

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY GUIDELINES**Federal Definition of Specific Learning Disability:**

The term 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 an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

The term 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.

Eligibility:

A “child with a specific learning disability” (SLD) means that a child has been evaluated in accordance with the district’s policies and procedures, determined to have an identified learning disability, needs special education (i.e., specially designed instruction), and may require related services. “Specially designed instruction” means adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the disability and ensure access of the child to the general education curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the district that apply to all children.

Criteria:

The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified above:

- Using a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; OR
- The child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, state-approved grade level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments.

The district supports determining Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) as a comprehensive approach to SLD identification supported by multiple sources of information. Within the process of determining the presence of a discrepancy between cognitive processing and academic performance, the multidisciplinary team will evaluate patterns of strengths and weaknesses across relevant cognitive and academic domains.

The child does not achieve adequately for the child’s age or to meet state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child’s age or state-approved grade-level standards:

- Oral expression
- Listening comprehension
- Written expression
- Basic reading skill
- Reading fluency skills
- Reading comprehension
- Mathematics calculation
- Mathematics problem solving

Evidence of interventions and progress monitoring history indicated by interventions targeting the problem area and delivered for an adequate amount of time as well as evidence of inadequate rate of growth relative to peers:

- Problem area(s) were targeted reasonably (i.e., identify skill deficit and match with evidence-based intervention)
- Interventions were delivered with fidelity (i.e., implemented as intended and for at least 6 weeks per intervention)
- Inadequate rate of growth relative to peers (i.e., not meeting the expected rate of improvement target and performing significantly below peers (e.g., at or below the 10th percentile)

There is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written. The relevant psychological processes include visual processing, auditory processing, learning efficiency, fluid reasoning, processing speed, retrieval fluency, short-term working memory, comprehension/knowledge, or other. Identify how psychological processes may relate to learning areas of need(s) including psychological weaknesses and strengths found. These determinations need to be made using formal measures.

The student may *not* be identified as having a specific learning disability if the low achievement, lack of progress or severe discrepancy between ability and achievement is primarily the result of:

- A visual, hearing, or motor disability;
- Intellectual Disability;
- Emotional Disability;
- Cultural factors;
- Environmental or economic disadvantage; or
- Limited English Proficiency

PSW/Discrepancy Criteria Process:

Inclusionary Criteria

- Documentation of a significant gap [e.g., significant psychological processing weaknesses found (relative and/or normative; i.e., at the 10th percentile or below considering the standard error of measurement) and significant psychological processing strengths found (relative and/or normative; i.e., above the 25th percentile considering the standard error of measurement)].
- Documentation of a significant gap between the student's intellectual ability and achievement in comparison to normative standards as well as the average performance of the student's classroom peers (these determinations need to be made using formal measures as well as performance based on the student's classroom curriculum).
- Informal results should support formal results, if data is contradicting, additional information should be gathered and when the team has all information needed, professional judgment should be used to make a determination regarding the existence of patterns of strength and weakness or discrepancy.
- The pattern of strength and weakness or discrepancy between the student's ability and achievement is not correctable without special education and related services.

Exclusionary Criteria

- Vision, hearing, motor disability
- Intellectual disability
- Emotional disturbance
- Cultural factors
- Environmental or economic disadvantage
- Limited English Proficiency

Educational Impact:

The impact of the disability requires specialized instruction as it has an adverse impact on educational performance and is not able to be provided by general education.

Response-to-Intervention (RtI) Process:Inclusionary Criteria

- **Discrepancy**

Is the student's performance significantly discrepant? (i.e., Around the 10th percentile on CBMs)

- **Educational Progress**

Is the student progressing at a significantly slower rate than expected? (i.e., AIMSweb under the 25 percentile; AIMSweb EOY – BOY divided by 36 weeks)

- **Decision Making Rules**

Minimum of 6 data points below expected growth

Instructional Need

- Are the student's instructional needs significantly different and exceed general education resources? (i.e., can't back down on intervention support without an increase in discrepancy)

Exclusionary Criteria

- Vision, hearing, motor disability
- Intellectual disability
- Emotional disturbance
- Cultural factors
- Environmental or economic disadvantage
- You can rule these out with RTI data, but you can't rule these in with RTI data.

Determinant Factors

- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction
 - Research based curriculum materials
 - Fidelity to intervention/instruction
- Lack of appropriate instruction in math
 - Research based curriculum materials
 - Fidelity to intervention/instruction
- Limited English Proficiency

Educational Impact:

The impact of the disability requires **specialized instruction** as it has an **adverse impact** on educational performance and is **not** able to be provided by general education.