processes Commonly Related to Oral Expression and/or Listening Comprehension**

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Verbal Reasoning/Vocabulary (Vocabulary, Comprehension)
3. Rapid Automatic Naming (Fluency)
4. Working Memory
5. Processing Speed (Fluency, Comprehension)
6. Associative Memory
7. Oral Language
8. Processing Speed
9. Fluid Intelligence (thinking about relationships among concepts, deduction and induction)

Based on content cited in “Specific Learning Disability: What are the new requirements” 2007.

***Explanations of Psychological Processes Related To Oral Expression and/or Listening Comprehension***

**Crystallized Intelligence:** Crystallized abilities, especially one’s language development, vocabulary knowledge, and the ability to listen are important for both listening comprehension and oral expression. Low crystallized abilities may hamper an individual’s

ability to comprehend oral communications due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge, basic concepts, and general life experiences that are needed to understand the information being presented (“Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement” n. d.).

**Short Term Memory:** A student with short-term memory deficits may have problems following oral directions because they are unable to retain the information long enough to be acted upon. A student with short term memory deficits also may have problems with oral expression because of difficulties with word-find or being unable to retain information long enough to verbally express it. (“Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement” n. d.).

**Oral Language:** Phonological memory impairments can constrain the ability to learn new oral vocabulary. It is likely to impair listening comprehension for complex sentences. (“Areas of Processing Deficit and Their Link to Areas of Academic Achievement” n. d.). Auditory processing deficits may be linked to academic difficulties with listening comprehension. Students may have difficulty interpreting lectures, understanding oral directions, and learning a foreign language.

## Appendix 2: Supplementary Information

This section documents additional factors to consider when the team is considering eligibility determination. This information is applicable for all eligibility determination processes. This must be considered when a team is considering eligibility when the difference between psychological processes scores is 9-12 standard score points or academic ability scores are in the 81 to 85 range.

- Educational History
  - What is the student’s educational history?
    - Has he or she been eligible for special education? For how many years? In which category?
    - How has the student performed in special education?
      - Consider SAGE results
      - Consider CBM
      - Consider current Standardized Assessments
    - What was the student’s pattern of responses to interventions and instructional strategies specifically tailored to meet his or her areas of academic weakness?
      - What types of interventions were effective?
      - What types of interventions were ineffective?
    - What motivates the student to succeed?
    - What are the student’s goals and how has the team supported him or her in achieving the goals?
    - What are the family’s goals for the student, are they reasonable? How has the team supported the family in setting reasonable goals for the student?
- Family History
  - Does the student have relatives who have learning disabilities? If yes, document this in the evaluation summary section of the educational record.
  - Does the student have relatives who have other types of disabilities? If yes, document this in the evaluation summary section of the educational record.

- Does the student have relatives with other types of disabilities? If yes, document this in the evaluation summary section of the educational record.
- Medical History
  - Is there anything in the student's medical history that might impact how he or she learns? If yes, document this in the evaluation summary section of the educational record.
- Developmental History
  - Is there anything in the student's developmental history that might impact how he or she learns? If yes, document this in the evaluation summary section of the educational record.
- Additional Areas of Educational Need
  - Are there significant findings in any/all of the following areas? If yes, document this in the evaluation summary section of the educational record. Include an explanation of how the findings correlate with the area(s) of specific learning disability.
    - Executive functioning
    - Social/behavioral needs
    - Attention
    - Adaptive skills
    - Fine motor skills
    - Gross motor skills
    - Hearing acuity
    - Visual acuity
    - Transition skills

### **Appendix 3: Full and Comprehensive Evaluation – Other Factors to Consider**

- When a student doesn't qualify... Explain the evaluation to inform instruction. Even students who don't demonstrate a pattern of strengths and weaknesses at the level to the level significant enough to qualify for services under the IDEA demonstrate a profile of strengths and weaknesses.
- Ensure that all IDEA eligibility categories have been considered. Does the student demonstrate risk factors for the other twelve disability conditions? Has the team ruled out or identified concerns in the following areas:
  - Autism spectrum disorders?
  - Deaf-Blindness?
  - Developmental delays (for students younger than age 8)?
  - Emotional disturbance?
  - Hearing Impairment/Deafness?
  - Intellectual Disability?
  - Multiple-Disabilities?
  - Orthopedic Impairment?
  - Other Health Impairment?
  - Speech-Language Impairment?
  - Traumatic Brain Injury?
  - Vision Impairment?

**Appendix 4: Frequently Asked Questions**

*This section will be expanded as the training continues and questions are asked and answered.*

1. How could a student be eligible with a discrepancy model, but not demonstrate a pattern of strengths and weaknesses?
  - a. One of the weaknesses of the discrepancy model is it failed to acknowledge the requirement of the basic psychological process(es). By overlooking this requirement, the team overlooks important information about how the student learns and how to individualize the student's educational program. See [Appendix 3: Full and Comprehensive Evaluation – Other Factors to Consider](#) for additional information about the IDEA eligibility process.
  - b. The team also needs to answer the question, "Is the student struggling or does he/she have a disability?"

It is possible for a student to struggle in one or more academic area for a variety of reasons. The team needs to consider the rule out factors defined by the IDEA including access to instruction, linguistic, cultural and socio-economic factors. Failure to consider these factors can lead to over identification of disability.