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## Academic Assessment

### How does spelling relate?

Spelling is a component of academic achievement, but it is not sufficient to identify a child as having a specific learning disability. The Special Education team would be encouraged to collect and review any data that may be associated with the students spelling.

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## Assessment Tools

### Will the district be able to purchase additional memory test evaluations?

In the hopes of looking more closely at some specific cognitive processes, we anticipate an increase in the demand for more narrowly focused instruments. These instruments will be reviewed by the district in light of their psychometric value and financial cost. If you have a specific assessment you would like to recommend, please send your suggestion to Cheryl Orme.

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## Cognitive Processes

### How can fluid reasoning be taught?

Instructional strategies designed to target fluid reasoning include creating situations for more abstract thought and novel perspective taking. Asking questions like "why do you think they did that," or "what do you think comes next" are ways to help students develop new ways to think outside the box. Fluid

reasoning is also often described as using deductive skills, so encouraging students to put on their 'detective' hats and gather clues and evidence to solve tricky problems can bolster fluid reasoning.

Missing 'processing speed' and 'attention' as psychological processes.

Processing speed and attention are being included as processes under 'cognitive efficiency.' Please note that these will need to be addressed via direct assessment from an approved cognitive measure, and may not be taken from an indirect source (i.e. parent/teacher/self-report checklist).

Can specific interventions to target underlying cognitive processes be a service component?

If the team and especially the implied service provider feel that this is appropriate and necessary for the student to receive FAPE, the team can support these services on the student's IEP. This is, of course, a team-based decision and would need data to support the service, a goal to identify focus, and progress monitoring feedback provided at consistent intervals.

Are there going to be defined scores we are using for each psychological process so it is consistent?

Professional judgment will be expected. Composite scores will be preferred in most situations however consideration will be given to situations where motor skills, attention skills and other factors limit calculation of the composite score. Documentation of the rationale for these decisions will be critical.

Will there be a standard procedure for determining which cognitive areas are related to which academic areas so everyone in the district is qualifying people the same way?

Yes. See the section in the PSW Guidelines document.

Are psychologists going to be giving all IQ subtests not just core to cover all psychological processes?

Professional judgment will be expected. Professionals will all be encouraged to consider the benefits of the full psychological battery for student assessment, however understanding will be given to situations where motor skills, attention skills and other factors limit student participation in the full battery. Documentation of the rationale for these decisions will be critical.

Will we be using IQ scores like the GAI and CPI still?

Yes. These scales can be beneficial in quantifying a student's global performance, however when considering the student's pattern of strengths and weaknesses, these scales will be less impactful. Comparing the GAI or CPI to one or more of the indices can lead the team to useful discussions about how the student might appear to have globally lower skills but perform better in one or more splinter areas. It's also useful to keep in mind that the PSW model is also only used for SLD eligibility, and there are still 12 other disability categories. These indices might be useful when considering ID, SLI, OHI, Autism or the other disability categories.

A pattern generally indicates multiple areas that repeat itself and would have a predictive value. I'm concerned that an area such as fluid reasoning which could justifiably affect all cognitive areas if it is low may become the 1 pt that could qualify a student. The same could be justified for processing speed. Will there be more of a matrix besides grades, CBMs and test scores to justify labelling a student with a disability?

The correlation between psychological processes (including fluid reasoning) and academic areas will be the subject of multiple trainings in the future. In the end, the team will be responsible for linking the psychological process with the observed impact on educational achievement. Although we considered an additional decision making matrix as some other school district have developed, we wanted to keep the process straightforward and contained within the myIDEA eligibility determination form for consistency across the district. This was an introductory training for teams as an overview of the PSW framework. Additional trainings targeted to different disciplines will include more in-depth information and critical review of the PSW model.

Will there be examples written up somewhere for describing where and how things are impacted by the weaknesses?

Yes. Although the list will not be exhaustive, there will be examples of different relationships between cognitive processes and academic achievements

When looking at executive functioning as a basic process, you don't necessarily see processing speed or working memory deficits, will we need to use a direct assessment of EF or can we use checklists (not best practice).

Although we are including cognitive efficiency as a psychological process, these domains must be measured via direct assessment on approved cognitive measures. Although they may be used as supplemental data, indirect sources of information (i.e. parent, teacher, or self-report) such as checklists are not adequate to stand alone in the determination of SLD.

WNV is reported as T scores on the breakdown. We will need guidelines for that conversion, or can we even use that since it reports subtest scores and not index scores?

There are charts and formula that can convert t scores to standard scores, and these will be provided on the PSW website. That said, the committee has concerns related to the use of nonverbal measures to identify a disorder in language processing.

In determining relative strengths using a statistical significance, will base rates ("clinical meaningfulness") need to be considered as well?

Base rates and other statistically derived data certainly has utility in making eligibility determinations. However, at this time, consideration of these data is not required, but it is appreciated. We are considering changing some of the language in myIDEA, but it is unlikely that base rates will be required.

## Informal Data

The problem I see with using the SMART report is teachers can modify it based on what they feel the student deserves. It is not necessarily a calculation.

SMART reports are one of many data sources and need to be considered. If this is a concern, the teacher needs to be consulted and a record of the adjustment should be made in the myIDEA assessments area along with the description of the SMART report.

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## Interventions

I would love to have a place to go that gives interventions for specific ways to help students fix where their deficits tend to be based on the cognitive and academic results.

An LRE/MTSS specialist is going to start in the 2016-2017 school year. We'll share this suggestion.

A list of interventions for teachers for cognitive and academic weaknesses.

See the Academic interventions at <http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/Page/90491>. The connections between cognitive strengths and weaknesses and accommodations will be part of upcoming training.

Exactly which interventions are researched based and which are not? How do we know which are best? Is there a list that is used as a standard for the district?

Refer to the DSD Curriculum website for information about evidence based interventions  
<http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/Page/51592>

There are often questions about which interventions are research-based. Does the district have a list of research based interventions?

Refer to the DSD Curriculum website for information about evidence based interventions  
<http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/Page/51592>

What is considered a reasonable interval for documentation of repeated assessment?

Assessments should typically done at weekly intervals to assess student growth. This allows for timely adjustments when students are/are not making adequate progress. Adjustments based on progress ensure that time spent on intervention is meaningful.

How can I help my teachers understand how to track and record interventions properly? Can examples be provided?

Refer to the DSD Curriculum website for information about evidence based interventions  
<http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/Page/51592>

Who does training for reg ed teachers on RtI?

The student services department has training that they provide to local case management teams (LCMT), the LCMT then disseminates information to the school staff. The special education department will begin collaborating with student services to increase understanding of MTSS in the 2016-2017 school year.

Could we get an excel file that a gen ed teacher could enter data into from PM that could or would be graphed and a teacher or team could see progress being made or not?

Yes. See <http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=1307> for a variety of tools that chart and track resources. Also email Bradie Ormond ([bormond@dsdmail.net](mailto:bormond@dsdmail.net)) for a copy of CBM Focus.

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## myIDEA

Would love to see graphs within summary report.

We are hoping that updates to the myIDEA platform allow for more format options, potentially including graphics and score plots. If these remain too advanced, we will be happy to send out excel-based graphing templates to you and your team, although these would need to be considered as a formal educational record and included in the student's file.

Will there be a box right under #8 for the option of standard scores 81-85 for us to provide supplementary information there? Or do you want us to attach it somewhere else?

Yes, for both questions. Below #8 there will be a text box for the summary of supplemental data indicating a severe level of concern. However, this is just the summary, and physical copies of the data will need to be attached as well.

On #9 for the second option, can you add a '9 point spread' in addition to standard score of 90? So, above 90 (25th percentile) on an approved IQ or language measure WITH or INCLUDING a 9 point spread.

This may be a change for PSW 2.0. The 9 point spread is implicit given a processing weakness with the same spread.

May we have the spreadsheet graphs to type numbers in and generate charts?

We are hoping that updates to the myIDEA platform allow for more format options, potentially including graphics and score plots. If these remain too advanced, we will be happy to send out excel-based graphing templates to you and your team, although these would need to be considered as a formal educational record and included in the student's file.

Yellow handout and the last slide for this section (13) says to check all that apply but they were on the same screen. Do we need to separate the strengths from weaknesses on a difference screen to clarify and avoid confusion?

Sure. Good feedback. Thanks!

Can we have the neat graphs that are on your powerpoint added to myIDEA so we can plug in the numbers and come up with the completed graphs? Please oh please! I bet cute Bradie could do this. Great training! Thank you!

Maybe in version 2. When myIDEA goes into redevelopment we'll ask for this functionality.

Can we get programs on the computer to do the graphs?

Maybe in version 2. When myIDEA goes into redevelopment we'll ask for this functionality.

### Praise

Thanks for this training, I really want to understand the cognitive academic score connection. This training provided a good opportunity to talk with my team using a case study. Thank you. We are hoping that additional training and more case examples will help cement the connection between cognitive and academic scores.

I like this. After listening to everything I think this is all good (had previously written in concerns- aren't we doing this anyway, is this to keep kids out of special ed, will it be more work for teachers)

Thank you! We are glad that what you heard clarified previous concerns.

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### PSW Overview

I need a better understanding of the relationship or discrepancy between cognitive strength and cognitive weakness in this model.

Sure. The neurological basis for a specific learning disability indicates that there is a specific weakness in a student's cognitive processing. Under the discrepancy model, we tended to focus on the full scale IQ or general ability index, so when we saw a big difference between IQ and academics we would say "We would expect you to perform here, but these academics are lower than that, so this may be a learning disability." Under PSW, because we are looking at more narrow abilities with a more focused lens, we are able to see that very specific cognitive processes are weaker than others, and for specific learning disabilities, the cognitive weakness aligns with the academic weakness. Conversely, the SLD student will demonstrate another cognitive process that is a relative strength when compared to their weakness, revealing that they are not in the range of intellectual disability, nor are they simply slow learners.

RE 9 and 10, I am confused about using this measure; index scores that are 12 or more index scores, 9 or more points higher.

Index scores are similar to standard scores, and for these components we are looking for the difference between the standard or index scores. The greater the difference between them, the more confident we can be in determining a strength or a weakness. That is why a 12-point difference stands alone, but a 9-12 point difference would require some additional documentation.

Are there age limits or guidelines (PS)? How old to children need to be to have SLD eligibility?

There are no age limits, a child in preschool can be identified as SLD although this determination needs to be made rarely. Identifying learning disability before children are exposed to a more academic subjects is challenging.

What happens when someone has a flat IQ profile in the average range but academics are in the 70-80s?

A more thorough review of multiple cognitive processing domains, including language, may be called for. In addition, ensuring that all exclusionary factors have been ruled out, including exposure to reading and math instruction and regular attendance, will be important.

I want to know all about the gray areas!!!

Indeed. We are looking forward to continued training and supporting teams when these gray areas emerge. We think that more case examples will help with these determinations as well.

We talked a lot about weaknesses but I don't see the use of strengths being used for eligibility. It doesn't seem we are giving the strengths a good enough look.

Ideally, the strengths would be used when the team is looking toward developing instructional strategies and how to best help students. This will come into place also when looking toward developing supports on the IEP. The strengths will also come into play when writing the 'can' statement of the PLAAFP.

I'm worried about over-identification because of too many team based decisions. It may lack standardization.

Consistency across the district is a concern that we have, as it has been with many eligibility determinations. We have attempted to address this by having clearly defined guidelines and with additional trainings to whole teams as well as to specific disciplines.

Can I get the powerpoint? By the time I will need this next year my poor brain won't remember. Sure! The powerpoint as well as other training materials and resources are on the PSW Website (<http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/Page/89174>).

Will PSW add a greater level of precision to identification or does it expand the opening? Is there a concern of over-identification with PSW?

Consistency across the district is a concern that we have, as it has been with many eligibility determinations. We have attempted to address this by having clearly defined guidelines and with additional trainings to whole teams as well as to specific disciplines.

Given the increased difficulty in learning center and functional skills placements, we anticipate more students staying in resource who previously would have been placed in learning centers. Will PSW exacerbate this issue by over-identification?

Eligibility does not drive placement, as placement is based on educational need.

How to explain to parent without confusing them.

This process can be explained in common language, especially when using visual supports to show parents where a student's strengths and weaknesses fall. Traditionally, parents have provided feedback that they appreciate having more discussion on their student's strengths. As with any parent feedback, take the time needed to explain the results to the parents at a level they can understand, communicating both areas that their child struggles with and areas in which they excel.

### Re-evaluation

If a student didn't qualify at the end of this year, can I revisit his data to see if he qualifies at the first of next year?

It would be our recommendation that you provide a period of instructional intervention in the fall to monitor how the student is progressing with some additional instructional strategies, perhaps identified using the completed formalized assessment. The team may choose to reconsider the eligibility of the student at any time by conducting an RDR and determining what additional information is/is not needed and determine whether the student is a student with a disability.

What about a kid qualified under a discrepancy model previously? Can/will that formula continue to qualify?

The discrepancy formula is being replaced by the PSW model. Instead of a regression based equation, we are moving towards a simple-difference method. While the student may or may not still qualify as SLD, at their next re-evaluation the eligibility determination will be made via PSW and not discrepancy based on the estimator.

If a student does not qualify during the 2015-16 school year, using PSW can we address their needs again during the 2016-17 school year or do we need to wait a year?

It would be our recommendation that you provide a period of instructional intervention in the fall to monitor how the student is progressing with some additional instructional strategies, perhaps identified using the completed formalized assessment. The team may choose to reconsider the eligibility of the student at any time by conducting an RDR and determining what additional information is/is not needed and determine whether the student is a student with a disability.

Scenario: A student enrolls into 8th grade after 5 years of homeschooling. No evidence is provided by the parent of the homeschooling. Meanwhile, after an LCMT process that results in a SPED referral, testing is done and the student achieves WISC-V testing that is in the 100's in all areas demonstrating strengths in all areas. But, the student has such low scores on the KTEA he clearly has a discrepancy in multiple areas. Is this an example of a "lack of instruction in reading or math?"

If the WISC scores are all in the 100's, there is no evidence of a cognitive weakness. The student would not demonstrate a cognitive weakness, thus eligibility would likely be ruled out based on this factor. The second part of this question is related to identifying a lack of instruction in reading or math. This question is challenging when a student has been home schooled. This is a sensitive topic. When there is a home school certificate, the state accepts this as evidence that the parent has provided instruction to the student. See

<http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/cms/lib09/UT01001306/Centricity/Domain/94/AFFIDAVIT%20FOR%20COMPULSORY%20EDUCATION%20EXEMPTION.pdf> for additional detail. The school can interview the parent and student to find out how home school instruction was provided. Questions and conversation about schedules, types of activities the family enjoys and print information in the home in addition to school activities can be insightful. Information can also be inferred from the student's performance during instruction at school regarding his or her rate of learning and response to instructional strategies. The school cannot pre-determine that evaluation should not proceed because there is a lack of evidence of



instruction. Nor should eligibility be pre-determined due to a student's history of home school instruction. This is not described in this scenario; however, it is a caution that needs to be provided whenever this conversation comes up.

What if the same scenario occurred with the difference of instead of being homeschooled, the student has documented absenteeism that is excessive?

The team would need to rule out a medical or mental health concerns which are causing the absenteeism. If the student has a medical need such as migraines, seizures, chronic fatigue that is interfering with his ability to access education, the team needs to consider if this is an other health impairment. If the student has a mental health need which is causing the student to avoid school, the team needs to consider how the mental health needs adversely impacts the educational performance. This could be an other health impairment or an emotional disturbance. These are probably not causing a SLD, but the courts are clear that absenteeism is not a valid reason to deny evaluation or eligibility consideration.

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## Speech and Language

What are best speech and communication tests to use PSW with?

For the purposes of including language in an SLD evaluation, the consideration of the CELF-5, the CASL, TOLD P-4 or I-4, PLS-3, and other whole-language assessments are valuable. That said, this is a determination that would be best made by the team and the SLP.

I really want to understand the SLI-SLD relationship better.

This will be addressed more in the trainings to come this Fall, supported by additional ongoing support.

Can the SLPs especially have more instruction in how we fit into the process of PSW?

This will be addressed more in the trainings to come this Fall, supported by additional ongoing support.

Sounds like SLP is involved in every eval? How do you determine?

The SLP should be involved in the team discussion, providing assistance where needed in determining which assessments may be beneficial. This does not necessarily mean that the SLP will conduct standardized assessments in each evaluation. Typically, formal and informal assessment will reveal or indicate a need for language assessment.

Who should be the case manager when a student qualifies for both SLI and SLD?

This determination is made by the amount of service time, with the professional delivering the most service time being designated as the case manager.

How to determine which is the primary?

This is a team based decision with consideration towards evaluation and eligibility data. More training is forthcoming in Fall for the cases in which differentiating between these eligibilities is difficult.

A student who will be SLI with academics, who is the case manager?

This determination is made by the amount of service time, with the professional delivering the most service time being designated as the case manager.

How does the KTEA's Listening Comprehension test fit in with this model? Is it an academic weakness? Do we even need to test it or will and SLP do that?

The Listening Compression test is a supplemental measure that should not stand alone in the evaluation for SLD. It should not be used to identify an academic weakness. When a student scores low on this subtest, other measures from the Speech and Language domain should be reviewed by the team.

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### Timeline

What is the timeline for implementing these process updates? Will there be an overlap allowance? When may teams begin to implement this new model?

The RtI+PSW model will be implemented across the district beginning July 11th, 2016. At that time, all eligibility determinations will be made using the RtI+PSW approach. If a student qualified under the discrepancy model, they will remain eligible based on that determination until their next scheduled re-evaluation.