 **Specific Learning Disability Entrance Criteria**



**State Definition**

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 an imperfect ability to listen think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including such conditions 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 disabilities, or emotional disability, or of environmental , cultural, or economic disadvantage. In accordance with 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.130, beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, Illinois districts are required to use a process that determines how a child responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation procedures to determine special education eligibility under the category of specific learning disability (SLD).

**Cooperative Definition**

A Specific Learning Disability exists when a student’s academic achievement is significantly discrepant from his/her peers in one or more of the following areas: basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, listening comprehension. A significant discrepancy is evident when targeted and intensive interventions have been implemented with fidelity and the student’s academic achievement and/or rate of improvement continues to be insufficient to meet grade level standards.

**Cooperative Eligibility Criteria**

**STEP 1: Identification of Disability**

**Determinant Factors**

Y N Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including essential components of reading instruction

Y N Lack of appropriate instruction in Math

Y N Limited English Proficiency

**Exclusionary Factors**

Y N The student’s difficulties are better explained by a visual, hearing or motor disability.

Y N The student’s difficulties are better explained by an intellectual disability.

Y N The student’s difficulties are better explained by an emotional disability.

Y N Factors such as differing cultural expectations or other cultural/linguistic factors are present, and these are the

primary factors contributing to the student’s difficulties.

Y N Factors such as environmental or economic disadvantage are present, and these are the primary factors contributing

to the student’s difficulties.

**Educational Progress**

Criteria 1: Is the student progressing at a significant slower rate than is expected in any area of concern (basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, listening comprehension)?

No

Yes The student is progressing at a significantly slower rate than expected

Yes The student is currently making an acceptable rate of progress but only because of the intensity of the intervention that is being provided.

**Discrepancy**

Criteria 2: Is the student’s performance significantly below performance of peers or expected standards in any areas concern (basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, listening comprehension)?

No

Yes The student’s performance is Significantly Discrepant.

Yes The student’s performance is not currently discrepant but only because of the intensity of the intervention that is being provided.

**Educational Need**

Criteria 3: Are this student’s needs in any area of concern significantly different from the needs of typical peers and of an intensity or type exceeds general education resources?

No

Yes The student’s instructional needs are significantly different from peers in general education and exceed general education resources.

**STEP 2: Documentation of adverse effect on educational performance in one or more areas:**

Basic reading skills

Reading fluency skills

Reading comprehension

Mathematical calculation

Mathematical problem solving

Written expression

Oral expression

Listening comprehension

**STEP 3: Determination of Need for Special Education Services**

Y N The student requires special education services to address educational needs.

**STEP 4: Eligibility**

Y N The student is entitled to special education services.

**Exit Criteria**

The student will no longer be eligible for developmental delay services when any of the below of marked “Y.”

Y N The student no longer meets the entrance criteria.

or

Y N The student’s needs would be better met with a reclassification under a different category.

or

Y N The student’s disability no longer demonstrates an adverse effect on educational performance.

**DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES**

**Determinant Factors:**

Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including essential components of reading instruction:

**Essential components of appropriate reading instruction** include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Lack of appropriate instruction in math,

**Essential components of appropriate mathematics instruction** include:

Key Concepts related to appropriate instruction:

**Appropriate Instruction** is defined as the use of *scientifically-based reading, math, and written expression programs*, *implemented with integrity*.

**Scientifically – based** programs are defined as those practices or programs that have been thoroughly and rigorously reviewed to determine whether they produce positive educational results in a predictable manner.

**Implemented with Integrity**

* Student received appropriate instruction aligned with suspected area(s) of deficit
* Teacher used and followed the research based interventions according to prescribed instructional procedure consistent with recommended intensity
* Each intervention was completed for a minimum of six to nine weeks in order to obtain 6-8 data points from progress monitoring

**Lack of Instruction:** No absolute “rule” for transfers and absences can be stated, as every student’s situation is unique. However, a high level of absences from school (defined as approximately 40 or more absences per year across multiple years), a high level of absences from specific periods (defined as approximately 40 or more during a certain core subject or intervention), or a high number of school transfers (more than three per year for at least two consecutive years) must be specifically discussed and documented by the eligibility team in the eligibility paperwork. Absences and transfers related to a disability will not exclude a student from eligibility.

**Limited English Proficiency**: The student is not a native speaker of English, or the student’s learning problems are primarily due to the native language issues. This evidence can include home language survey, ACCESS scores, native language assessment results compared to English language assessment results, and other assessments designed to assess the contributing nature of a student’s language status. Furthermore, evidence (such as ISAT scores) shows that the core curriculum meets the needs of LEP students or the student is performing at a level significantly different from peers.

**Exclusionary Factors**

The student’s difficulties are better explained by a visual, hearing or motor disability: The student has passed hearing screening and vision screenings or wears corrective equipment to ameliorate sensory deficits. Team judgment based on informal observations, teacher report, cumulative file, and/or parent/guardian report may determine whether gross or fine motor difficulties are contributing to the student’s difficulties.

The student’s difficulties are better explained by an intellectual disability: If the student meets eligibility criterion to receive special education services as a student with an Intellectual Disability, then the student is not eligible as a student with a Specific Learning Disability.

The student’s difficulties are better explained by an emotional disability: Academic skills are not primarily due to depression, immaturity, recent life changes, unwillingness to complete work, or emotional trauma.

Factors such as differing cultural expectations or other cultural/linguistic factors are present, and these are the primary factors contributing to the student’s difficulties

* **Cultural factors**: The discrepancy is not primarily due to differing school expectations as defined by one’s culture. The discrepancy is not primarily due to limited experiences of social interaction with mainstream culture or to limited experiences which stimulate intellectual growth and fund of knowledge (e.g. limited exposure to cultural events such as museums, zoos, experience to develop art appreciation, interaction with adults and positive role models; or members of immediate family are illiterate). Cultural factors to be considered may include behavioral expectations, family involvement / support in the school, etc.

Factors such as environmental or economic disadvantage are present, and these are the primary factors contributing to the student’s difficulties.

* **Environmental Factors:**
* The student’s academic skills are not primarily due to numerous school transfers or absences (please refer to previous definition for school absences and school transfers).
* The discrepancy is not primarily due to a significant traumatic event in the child’s life affecting learning. Extreme disruption or disorganization in the family unit has not been the primary cause of learning problems.
* The student’s difficulty grasping academic skills are not primarily due to limited experiential background (e.g. lack of opportunity to acquire basic learning skills, lack of exposure to school environments, lack of familiarity with instruments and materials used in standardized tests and in the classroom, lack of opportunity to interact with peers and adults).
* Other environmental factors to be considered include negative neighborhood influences or exposure to violence or other inappropriate behaviors.
* Factors related to the classroom environment must also be considered. The student’s academic skills are not primarily due to inadequate matching or teaching style with individual learning style.
* **Economic Factors:**
* The student’s academic skill performance is not primarily due to economic factors such as low income family, unemployed parents, limited facilities, and limited school supplies.
* Economic factors include lack of resources such as money, medical care, phone, and transportation.

**Educational Progress**

**Criteria 1:** Is the student progressing at a significant slower rate than is expected in any area of concern (basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, listening comprehension)?

The student is progressing at a significantly slower rate than expected:

* Evidence from Curriculum Based Assessment that suggests **little or no progress** in any *area of concern*. For example, a moderate impact on learning would be noted by a student who is making some progress, but despite the progress, the student progress continues to diverge from the aim line. A severe impact on learning would be noted by a student who is making little or no progress, (or a flat or downward slope in the student’s rate of progress as compared to goal aim line is apparent), and the student is not projected to meet the end of the year benchmark for their grade level or are at risk for not meeting state-approved grade level standards.

**Curriculum-based assessment** is defined as an assessment process or tool utilized to determine a student’s status on skills that are taught in a curriculum. Curriculum-based measurement is one type of curriculum-based assessment, and is a set of standardized and validated short duration tests used to measure student progress in basic skill area. Examples of curriculum-based assessments might include AimsWeb, DIBELS, EasyCBM, STAR, NWEA MAP.

Any **area of concern** is defined as basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, or listening comprehension.

An **acceptable rate of progress** would be defined as a student whose rate of progress is either progressing parallel to the aim line approximating closing the gap.

**Intensity of Intervention** is defined as Tier 3 Level research based interventions (for example: greater than 30 minutes daily one-on-one to small group no more than 3 students), including those tier three interventions that are above and beyond those interventions that are received in general education as part of the core curriculum.

**Discrepancy**

**Criteria 2**: Is the student’s performance significantly below performance of peers or expected standards in any areas concern?

The student’s performance is significantly discrepant:

* **Significantly Discrepant** is defined as performance below the 10th percentile in any area of concern as evidenced from Curriculum Based Assessment and/or Standardized Assessment. If the student has not been provided significant intervention, the student’s performance would be below the third percentile at grade level and below the third percentile one grade below grade level

The student is currently making an acceptable rate of progress but only because of the intensity of the intervention that is being provided.

* Student performance not currently discrepant is performance between the 10th and 25th percentile as evidence from Curriculum Based Assessment and/or Standardized Assessment.

**Intensity of Intervention** is defined as Tier 3 Level research based interventions (for example: greater than 30 minutes daily one-on-one to small group no more than 3 students), including those tier three interventions that are above and beyond those interventions that can continue within the general education resources, and the scope of those interventions cannot reasonably continued without eligibility to receive specialized educational support.

**Educational Need**

**Criteria 3:** Are this student’s needs in any area of concern significantly different from the needs of typical peers and of an intensity or type exceeds general education resources?

The student’s instructional needs are significantly different from peers in general education and exceed general education resources.

* The student’s **instructional needs are significantly different** from peers in general education and exceed general education resources. This is evidenced by the student receiving Tier 3 Level research based interventions (for example: greater than 30 minutes per day; one-on-one to small group no more than 3 students)
* Evidence from Curriculum Based Assessment that suggests some progress but the student continues to diverge from the goal line and is not expected to meet the end of the year benchmark for their grade level. For example, the student demonstrates parallel progress with the goal aim line. A student with a significant intensity of intervention would be those students receiving tier three interventions that are above and beyond those interventions that can continue within the general education resources, and the scope of those interventions cannot reasonably be continued without eligibility to receive specialized educational support.

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| Impact on Learning | None | Mild | Moderate | Severe |
| Standardized Achievement:  Standard Score | 90 or above | 89-85 | 84-80 | 79 or Below |
| Standardized State-Wide Assessment | Meets or Exceeds | Below (B1) | Below (B2) | Academic Warning |
| Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA):  (Compared to grade level expectations / norms) | 25% or above | 24th-15th%ile | 14th-10th%ile | Below 10th%ile |
| RtI Progress Monitoring Data:  (Post Intervention Median Score Discrepancy) | At or above grade level benchmark (25th%ile) | Approaching grade level benchmark (24th-15th%ile) | Below grade level benchmark (14th-10th%ile) | Well below grade level benchmark (<10th%ile) |
| RtI Progress Monitoring Data: (Rate of Improvement) | Strong Progress (at or above aim line) | Moderate Progress (Approximating aim line) | Some Progress (by diverging from aim line) | Little or no progress (flat / downward slope compared to aim line) |
| Intervention Tier:  All previous tiers should be checked as the child moves to the right | Tier 1: Core instruction | Tier 2: An additional intervention time (approximately 60 min/wk.) in a small group setting | Tier 3: More additional intervention time added in a very small group (e.g. 1:1,1:2,1:3 teacher / student ratio), 4-5x/week, 20-30 min/day | Tier 3: Continuation of more additional intervention time added in a very small group (e.g. 1:1,1:2,1:3 teacher / student ratio), 4-5x/week, 20-30 min/day |
| Likelihood of SPED, SLD Eligibility | Highly Unlikely | Unlikely | Likely | Highly Likely |

Other helpful hints to consider:  
1. It is good practice to have a minimum of 6-8 progress monitoring data points, at each tier, to help determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

2. Tiered intervention amounts of time and number of days are good practice recommendations. These amounts of time and number of days might differ from district to district.

3. Although it is a requirement to proceed through tiered intervention prior to finding SLD eligibility, the lack of data cannot prevent a team or parent from making a referral. If the needed data is not available at the time of the referral, the team must put a plan into place to provide intervention and collected needed progress monitoring data

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DOMAIN** | **RELEVANT** | | **EXISTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD** | **ADDITIONAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES TO CONSIDER** | **SOURCES FROM WHICH DATA WILL BE OBTAINED** |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| **Academic Achievement**  Current or past academic achievement data pertinent to current educational performance. |  |  |  | * Review of records (district assessment-STARS, AIMSweb, MAP, thinklink, discovery ed/state assessment-ISAT, PARCC, DLM) * Teacher interviews * Student interviews * Observation and Assessment of the Learning Environment * Classroom performance products (Gold, creative curriculum, work sampling) * Standardized achievement testing (WIAT, KTEA, Woodcock-Johnson Achievement) * Curriculum-based measurement Benchmarks (AIMSweb, DIBELS, MAPS, EasyCBM, STAR, Discovery Education) * Curriculum-based measurement progress monitoring (AIMSweb, DIBELS, EasyCBM; Must have a minimum of 6 data points) | School Psychologist |
| **Functional Performance**  Current or past functional performance data pertinent to current functional performance. |  |  |  | * Record review (grades, attendance, discipline) * Teacher interview * Parent interview * Student interview * School observations * Behavior Rating Scales (SDQ, SMALSI, Conners-3, EC Conners-3, ASQ: SE; BRIEF) | School Social Worker, School Psychologist |
| **Cognitive Functioning**  Data regarding cognitive ability, how the child takes in information, understands information and expresses information. |  |  |  | * Review of records (district assessment/state assessment) * Teacher interviews * Student interviews * Observation and Assessment of the Learning Environment * Classroom performance products * Optional: Standardized cognitive testing (verbal, nonverbal, or play-based assessment) [DAS-II (preferred test), WISC,WPPSI, WNV, DAS-II, SB-V, C-TONI] to assess thinking/cognitive integration skills | School Psychologist |
| **Communication Status**  Information regarding communicative abilities (language, articulation, voice, fluency) affecting educational performance. |  |  |  | * \*Record of communicative developmental milestones * Teacher interview * Observations (social communication, nonverbal communicative behaviors, stereotyped or repetitive speech, rigid or concrete thinking) * \*Pragmatic language assessment (Test of Pragmatic Language, 2nd Edition, CASL, Functional Communication Profile, Rossetti) * \*Receptive/expressive language assessment (CASL, CEFL, Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, 5th Edition, E0WPVT, Functional Communication Profile, OWLS, PPVT-4, PLS, TELD, TOLD, Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language, 4th Edition, Test of Semantic Skills, Primary, Rossetti) * Standardized Assessment (ADOS) * Play-based assessment * Assistive technology assessment (Test of Aided Communication Symbol Performance | Speech/Language Pathologist |
| **Health**  Current or past medical difficulties affecting educational performance. |  |  |  | * \*Parent interview to obtain health history, including current health status (diagnosis, medications, therapies) * Medical review by nurse as needed * Medical consultation with outside providers | School Nurse, School Social Worker |
| **Hearing/Vision**  Auditory/visual problems that would interfere with testing or education performance. Dates and results of last hearing/visual test. |  |  |  | * \*Vision screening * \*Hearing screening * Audiological evaluation if needed | School Nurse, Audiologist,  Visual Impairment Instructor, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Instructor |
| **Motor/Sensory Abilities**  Fine and gross motor coordination difficulties, functional mobility, or strength and endurance issues affecting educational performance. |  |  |  | * Teacher interview * Parent interview * School observation (stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, hyper- or hyporeactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment) * Consultation with outside providers * Motor assessment (fine and gross motor) * \*Sensory assessment (Sensory Profile) * Standardized Assessment (ADOS) * Play-based assessment * Assistive technology assessment | Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist |
| **Social/Emotional Status**  Information regarding how the environment affects educational performance (life history, adaptive behavior, independent function, personal and social responsibility, cultural background). |  |  |  | * Record review (grades, attendance, discipline) * Teacher interview * Parent interview * Student interview * Consultation with outside providers * \*Social history * School observation (Social-emotional reciprocity, social interactions) * Observation in multiple environments * Adaptive behavior assessments (Vineland, ABAS-II, DP-3) * \*Autism rating Scales completed by school personnel and parent (GARS-3, CARS-2, etc.) * Standardized Assessment (ADOS) * Play-based assessment * Behavior rating scales | School Social Worker, School Psychologist |