CISD
CALHOUN INTERMEDIATE
SCHOOL DISTRICT
An Educational Service Agency

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Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)

Guidelines for Identification

This document is designed to help Problem Solving Teams and IEP Teams to navigate the SLD evaluation and eligibility process.

August 1, 2010

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Corresponding Forms/Worksheets:

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the learning outcomes of all students is a key mission within the Calhoun Intermediate School District (CISD). Effective instructional practices delivered by skilled teachers will maximize the learning outcomes for students. Some students, after carefully planned and documented educational interventions, will not make expected educational progress leading to less than optimal learning outcomes and consideration as "at-risk" students. The majority of students who are identified as "at risk" will respond to general education interventions. However, there are a small minority, estimated to be approximately 5% of the student population, who will not respond adequately to increasingly intense general education interventions. Not all of these students have disabilities, but intervention teams may have data that will lead them to suspect that some of the inadequately responding students may have a disability and need to be referred for a special education evaluation.

This document is designed to provide guidance for the identification of individuals suspected of or continuation of a Specific Learning Disability. The document is divided into four major sections:

I. Regulatory Reference – reviews Michigan, Federal regulations and CISD guidelines related to the identification of SLD.
II. System of Appropriate Instruction – reviews the district's documentation of decision-making relative to providing appropriate intervention strategies for at-risk students.
III. Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) and Evaluation Planning – reviews the decisions that are reached from a review of educational data with emphasis toward evaluation planning.
IV. Eligibility Determination – reviews the specific issues IEP Teams must consider when ruling in SLD and ruling out other non-eligibility factors.

Special thanks is extended to the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE), Kalamazoo RESA and Berrien RESA and who provided examples of documents that have been included in this procedural document.

TIMELINES AND IMPLEMENTATION
IDEA 2004 AND MARSE
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

	Referral	The student is suspected by parent(s), school staff or other professionals as having a disability. A referral is submitted.
10 calendar days		
	REED Parent Consent/ Notice	The required information and consent form is signed by the parent(s) within ten (10) days of receiving the referral (Evaluation review).
	Parent Consent Received	Parent/Guardian returns the consent form giving permission to evaluate.
		IEPT must be convened within 30 school days from the district receiving the signed consent form. An evaluation extension may be requested with signed parental consent.
30 School Days	MET	The student receives a comprehensive evaluation by a team of MET professionals. The MET members recommend eligibility based on criteria outlined in the state law. The MET report is presented at an IEPT meeting.
	IEPT	IEPT meeting is convened:
15 School Days	Placement	• Parent is invited to the meeting at a mutually agreed upon time and place. • Eligibility is determined based on the state rules and regulations. • Program and/or services are recommended and agreed upon based on the student' needs.
	IEP Implemented	• The IEP is developed. Notice is signed by parent to implement the initial program and/or service is obtained. The IEP is implemented within 15 school days.
One Year	Annual Review	Prior to the annual review date, the IEPT meeting is convened to reconsider programs and services.
Three Years	Three Year Redetermination	Every 36 months, the IEPT must review existing data and additional data necessary to determine the need for further evaluation (s).The Ongoing Eligibility recommendation is taken to an IEPT meeting, at which time eligibility and program/services are reviewed and revised as appropriate.

Legal References

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS:

Language from IDEA implementing regulation 34 CFR 300.309 *Determining the existence of a specific learning disability*, states, in part:

> *(a) The group described in...300.306 may determine that a child has a specific learning disability...if*
> *(1) 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...*
> *(2)(i) The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas...when using a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; or*
> *(2)(ii) 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 determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability...*

MICHIGAN REQUIREMENTS:

In September, 2008, Michigan finalized rules to address the requirement that states adopt criteria for determining specific learning disability. Language mirrors federal language in §300.8(b)(10):

> *R 340.1713 Specific learning disability defined; determination.*
> *Rule 13. (1) "Specific learning disability" means a disorder in 1 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 to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of cognitive impairment, of emotional impairment, of autism spectrum disorder, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.*
> *(2) In determining whether a student has a learning disability, the state shall:*
> *(a) Not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement.*
> *(b) Permit the use of a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention.*
> *(c) Permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures.*

R 340.1713 also adds the following language that mirrors federal language in §300.309:

> *(3) A determination of learning disability shall be based upon a comprehensive evaluation by a multidisciplinary evaluation team, which shall include at least both of the following:*

(a) The student's general education teacher or, if the student does not have a general education teacher, a general education teacher qualified to teach a student of his or her age or, for a child of less than school age, an individual qualified by the state educational agency to teach a child of his or her age.
(b) At least 1 person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations of children, such as a school psychologist, an authorized provider of speech and language under R 340.1745(d), or a teacher consultant.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LETTER OUTLINING REQUIREMENTS:

In a letter of clarification to the field, dated January 22, 2009, Dr. Jacquelyn Thompson, Michigan Director of the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services, indicates three processes that may be used by the field in the evaluation of Specific Learning Disabilities including the following:

1) **Consideration of a severe discrepancy**, *"but only as one part of a full and individual evaluation. Severe discrepancy may never be used alone to determine a student eligible as a student with a SLD."*
2) **Response to scientific, research based intervention.** Dr. Thompson notes that, *"depending on the local district's practice, this process may have a variety of names; e.g., Instructional Consultation Team, Response to Intervention, Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) does not mandate any specific scientific, research-based intervention process."*
3) **Pattern of strengths and weaknesses.** "The MDE does not mandate any specific process to determine a pattern of strengths and weaknesses. Any determination of SLD requires a full comprehensive evaluation according to the evaluation procedures in the federal regulations at §300.301 – §300.311, including those particular to a student suspected of having a SLD in §300.307 – §300.311."

CALHOUN ISD RECOMMENDATION:

Given federal and state guidelines to the field, Michigan districts have options for establishing eligibility for students suspected of having a specific learning disability. However, Calhoun ISD and its constituent districts do not have an established process for Response to Scientific, Research Based Interventions (RtI). As RtI is further developed and implemented within a district/building, the option for data from a response to intervention (RtI) process in its consideration of eligibility for SLD may used.

Until that time, the only option that Calhoun ISD and its constituent districts may use to determine eligibility for SLD is to determine whether a child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development. The assessment of intellectual development is used to rule out cognitive impairment and to address specific processing of strengths and weaknesses.

Each year the Calhoun ISD will revisit each district's options for determining eligibility and will update the chart below to reflect the current option the district/building will be using for eligibility determinations for SLD.

GRADES													
DISTRICT	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Albion	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Arbor	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW						
Athens	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Battle Creek	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Bellevue	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
CCHS											PSW	PSW	PSW
Endeavor	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW				
Harper Creek	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Homer	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Lakeview	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Mar Lee	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW				
Marshall	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Marshall Academy	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Olivet	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Pennfield	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Tekonsha	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
Union City	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW	PSW
CISD		PSW for all programs considering SLD eligibilities											

System of Appropriate Instruction

The purpose of the Student Intervention Data Review (SIDR) and the Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) process is to develop a systematic approach to address the needs of all learners in the building. Every person in a school who assists learners needs to be informed on the data collection process in the building and be provided opportunities to hone their skills on the analyses of the data to assist in instructional decisions that impact learners. The implementation of the SIDR/REED process is a complex process. The culture of the school and the decision-making process using data within the school is imperative to the successful development of the SIDR/REED process.

An effective data culture within a building must include:

- The teaching-learning cycle is implemented with fidelity with an emphasis on planning, teaching, assessing and evaluating. School personnel will be solid in their foundations of knowing the standards, benchmarks, content expectations, and local district curriculum. When planning lessons, teachers consider multiple approaches for delivery while differentiating for the learners in the classroom. Formative and benchmark assessments will guide the instructional practices of the teacher, as well as monitor the progress of each student.

- The school uses multiple data points on a regular data collection schedule to determine student proficiency. Data collected is contained in a common warehouse with access afforded to school personnel. The school teams identify what data to collect and will monitor district, school, grade level and classroom data with a consistent analysis process and schedule (data conferencing). This is a good practice to help teachers with routinely checking for instructional gaps in the curriculum and student progress.

    - Data conferencing is the method of sharing multiple data results with the principal or a team to make educational decisions for students. Responsibilities of participants in this process are:

        1. Parent input – provides information about the student through informal and formal input (outside agency assessments, services, medical history, etc). They must be afforded the opportunity to receive ongoing assessment results and student progress.

        2. Teacher – knows the student's instructional level, plans instructional strategies and lessons accordingly, is knowledgeable about appropriate instructional outcomes, resources and interventions, reflects on achievement, evaluates teaching and groups students based on assessment

results. The teacher brings any concerns to the principal and reflects on the shared responsibility for student learning.

3. Principal – established a data culture within the building, arranges for times to conduct data conferences with individual teachers and teams on a scheduled basis, and facilitates the data conference sessions. Uses data to uncover problems, uses student work samples not just assessment scores, focuses on improvement efforts (finds areas of need, predicts impact, focuses on resources and action plans, provides feedback, and aligns all resources and action plans to school improvement goals) teaches teachers how to look at data, and use of formative and summative data in planning for teaching, systematic monitoring at grade level.

4. Central Office – monitors progress at each building level, creates a district-wide picture, looks for commonalities among schools, continues to support and provide the data warehouse system, plans for district-wide professional development opportunities and allocates necessary resources and finances.

- Classroom instruction reflects the district curriculum, including emphasis on content expectations and core standards. The essential skills and strategies related to the expectations are integrated into the lesson. The classroom shall provide explicit instruction with much opportunity to practice with the teacher feedback and support and independent practice. Based upon assessment results, instruction may be differentiated to meet the needs of each student. Frequent monitoring of student progress informs proficiency levels.

- All personnel who work directly with students receive ongoing opportunities for professional growth in the content areas.

SIDR Process:

Effective instructional practices delivered by highly qualified teachers will maximize the learning outcomes for most students. Some students, after carefully planned and documented educational interventions, will not make expected educational progress leading to less than optimal learning outcomes and consideration as "at-risk" students. The majority of students who are identified as "at risk" will respond to general education interventions. However, there are a small minority, estimated to be approximately 5% of the student population, who will not respond adequately to instruction and will require increasingly intense general education interventions. This process is called Tiered Intervention.

Tier I – Appropriate instruction is provided to all students enrolled in the school by highly qualified teachers. Materials and instruction are reflective of scientifically-based instruction, and lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Data is collected systematically on student performance and shared with the parents on a regular basis. Students who are identified as struggling are closely monitored and instruction is adjusted based upon the need of the identified student.

Suggested Activities for Tier I –

Activity	Duration	Location	Assessment/Next steps	Persons involved
Formative assessments	Frequently to determine appropriate instructional grouping and student proficiency of skill	Classroom	Informal and aligned to curriculum and instruction	Teacher
Ongoing Analysis of Data	Continuously identifies students who are not proficient and compiles the data for data conferences	Classroom		Teacher
Data Conferencing	Continuously brings data on students not proficient to conference with principal	Building	Reviewing the data, the principal and teacher will determine: ▪ Interventions that can be done within the classroom ▪ Whether this student will be presented at a SIDR	Teacher Principal
SIDR Meeting	Team meets on an ongoing basis to discuss student(s).	Building	Discusses student and drafts an action plan that documents data reviewed and interventions	Teacher Parent Principal Intervention Strategy Specialist Curriculum Specialist Instructional Coaches SE itinerant staff
Interventions as defined by SIDR	Recommended 2-3 sessions per week for 20-30 minutes in a small group of up to 5 students to implement	Building and classroom	Conduct interventions with fidelity for length of time, collect the data and monitor weekly or every	SIDR team (as defined above)

	instructional interventions for 4 -12 week intervals depending on student progress or lack of response.		other week, review the results at a SIDR meeting, make necessary intervention adjustments and provide the results on a regular basis to the parents.	

Tier II – Students identified as struggling learners are provided with additional instruction in the content area based upon the identified need. Close monitoring of progress is used to inform instructional decisions. The use of targeted, short-term, scientific researched-based interventions is provided in small groups in addition to Tier I instruction. Data is collected and analyzed by the SIDR Team to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness and to determine if intervention adjustments are needed. The results of interventions are regularly shared with the parents.

Suggested Activities for Tier II –

Activity	Duration	Location	Assessment/Next steps	Persons involved
Formative assessments as part of Tier I and II	Frequently to determine appropriate instructional grouping and student proficiency of skill	Classroom	Informal and aligned to curriculum and instruction	Teacher
Ongoing Analysis of Data as part of Tier I and II	Continuously identifies students who are not proficient and compiles the data for data conferences	Classroom		Teacher
Data Conferencing	Continuously brings data on students not proficient to conference with principal	Building	Reviewing the data, the principal and teacher will determine: ▪ Interventions that can be done within the classroom or, ▪ Whether this student will continue in the SIDR process and at what Tier	Teacher and Principal
SIDR	Team meets on an ongoing basis to discuss student(s).	Building	Discusses student and drafts an action plan that documents data reviewed & interven-tions	Teacher, Parent Principal, Instructional Coaches, SE itinerant staff

Activity	Duration	Location	Assessment/Next steps	Persons involved
Interventions as defined by SIDR	Recommended 3-4 sessions per week for 20-30 minutes in a small group up to 3 students to implement instructional interventions by a know-ledgeable staff person for 4 -12 week intervals depending on student progress or lack of response.	Building and classroom	Conduct interventions with fidelity for length of time, collect data and monitor weekly or twice a week, review the results at a SIDR meeting, develop further action plan, if necessary and provide the results on a regular basis to the parents.	SIDR team

Tier III – The use of intense, scientific, researched-based interventions, in addition to Tier I and II instruction. The instruction will be provided individually or in small groups of students who are well below the academic and/or behavioral standards/skills for their grade. Data is collected weekly to evaluate intervention effectiveness and to determine if intervention adjustments are needed. Intensive instruction is provided to identify struggling learners in addition to the daily content instruction. The results of interventions are regularly shared with the parents.

Suggested Activities for Tier III –

Activity	Duration	Location	Assessment/Next steps	Persons involved
Formative assessments as part of Tier I, II and III	Frequently to determine appropriate instructional grouping and student proficiency of skill	Classroom	Informal and aligned to curriculum and instruction	Teacher
Ongoing Analysis of Data as part of Tier I, II and III	Continuously identifies students who are not proficient and compiles the data for data conferences	Classroom		Teacher
Data Conferencing	Continuously brings data on students not proficient to conference with principal	Building	Reviewing the data and determine: ▪ Interventions that can be done within the classroom or, ▪ What data to bring to the SIDR mtg to make decisions on Tier and action plan	Teacher and Principal

Activity	Duration	Location	Assessment/Next steps	Persons involved
SIDR	Team meets on an ongoing basis to discuss student(s).	Building	Discusses student and drafts an action plan that documents data reviewed & interven-tions	Teacher, Parent Principal, Instructional Coaches, SE itinerant staff
Interventions as defined by SIDR	Recommended 3-5 sessions per week for 20-30 minutes in a small group of up to 3 students or individually to implement instructional interventions by a knowledgeable staff person for 4 -12 week intervals depending on student progress or lack of response.	Building and classroom	Conduct interventions with fidelity for length of time, collect the data and monitor twice weekly, review the results at a SIDR meeting, develop further action plan, if necessary and provide the results on a regular basis to the parents.	SIDR team
Determine whether to move to SE referral	During the SIDR process, the team will determine the appropriateness of a SE referral for the student based on interventions and results	Building	Complete the REED and obtain parental consent	SIDR Team

Data Requirements for SIDR process:

The general education teacher's role in the SIDR process has been enhanced. Greater emphasis will be on the data collected, interventions provided and results analyzed to make educational decisions for the student. The analysis will include comparing student's performance on multiple assessments to classroom peers, school-wide peers (if more than one class at each grade level), district-wide peers and if appropriate, statewide peers. Communication with the parents on an ongoing basis is an essential component of the SIDR process. Communication can be done through formal and informal methods which include receiving documented progress as well as actively participating in the SIDR meetings. **It should be noted that any identified intervention will not replace the current classroom instruction but rather to enhance the ongoing classroom instruction.** If scientific researched-based core instruction or interventions are not available in a content area, the use of best practice instructional programs/strategies is acceptable.

Throughout the SIDR and Tier Intervention processes, the teacher continues to monitor progress of the student while providing differentiated lessons to the needs of the student. Other SIDR Team members may assist the general education teacher in this process and may conduct observations and other assessments.

The SIDR Team's responsibility is to work collaboratively to continue the analysis of data and determine a systematic plan for addressing the student's specific needs. The plan will be informed by a review of existing data which includes the review of the student's strengths as it relates to the identified need and a comprehensive review of the data in the following areas:

- **Local Assessments/Evaluations** – Provide data results that compare the student's performance to overall district and peers within the grade in the area of concern. Such data would include classroom assessments, work samples, district quarterly assessments, standardized assessments, district assessments, universal screeners, outside agency reports, and developmental assessments (preschool).

- **Student School History** – Data must include behavioral data, attendance history, medical history and needs, developmental history, report cards, educational services history (Title I, Early On, preschool, etc), any other intervention that have been implemented and English proficiency information.

- **Statewide Assessment results** – Results of data analysis in statewide assessments including comparison of individual to grade, district, and state averages in the area of concern.

- **Behavioral: Social/Emotional** – Data must include a review of the data from discipline referrals, review and analysis of any functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan related to the areas of concern. Attendance history may also be included in the review as it relates to suspension, expulsion and chronic attendance issues.

- **Parental Input** – Data must include any behavioral concerns at home, attendance issues from the parent perspective, outside agency reports and services, medical needs and history, educational services history, developmental history, primary language spoken within the home, school districts attended and any other interventions that have been implemented within other school districts.

- **School-based Observations** – Data must include documented formal and informal observation of the student in the classroom during the instruction in the area of need. The observation is to be completed by any member of the SIDR Team and the results shared with parents and SIDR team.

- **Sensory & Motor Skills** - Data must include any concerns observed and documented in the areas of gross motor, fine motor, or sensory integration.

- **Communication** – Data must include documented concerns with articulation, voice, fluency of speech, expressive or receptive language.

Once the data is reviewed and documented, a formal action plan is developed to address the areas of need. Each time the SIDR team meets the action plan is updated and new data is documented.

The SIDR action plan must describe the additional instruction that will be provided to the student. The instruction should be researched based and reflect best practices. The instruction can occur in the classroom or in another place in the building, It is extremely important to determine the frequency, the amount of time for each session and who is responsible for the sessions and data collection. Equally important is to determine the resources necessary for the plan to be implemented.

When the SIDR team makes the decision to move to a special education referral, the data collected and documented on the SIDR action plan must be used in the development of the Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) process. The REED process is described in the next section.

Whether a student is being referred for the first time for a special education evaluation or the student has been found eligible and received services for the past three years, the SIDR/REED process is applicable. Regardless if the student is found eligible or not, the student will receive interventions via the SIDR process. Special Education is considered a Tier III intervention.

Review Of Existing Evaluation Data and Evaluation Plan

The REED is a newly mandated evaluation plan process via the Michigan Administrative Revised Rules for Special Education (MARSE) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-04). This process will be used for all initial and reevaluations and is accessed through the Illuminate Special Education system (formerly FOCUS).

The REED process is to develop a systematic approach to collecting, analyzing and making decisions based upon data. The implementation of the REED process is complex. The culture of the school and the decision-making process using data within the school is imperative to the successful development of a REED for a student suspected of or redetermining eligibility of SLD.

This process requires that the Problem Solving Team (PST) or the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team conduct a review of existing evaluation data to determine what, if any, additional information is necessary in order to determine eligibility.

The more difficult part of the process is figuring out whether additional data is needed to determine eligibility and, if the student is eligible, to determine IEP content. IDEA 2004 has significantly expanded the documentation requirements for determining a specific learning disability beyond what districts have historically reviewed and documented in practice.

Examples of new documentation requirements include:

1. New components in SLD identification, e.g., the introduction of rate of student progress in response to scientifically research-based interventions and patterns of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement or both relative to age, State-approved grade level standards, or intellectual development.

2. If a child has participated in scientifically research based interventions, documentation of
    a. instructional strategies used and student-centered data collected
    b. parent notification of State policies on the amount/nature of student performance data collected and general education services that would be provided; strategies for increasing the child's rate of learning; the right to request an evaluation at any time

Examples of expanded documentation requirements for existing criteria include:

1. There has long been a requirement in the federal regulations that IEP Teams rule out lack of appropriate instruction as the primary explanation for underachievement in reading or math when that underachievement is a factor used in determining disability status. There has been a concern on the part of the United States Department of Education (USDOE) that in the past IEP Teams have not given this requirement serious consideration, thus

resulting in over-identification of students as SLD. To address this concern the federal regulations for SLD identification now require documentation of the data basis for the team's decision on the instructional rule-out (refer to Appropriate Instruction section of this document for further guidance):

a. Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as part of, the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel.
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 child's parents.

2. Prior to IDEA 2004 there was a long standing requirement to observe the child's academic performance in the regular classroom setting. Unfortunately, these observations were often conducted when the observer had available time and were not necessarily aligned with the academic area of concern. To address this lack of alignment, IDEA 2004 now requires the district to document the child's academic performance and behavior in the area(s) of difficulty.

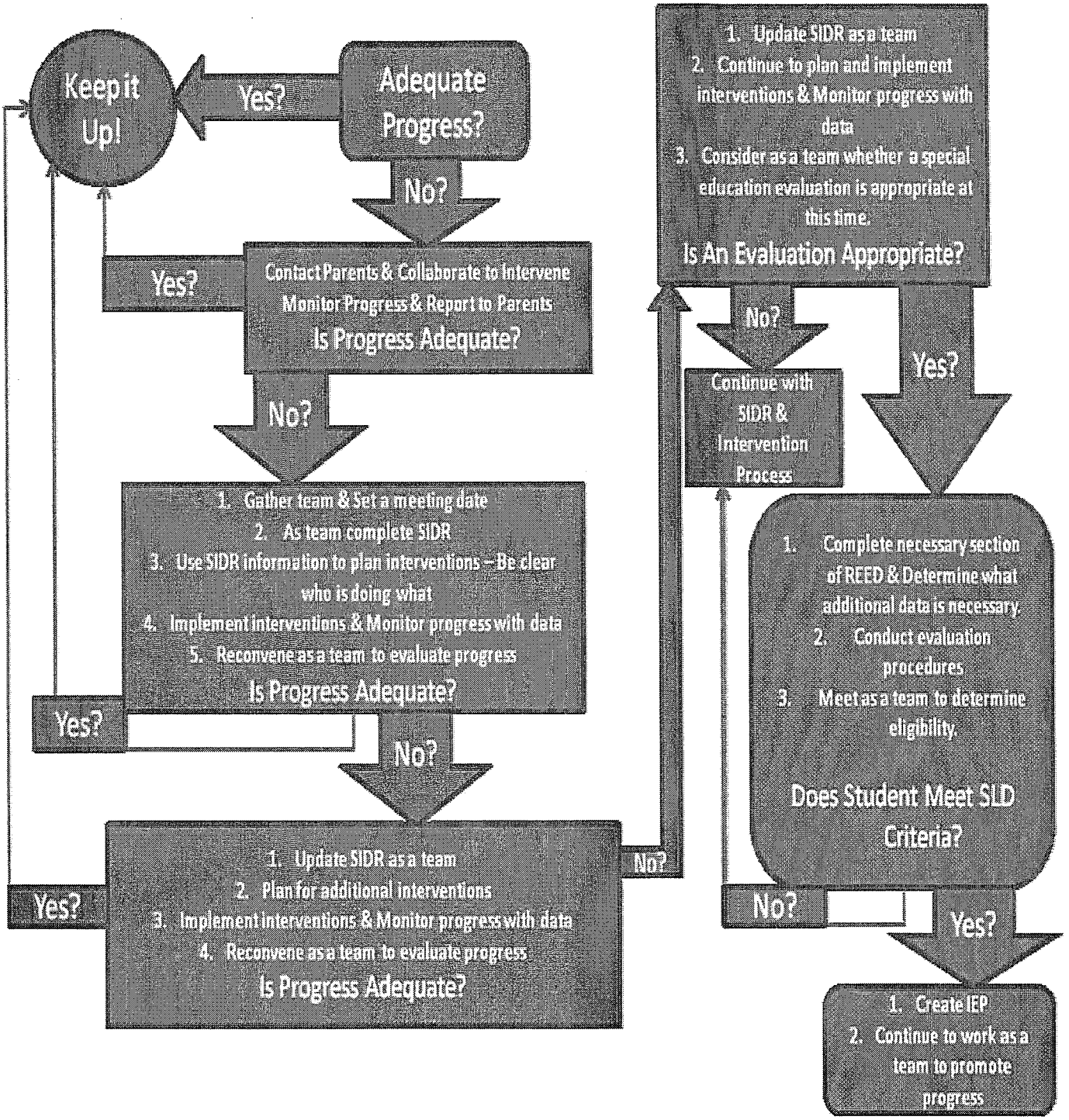
To make appropriate decisions about what if any additional information is needed to determine SLD eligibility and fulfill requirements for a comprehensive (i.e., "full and individual") evaluation, the CISD recommends that IEP Team members match existing data with a "checklist" of SLD requirements. The use of the checklist will allow the IEP team to:

1. Compare existing data with required data to identify additional data needs.

2. The IEP team records additional data needs on the Evaluation Plan page, indicating the data needed and the means that will be used to obtain the data. If no additional data is needed for either SLD eligibility determination or IEP content, the team will check the box "No Additional Data Needed" and provide a written explanation of why that determination was made.

At this time, all districts will use a pattern of strengths and weaknesses model to determine SLD eligibility. Once the REED and evaluations are completed, the IEP Team will take the findings to an IEP Team meeting to determine eligibility for SLD.

The following page outlines a flowchart of the process from SIDR to REED.


Keep it Up!
Yes?
Adequate Progress?
No?
Yes?
Contact Parents & Collaborate to Intervene
Monitor Progress & Report to Parents
Is Progress Adequate?
No?
1. Gather team & Set a meeting date
2. As team complete SIDR
3. Use SIDR information to plan interventions – Be clear who is doing what
4. Implement interventions & Monitor progress with data
5. Reconvene as a team to evaluate progress
Is Progress Adequate?
Yes?
No?
1. Update SIDR as a team
2. Plan for additional interventions
3. Implement interventions & Monitor progress with data
4. Reconvene as a team to evaluate progress
Is Progress Adequate?
Yes?
No?
1. Update SIDR as a team
2. Continue to plan and implement interventions & Monitor progress with data
3. Consider as a team whether a special education evaluation is appropriate at this time.
Is An Evaluation Appropriate?
No?
Continue with SIDR & Intervention Process
Yes?
1. Complete necessary section of REED & Determine what additional data is necessary.
2. Conduct evaluation procedures
3. Meet as a team to determine eligibility.
Does Student Meet SLD Criteria?
No?
Yes?
1. Create IEP
2. Continue to work as a team to promote progress

Specific Learning Disability Eligibility Criteria

The CISD has determined that a pattern of strengths and weaknesses model will be used to determine eligibility for special education services as a student with a learning disability. At least one area of strength and at least one area of weakness must be found to establish a pattern of strengths and weaknesses. **Students who do not demonstrate a pattern of strengths and weaknesses are not eligible for special education services for a specific learning disability.** To demonstrate a pattern of strengths and weaknesses, several components must be addressed.

1. **Data demonstrating inadequate achievement relative to age/state approved grade-level standards are required.** These data include: (1) MEAP scores, (2) Curriculum Assessments, (3) Grades, (4) Teacher Report, (5) Classroom Observations.

2. **Insufficient progress to meet age/state approved standards when using a scientific research based intervention.** Students who are demonstrating inadequate academic achievement are to be provided interventions. Progress monitoring data is to be collected and provided to parents at reasonable intervals. If throughout this process the student continues to demonstrate insufficient progress, as indicated by predetermined district decision rules, then the team may initiate an evaluation for special education eligibility.

3. **Data demonstrating the pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both relative to age/state approved grade-level standards or intellectual development.** These data include (1) Progress monitoring/Curriculum Based Measurement/Criterion Referenced Assessments, (2) MEAP scores, (3) Curriculum Assessments, (4) Grades, (5) Teacher Report, (6) Classroom Observations, (7) Norm Referenced Achievement Tests, and (8) Cognitive Processing Assessment. Norm referenced assessments are a required component of an evaluation. Cognitive assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the team and can provide an assessment of cognitive strengths and weakness that can then be linked to and provide better understanding of the student's performance in their learning environment.

    - An area of strength consists of a minimum of three data sources indicated as a relative strength for an area of academic achievement. These areas of eligibility include (1) basic reading skills, (2) reading fluency,(3) reading comprehension, (4) math calculation, (5) math problem solving, (6) written expression, (7) oral expression, (8) listening comprehension OR in areas of (9)cognitive processing.
    - Strengths include meeting or exceeding benchmarks, report card grades of A or B or "meets/exceeds" standards, curriculum assessment scores of 80% or better, percentile rank scores approximately greater than or equal to 30, average or typical performance in comparison to same age peers, and advanced or proficient MEAP scores.
    - An area of weakness consists of a minimum of four data sources indicated as a relative weakness in an individual area of eligibility. One of these data sources MUST be a norm referenced achievement test.
    - Weaknesses include falling below aimline for at least four consecutive data points, in the "at-risk" level in screenings, report card grades of D or E or "does

not meet" standards, curriculum assessment scores of 70% or less, percentile rank approximately less than or equal to 9, significantly below average or atypical performance in comparison to same age peers, and partially proficient or not proficient MEAP scores.

- On assessments where strengths or weaknesses are determined by percentile rank scores, these are recommended guidelines. For norm referenced achievement tests, the student needs to have approximately one standard deviation difference between performance areas to have a Specific Learning Disability. Professional judgment can be used to determine strengths or weaknesses.
- The level of performance required to be considered an area of strength or weakness is determined by the district's decision rules and .

4. **Data demonstrating that the underachievement is not primarily the result of other impairments, cultural, environmental or economic factors of LEP.**

    - Exclusionary factors include (1) Lack of Instruction in Essential Components of Reading and Math, (2) Limited English Proficiency, (3) Cognitive Impairment, (4) Emotional Impairment, (5) Vision, Hearing, or Motor Impairments, (6) Autism Spectrum Disorder, or (7) Environmental, Cultural, or Economic Disadvantages including (a) lack of opportunity, (b) motivational factors, (c) situational trauma, and (d) attendance.

5. **Data demonstrating that prior to/as part of the referral process student was provided appropriate instruction. Note: consider only with respect to appropriate instruction in the area(s) of suspected disability.**

    - Appropriate instruction by qualified personnel must be documented. Fidelity of instruction and intervention will be verified by school administration (see fidelity worksheet). The ongoing use of the Student Intervention Data Review (SIDR) will provide a data based log (e.g. progress monitoring log) of factors to be considered in the analysis of appropriate instruction in each area of academic concern.
    - Documentation of repeated formative assessments (assessments that guide instruction) at reasonable intervals (weekly or biweekly), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction must be provided to the parents. *Note: When sufficient data is not available prior to the initiation of the evaluation the MET Team will need to collect data from ongoing appropriate instruction during the evaluation process, which in many cases may require an extension to the 30 day timeline.*

6. **Data documenting that the student was observed in the learning environment (including general education setting) to document academic performance and behavior in the area(s) of difficulty.**

    - Observations must be conducted in the area(s) of concern. These observations may be conducted either as part of the problem solving team process (prior to initiation of evaluation) or as part of the evaluation process.

- Relevant learning behaviors (such as classroom participation, work completion, on task behavior, and other motivational factors) are also to be observed within the instructional setting.

Appendix A

EIGHT AREAS OF SLD

This section provides descriptions of the eight areas in which specific learning disabilities are identified in both federal and state law/rules/regulations. The goal of these summaries is provide a common language and conceptual base for addressing the different types of learning disabilities. Educators, in partnership with parents, can effectively screen, assess, intervene and progress monitor in each of the specific disability areas determined to be of concern.

The information provided is derived from reputable sources, but is not intended to be comprehensive. Many resources are mentioned here and additional ones, including websites, are cited in *General References and Resources* at the end of the document.

ORAL EXPRESSION AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION

(See also Section 6: *Speech-Language Impairment vs. SLD Determination.*)

Definition and Implications (Oral Expression)

Oral expression pertains to the use of words and includes the ability to formulate and produce words and sentences with appropriate vocabulary, grammar and application of conversational rules.

A child's oral expression skills are essential to their learning and academic success. Oral expression problems in students may result in literacy problems (ASHA, 1980). Furthermore, these children may not perform at grade level because of their struggle with reading, difficulty understanding and expressing language, and the fact that they may misunderstand social cues. Oral expression is about the student's ability to express ideas, explain thinking (critical in math), retell stories, and contrast and compare concepts or ideas.

Characteristics (Oral Expression)

The following may be exhibited by those children who demonstrate oral expression difficulties:

- Difficulty with the grammatical processes of inflection, marking categories like person, tense, and case (e.g., the *–s* in *jumps* marks the third-person singular in the present tense), and derivation, the formation of new words from existing words (e.g. *acceptable* from *accept)*
- Learning vocabulary
- Difficulty formulating complete, semantically and grammatically correct sentences either spoken or written
- Difficulty explaining word associations, antonyms/synonyms
- Difficulty with retelling, making inferences, and predictions

Definition and Implications (Listening Comprehension)

Listening comprehension refers to the understanding of the implications and explicit meanings of words and sentences of spoken language. Listening comprehension often co-exists with difficulties in written language and in the auditory processing of oral information. Children with problems processing and interpreting spoken sentences frequently can experience difficulties in mastering syntactic structures both receptively as well as expressively. Although some children appear to perceive and interpret the words used in spoken sentences, they may not be able to grasp the interrelationship among the words in the sentences. Difficulties with listening comprehension should not be mistaken for difficulties or deficits in Central Auditory Processing.

Characteristics (Listening Comprehension)

Children experiencing listening comprehension difficulties may exhibit the following:

- Difficulty with following directions for seatwork and projects
- Difficulty remembering homework assignments
- Difficulty with understanding oral narratives and text

- Difficulty answering questions about the content of the information given
- Difficulty with critical thinking to arrive at logical answers
- Difficulty with word associations, antonyms/synonyms, categorizing, and classifying
- Difficulty with note-taking or dictation

Assessment (Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension)

The classroom teacher may screen for those students who are at risk of having oral expression and/or listening comprehension difficulties by referencing norms for oral expression and listening comprehension acquisition (see chart following progress monitoring/interventions). The speech-language pathologist should be the one to assess and determine deficits in these two areas.

The use of standardized tests provides the speech-language pathologist with valuable information regarding the student's communication skills in specific areas. However, we must realize that standardized assessments may be one component of an assessment process. The use of nonstandardized or informal assessments, dynamic assessment, behavioral and pragmatic observations in the "natural environment" (outside of the classroom) as well as spontaneous and structured language sampling also provide important information that standardized tests by themselves may not.

Some common assessment tools used for assessing oral expression and listening comprehension skills are:

Preschool Language Scale-3 (PLS-4) and the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-4 (CELF-4), Bracken Basic Concept Scale-Revised (BBCS-R), Comprehensive Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Test-Second Edition (CREVT-2), Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test- Fourth Edition (PPVT-4), Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language-Third Edition (TACL-3), Test of Language Development, Fourth Edition (TOLD-4).

For students who are Spanish speaking the following assessment tools are either criterion-referenced or standardized in Spanish:

Bracken Basic Concept Scale- Revised, Spanish, Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Fourth Edition, Spanish (CELF-4 Spanish), Preschool language Scale, Fourth Edition (PLS-4 Spanish Edition), Spanish Structured Photographic Expressive Language Test-II (Spanish SPELT-II), Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP), Test of Phonological Awareness in Spanish (TPAS)

The speech-language pathologist should be culturally sensitive when selecting and using assessment tools being administered to second language learners. The use of standardized assessments may not be appropriate with second language learners. It is the responsibility of the speech-language pathologist to validate the assessment instrument being used to the population for whom it was criteria-referenced or standardized.

For a comprehensive reference of assessment instruments for monolingual English speakers or bilingual students, please refer to the *Directory of Speech-Language Pathology Assessment Instruments*, 2007.

Intervention and Progress Monitoring (Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension)

The speech-language pathologist can provide both direct and consultative services in collaboration with the classroom teachers, resource teachers and interventionists in developing intervention strategies that will include explicit skills-training in the areas of oral expression and/or listening comprehension as key to some students' access to the curriculum.

Providing structured opportunities for students to participate in social interactions, such as giving them "helping" roles or having them "talk through" an activity involving a successfully learned skill, reinforces oral expression skills. Working on beginning, middle and end to organize narratives as well as in the retelling of stories fosters oral expression development.

The direct teaching of listening strategies is important to improving listening comprehension. Particularly effective is cuing the student to keep their eyes on the speaker, make a picture in their head, ask for clarification, and internalize directions by repeating them to themselves. For the older student, learning to listen for the main idea is important. Modeling and demonstration is essential with students of all ages.

An example of progress monitoring of an oral expression and/or listening comprehension intervention would be correct identification of picture cards of specific targeted vocabulary being taught. The desired result should be that the student's correct labeling/identification of the target vocabulary increase with each collection of data to be analyzed (progress monitoring). The targeted intervention needs to be systematic and explicit in its delivery and progress monitoring.

Norms for Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension

	Oral Expression	Listening Comprehension
Kindergarten	Speaks intelligibly	Comprehends 13,000 words
	Uses 1500 words	Understands opposites
	Retells a story or event	Follows 1-2 step simple directions in sequence
	Takes turns during conversation	Listens to and understands age appropriate stories
	Sentences should be mostly grammatical	Recognizes meaning from tone of voice, and facial expressions
First Grade	Tells and retells stories and events in a logical order	Comprehends 20,000 words
	Expresses ideas with a variety of complete sentences	Understands months and seasons

	Uses most parts of speech correctly	Remembers information
	Asks who, what, where, and why questions	Follows 2-3 step directions in sequence
	Stays on topic and takes turns in conversation	
	Gives instructions	
Second Grade	Uses increasingly complex sentences	Follows 3-4 oral directions in sequence
	Clarifies and explains words and ideas	Understands direction words for location, space, and time
	Gives 3-4 step directions	Answers questions about a grade-level story or theme correctly
	Uses oral expression to inform, persuade, and to entertain	
	Opens and closes conversation appropriately	
	Experiments with vocabulary	
Third Grade	Summarizes a story accurately	Listens attentively in group situations
	Uses content area vocabulary	Understands grade level material
	Explains what he has learned	Expresses well-developed time and number concepts
	Varies verbal and nonverbal behaviors depending on the audience (more formal to teacher than with peers)	
Fourth Grade	Understands some figurative language	Listens to and understands information presented by others
	Participates in group discussions	Forms opinions based on evidence
	Makes effective oral presentations	Listens for specific purpose
	Identifies main ideas and supporting details	Asks clarifying questions
	Chooses vocabulary appropriate to the message	Uses listening skills to understand directions
	Uses grammatically correct speech	
Fifth Grade	Makes planned oral presentations appropriate to the audience	Listens and draws conclusions in subject area
	Maintains eye contact, uses gestures, facial expressions, and appropriate voice during group presentations	Distinguishes fact from fiction
	Summarizes main points	
	Reports about information gathered in	

	group activities	
Middle School	Presents ideas effectively in discussion with a wide range of audiences	Recognizes stylistic elements such as tone of voice and body language
	Uses a wide range vocabulary for different purposes	
	Uses figures of speech	
	Uses a variety of simple and complex sentence structures	
	Defends a point of view	
High School	Supports a point of view using various forms of persuasion	Self evaluates oral presentations
	Incorporates materials from a wide range of sources (newspapers, books, technical materials, etc.)	Recognizes a speakers point of view, purpose, historical, and cultural context
	Selects and presents a focused topic	Analyzes and synthesizes materials presented orally
	Experiments with stylistic elements	
	Uses language to solve problems	

Websites (Oral Expression/Listening Comprehension)

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:
www.asha.org/public/speech/development

Language Development in Children:
http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/language_development.shtml

References (Oral Expression/Listening Comprehension)

American Speech Language Hearing Association. (2007). *Directory of Speech-Language Pathology Assessment Instruments.* Rockville, Md.

American Speech Hearing Association. (1999). *Guidelines for the Role and Responsibilities of the School-Based Speech-Language Pathologist.* Rockville, Md.

American Speech Hearing Association. (1980). *Language Learning Disorders: Ad Hoc Committee on Language/Learning Disabilities.* Rockville, Md.

Birth through Kindergarten/Colorado Communication Guidelines, 2007.

Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-4, Psychological Corporation, Harcourt Assessment Company, 2003.

Colorado Content Standards for Language Arts

Brace, J., Brockhoff, V., Sparks, N. & Tuckey, J. *First Steps Speaking and Listening Book 2nd edition* by Judy Brace, Department of Education and Training in Western Australia, 2007

Brace et al., *First Steps Speaking and Listening Map of Development, 2nd edition*, Department of Education and Training in Western Australia, 2007

WRITTEN EXPRESSION

A disability in written expression is an identified problem related to the writing process. Like reading comprehension, written expression develops through a progression of several interconnected skills and processes. To fully understand learning disabilities in the area of written expression it is important to differentiate the "transcription" component from the "generational" component (Berninger, 2004). Transcription involves the basic writing skills (BWS) of production of letters, words and spelling. The generational component, or composition, "translates ideas into language representations that must be organized, stored, and then retrieved from memory" (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007, p. 238). BWS are specific to written language, whereas composition processes involve oral language and thought. It is therefore, critical to address both BWS and compositional components in understanding written expression disabilities.

The first part of this section, *Written Expression: Basic Writing Skills*, covers the foundational skills of transcription—handwriting and spelling. The second part, *Written Expression: Composition*, focuses on generational components of composition—capitalization and punctuation, word and text fluency, sentence construction, genre-specific discourse structures, planning processes, and reviewing and revising processes.

Written Expression: Basic Writing Skills (Transcription)

Just as letter identification, phonemic blending, and decoding problems constrain reading comprehension, so do handwriting, phonemic segmenting, and spelling affect written expression (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007). It should be noted that the two processes are not completely parallel. To produce written work, letter forms and written words must be retrieved from memory during the writing process. Before children can give attention to planning, organizing, and constructing written pieces, they must first automatize basic writing skills including handwriting fluency and legibility, and spelling.

Handwriting and spelling difficulties can have serious, negative consequences for written expression, including a result in misinterpretation of the writer's meaning, producing negative perceptions about the writer and the quality of the written work, interference with the composing process because the writer's memory resources are overloaded with penmanship and spelling, and most importantly, student avoidance of writing, which further constrains writing development (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007).

Definition and Implications (Handwriting)

By the end of first grade, typically-developing children can name all the upper case and lower case alphabet letters presented in random order and can write dictated letters in both cases accurately from memory. This skill is an integration of orthographic codes (the form of the letter) phonological codes (the name of the letter) and graphomotor codes (output).

The automaticity of letter retrieval and production has the biggest affect on beginning writing development and is the best predictor of written composition fluency, content, and organization. Automatic letter formation and retrieval must be intact before students can attend to composition.

Definition and Implications (Spelling)

Spelling is referenced in the definition of dyslexia adopted by the International Dyslexia Association's Board of Directors in 2002 and is used by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. "Dyslexia is . . . characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities" (Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003).

Spelling is highly related to both reading and writing development. A solid research base shows that learning to spell enhances the reading and writing of all students. If spelling is not explicitly taught, spelling achievement can drop significantly while reading comprehension stays at an average level.

Learning to read and spell words follows a similar course of acquisition, and depends on the same knowledge about the alphabetic system and memory for the spellings of specific words. In other words, spelling and decoding are linked by phonological processing. However, the two processes are not quite the same.

Like beginning decoding skills, spelling abilities are predicted by a student's ability to map speech sounds to letters and letter clusters and knowledge of letter patterns (Berninger, 2004). However, competent spelling involves more than the skills identified above. It also involves understanding specific, rule-based letter patterns known as orthography, and understanding morphology, or the meaning of prefixes, roots, and suffixes.

Phonology and Spelling: Making the connection between phonemes and graphemes requires an awareness that all words can be segmented into individual sounds, or phonemic awareness. It is this awareness that allows the reader to discover and decipher the alphabetic code (Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003). Spelling is intimately related to reading because speech sounds are linked to letters and need to be translated into print.

Orthography and Spelling: After children have developed a secure understanding of the relationship between letters and speech sounds, they develop an understanding of spelling conventions. For example, final /k/ is spelled ck after a short vowel (i.e. *brick*), with a k after a vowel team or consonant (i.e., *book, milk*), and a c in multisyllabic words like *tarmac*). Shankweiler and his colleagues found that high school students' skill in representing individual phonemes with letters and letter clusters coincided almost perfectly (correlation of .95) with the ability to spell whole words.

Morphology and Spelling: An awareness of morphemes or meaningful units is called *morphological awareness*. Morphemes can include prefixes, suffixes, Latin roots, or Greek word parts, In written language, morphological awareness involves linking the sound with a meaning unit, not a letter. An example of this is the ability to distinguish the derivative *missed* from the base word *mist*. Morphology also involves understanding spelling rules for adding suffixes to base words, for example doubling the final consonant in *hopping* or dropping the silent e in *hoping*.

Poor spelling abilities hamper the ability to function as an adult. Liberman (1985) and her colleagues found that adult poor spellers limited their writing to words they knew how to spell correctly. The National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools, and Colleges reported that employment applications that are poorly written or poorly spelled will be rejected 80 percent of the time.

Characteristics (Handwriting)

Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder characterized by poor handwriting, with poor spelling as a secondary characteristic. People with dysgraphia often have fine motor problems that specifically affect written language (Levine, 1994).

Students with a disability in this area have slow, laborious, and often illegible handwriting. Spacing between words, spacing between letters in words, alignment, letter size and errors in proportion and formation are all affected (Graham, Struck, Santoro, & Berninger, 2006). This exists despite thorough instruction and ample time to practice letter formation outside the demands of spelling or the writing process.

There are three common forms of graphomotor dysfunction:

1) difficulty recalling the sequence of strokes needed to form a specific letter;
2) use of the larger muscles of the wrist and forearm rather than small muscles of the fingers to form letters; and
3) *finger agnosia*, in which a student has to visually monitor the location of the writing instrument because the fingers do not report their location to the brain. A person with agnosia may have an awkward, fist-like pencil grip, placing the thumb over the fingers and thus preventing the fingers from moving the pencil easily.

   (Wolf, 2005)

Characteristics (Spelling)

Spelling errors characteristic of people with specific learning disabilities are rooted in faulty phonological processing as well as poor morphological awareness. Louisa Moats found that 90% of errors in spelling could be identified in the following categories:

1) Inflected ending omission (i.e., *dressest* for *dresses*) or substitution (i.e., "dropt" *for dropped*);

2) Misplacement or omission of /l/ and /r/ (i.e., "backboard" for *blackboard* or "fog" for *frog*);

3) Omission of non-salient consonants, including in consonant blends (i.e., "sip" for *slip* or "med" for *mend*);

4) Vowel errors (i.e., "maet" for *met*); within-class consonant substitution (primarily fricatives: /f/ and /v/--i.e., "baf" for *bath*--/th/ and voiced /th/, /s/ and /z/, /sh/ and /zh/), and

5) Weak syllable deletion (i.e., "xplak" for *explicate*).

Assessment/Progress Monitoring (Handwriting)

This area of disability cannot be diagnosed solely by looking at a handwriting sample. A thorough assessment includes writing self-generated sentences and paragraphs and copying age-appropriate text. The examiner must assess not only the finished product, but also the processes involved, including pencil grip, fatigue, cramping, or tremor of the writing hand, handedness, and fine-motor speed (International Dyslexia Association, 2007).

An example of a handwriting assessment is the *Minnesota Handwriting Assessment* (Harcourt). Normative information is available and the assessment can also be used to monitor progress as a result of intervention. This test takes 2.5 minutes to administer the rate score and more time is given to produce a complete sample for scoring the five quality categories (legibility, form, alignment, size, and spacing). Both manuscript and D'Nealian handwriting styles can be assessed.

Assessment (Spelling)

To analyze spelling for phonological and morphological errors, Moats recommends using a comprehensive sample of words, including words of high and low frequency, real and nonsense words, words of one to four syllables, words with inflected endings (i.e., suffixes –s, -ed, -ing, -er, -est), and words generated both to dictation and in spontaneous writing. Include potentially problematic phonological features, such as liquids (i.e., /l/ and /r/), consonant blends, multisyllabic words, words with unaccented schwa syllables (i.e., *happen*), and non-syllabic or unstressed inflected endings (i.e., suffix –ed as in *walked* or *slammed*).

Some assessment instruments are identified below:

- *Process Assessment of the Learner, 2nd Edition (PAL-II): Diagnostic for Reading and Writing,* (Harcourt). This is a comprehensive instrument that thoroughly assesses handwriting fluency and legibility, spelling, and composition skills. It can be administered multiple times to assess student progress.
- *SPELL Spelling Performance Evaluation for Language & Literacy (2nd ed.).* Computer software scores and analyzes errors for students Grade 2 – adult.
- *Test of Written Spelling (TWS-4),* Sopris-West
- *Weshsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-II):* Spelling & Written Expression
- WJ-III: Spelling sounds
- *Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT 3):* Spelling

Intervention (Handwriting)

Effective writing instruction focuses on (a) legible and automatic letter production; (b) spelling; and (c) composition (word and text fluency; sentence construction; genre-specific discourse structures; planning processes; and reviewing and revising processes) (Berninger & Amtmann, 2003). Children in kindergarten and first grade should receive explicit, systematic instruction in letter formation and in associating the shape with the name of the letter. Work must always begin with the formation of individual letters written in isolation. Alphabets need to be practiced daily, often for months (International Dyslexia Association, 2007).

After almost two decades of research in handwriting instruction, Graham (1999) has found no evidence between the legibility or handwriting speed of students who used manuscript or cursive writing. Nor has he found any convincing evidence that slanted manuscript (the D'Nealian alphabet) makes the transition to cursive writing any easier. For students with LD, research examining the effectiveness of different scripts is "nonexistent" (Graham, 1999, p. 84). Graham advises teaching students with LD traditional manuscript before cursive. But, he cautions that teachers who insist on a strict adherence to any particular model "are likely to frustrate not only themselves but their students as well" (Graham, 1999, p. 84).

Intervention (Spelling)

Teaching students how to segment words into phonemes helps them learn to spell because sounds and letters are related in a predictable way. Phoneme awareness instruction, combined with explicit instruction connecting phonemes to alphabetic letters significantly improves early reading and spelling skills. After students have well-established phonemic awareness, they need to learn to relate the sounds to letters as they spell words.

Phonics instruction teaches how letters of written language map to the individual sounds of spoken language. It teaches students to use these relationships to read and spell words. Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is required. Orthographic letter patterns used to spell many complex and irregular words must be taught as well (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007).

At the most basic level, systematic instruction explicitly teaches letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence. Struggling students also need substantial practice in applying knowledge of these relationships as they read and write. Students also need opportunities to spell words and to write their own stories with words that include the letter-sound relationships they are learning (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001).

Progress Monitoring (Spelling)

One type of CBM for spelling is correct letter sequence (CLS) using dictated, grade-level word lists. Another way to progress monitor in spelling is total number/percentage of words spelled correctly (WSC). Although CLS requires more time to score, it is more sensitive to student improvement (Hosp, Hosp, and Howell, 2007).

One source for standardized spelling lists is AIMSweb Spelling-CBM. Provided are 33 alternate forms for each grade, 1-8. They are intended to be used for benchmarking grades 1-8 and progress monitoring any age.

The ABCs of CBM (Hosp, Hosp, and Howell, 2007) gives explicit instruction in the scoring of curriculum based measures in spelling, whether administering dictated lists of words or scoring words spelled correctly within timed student written passages.

The following are assessment tools or include assessment strategies that may be used to monitor student progress in spelling:

- *Process Assessment of the Learner, 2nd Edition (PAL-II): Diagnostic for Reading and Writing,* Harcourt. [See description above, under "spelling/assessment."]
- *SPELL Spelling Performance Evaluation for Language & Literacy (2nd ed.),* Learning by Design, Software for Grade 2 – adult. Scores and analyzes errors.
- Spelling Inventories (inform instruction by categorizing words according to a sequential patterns arranged by complexity):
  - Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2000). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
  - Ganske, K. (2000). *Word journeys: Assessment-guided phonics, spelling, and vocabulary instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.
  - *Spellography* (Sopris-West)

Written Expression: Composition (Generational Skills)

Definition and Implications

Like reading comprehension, written expression develops through a progression of several interconnected skills and processes. This section focuses on the generational aspects of written expression—capitalization and punctuation, word and text fluency, sentence construction, genre-specific discourse structures, planning processes, and reviewing and revising processes.

Characteristics

Difficulties in executive function and language hampers the composition component of written expression (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007). In addition to weak skills in handwriting and spelling, poor writers show problems in generating text. They are more likely to have shorter and less "interesting" essays, produce poorly organized text at both the sentence and paragraph levels, and be delayed in their acquisition and/or use of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about writing. Furthermore, "poor writers are less likely to revise spelling, punctuation, grammar, or the substantive nature of their text to increase communication clarity" (Hooper et al., 1994, p. 386).

There is some evidence that, after accounting for difficulties in handwriting and spelling, there is a subgroup of children whose difficulties in written expression are restricted to composition. Students typically struggle in one or more of the following areas: capitalization and punctuation; word and text fluency; sentence construction; genre-specific discourse structures; planning processes; and reviewing and revising processes.

The following are specific indicators of a disability in written composition that are summarized from several sources:

- Word omissions (e.g., They ran to bus vs. They ran to *the* bus);
- Word order errors (e.g., *I and my mom* were here);
- Incorrect verb and pronoun use (e.g., We *is* running fast; me and *him* are here);
- Subject-verb disagreement (e.g., The monster have five *eyes*);
- Use of simple, rather than complex, sentence structures – particularly at the middle and high school levels;
- Word ending errors (e.g., He laugh*ing* vs. He laugh*ed;* He is dyslex*ia* vs. He is dyslex*ic*)
- Lack of punctuation and capitalization;
- Discrepancy between oral and written language;
- Problems with cohesion (e.g., lack of transition words to link ideas);
- Problems with coherence (e.g., poor sentence organization and intra- and inter-paragraph organization);
- Word-retrieval problems (e.g., use of vague or general words—*thing, stuff, good*—instead of specific or precise vocabulary);

(Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007; Hooper et al., 1994; Wakely, Hooper, de Kruif, & Swartz, 2006)

Assessment and Progress Monitoring

Thorough assessment of written expression must include an analysis of basic writing skills (skills of transcription) as well as compositional (generational) skills. Work samples should be carefully examined for the above errors.

Examples of Assessment Instruments:

- *Process Assessment of the Learner, 2nd Edition (PAL-II): Diagnostic for Reading and Writing,* (Harcourt). This is a comprehensive instrument that thoroughly assesses handwriting fluency and legibility, spelling, and composition skills for students for Grades K-6. It can also be used to reveal error patterns in older, remedial students, but standard scores will not be generated.
- *Test of Written Language, Third Edition (TOWL-3)* (Pearson Assessments). Assesses capitalization, punctuation, spelling (ability to form letters into words), vocabulary (word usage), syntax (sentence combining), grammar, story construction.

To monitor progress, timed writing CBM can be administered individually or to a group using grade-appropriate story starters. (AIMSweb provides 125 story starters across grades 1-8.) Scoring writing CBM commonly includes three procedures:

- total words written (TWS)
- words spelled correctly (WSC)
- correct writing sequences (CWS)

Other scoring procedures may be applied, such as: number of long words/characters per word; number of different words; number of nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.; correct capitalization; correct punctuation marks; words per sentence; and number of complete sentences. (*The ABCs of CBM*, Hosp, Hosp, and Howell, 2007)

Interventions

Successful instruction draws clear linkages among oral language, reading, and written language. As in reading-related skills, effective instruction for students with disabilities in written expression must be systematic, explicit, and intensive (Lyon, 1996b). Classroom-level instruction that involves *Self-Regulated Strategy Development* (SRSD), developed by Graham and Harris (2005), have been shown to be significant in improving writing performance for students with learning disabilities (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007).

Comprehensive instruction includes intervention at all levels of generational composition, including:

- mechanics (capitalization and punctuation)
- word (grammar, including more mature synonyms, antonyms for verbs, adjectives, and adverbs)
- sentence construction
- paragraph construction
- multi-paragraph essays

Websites with information on research and instruction:

The Access Center: http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php

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BASIC READING SKILL

Definition and Implications

Learning to read is not like learning to speak. The human brain is hard-wired to learn spoken language and it is therefore, a naturally occurring process (Shaywitz, 2003). Typically, simply exposing hearing children to spoken language allows them to acquire and produce speech. Learning to read, however, is not "natural" for children. It has to be explicitly taught; exposure to text and print is not enough for the majority of the population.

In 1997, the National Reading Panel (NRP) was established in order to assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. The NRP identified 5 components to reading instruction that are essential for a student to learn to read. These 5 components are also referenced in IDEA 2004 and the Federal Regulations. The 5 essential components are phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary.

For most of the student population identified with learning disabilities, a breakdown occurs in their basic reading skill (BRS). BRS difficulty includes problems with phonemic awareness and/or phonics. That is, students struggle to identify individual sounds and manipulate them; to identify printed letters and the sounds associated with those letters, or to decode written language. It is also typical for these students to struggle with spelling, or encoding. However, it should be noted that not all students with encoding difficulties have BRS difficulties.

It should be noted that in reading research and in clinical contexts, a breakdown in basic reading skill is frequently referred to as dyslexia. While schools tend not to use this term, instruction and intervention should align with the underlying need for BRS acquisition.

Characteristics and Assessments

The ability to understand letters and the sounds they represent is a prerequisite skill for reading comprehension. While many people think that learning phonics is something children should learn in kindergarten and 1st grade, many students do not, particularly if phonics has not been taught systematically and explicitly. Difficulty in decoding words impacts the ability to comprehend text and may be misidentified as a disability in the area of reading comprehension. Therefore, educators should carefully plan how they will assess a student's reading abilities.

At the kindergarten and first grade level, it is best to assess whether students can identify letters, as well as consonant and short vowel sounds, through teacher-made or formal assessments.

If letters and sounds are not mastered, the student's phonemic awareness should be assessed. "Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to notice, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds—phonemes—in spoken words." (Shayitz, 2003, p. 51) For example, can the student identify that the word "cat" has 3 distinct sounds: /c/ /a/ /t/? Can they blend those sounds

together to make one word? Assessment tools for both of these areas (phonics and phonemic awareness) include the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP) and Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE). The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Early Skills (DIBELS) is also an effective tool. There are many informal assessments that can be conducted as well.

At the upper grade levels, assessment should start at higher skill levels and then funnel down to the more basic skills. Therefore, it is recommended to start at the reading fluency level. If students cannot decode sentences fluently, then word level reading should be assessed. Teachers should determine if students can read words in isolation from a list. If the student is not able to do this accurately, then assessment should address single syllable words, and then vowel sounds. Many older students with BRS deficits have not mastered their vowel sounds, and those who have tend to struggle to decode multi-syllable words. Formal assessments for these skills include the Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency (TOSCRF), Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF), TOWRE and DIBELS.

If older students have not mastered their consonant and vowel sounds, it may be prudent to assess their phonemic awareness. Many of these students don't understand that words are made up of individual sounds that can be segmented and blended. The CTOPP can be used with this age group as well.

Work samples should also be examined. Many students who struggle with BRS write using simpler language in their writing than in their oral vocabulary (typically 1-2 syllable words), and often jumble the letters in the words. They may have the correct letters, but in the wrong order. This is indicative of difficulties with sounding out what they are writing and relying heavily on their visual memory in attempting to spell.

When examining work samples, educators should look for patterns. Does the student have any words or vowel patterns they can spell or use consistently? Do they consistently use all of their short vowel sounds correctly? Do they understand the "magic e" rule? Work samples are extremely informative about concepts students have mastered, as well as those they have not.

The Colorado Department of Education also provides assessment flowcharts in accordance with the Colorado Basic Literacy Act. These provide basic frameworks for how to assess reading abilities at the different grade levels. For more information see the following website: http://www.cde.state.co.us/action/CBLA/index.htm

If students do have the skills to decode at grade or age level accurately, but not fluently, then this may not be a basic reading skill issue. Reading fluency skills are addressed following basic reading skill.

Intervention

For all students with basic reading skill deficits, instruction must be systematic, direct and

explicit. Instruction must be targeted to the student's unique needs and focus on areas of skill breakdown.

Systematic instruction progresses from simple to complex and follows a predetermined scope and sequence for instruction. Time should be built into lessons for independent practice and review of previously mastered skills.

In addition, because every year that a student misses out on grade level reading, they also miss learning grade level vocabulary, all reading interventions need to include enriched language experiences. These include listening to, talking about, and telling stories (Shaywitz, p.262).

A key component of effective intervention is the provision of ample opportunity for practice. Students with BRS deficits need significantly more practice on skills in order to be not only accurate, but fluent with the skill. Teachers need to teach to *mastery*, not just accuracy.

Students who have breakdowns at the phonemic awareness level should be taught how to segment and blend words. Lessons should be brief (10-15 minutes per day) and should have two or three focused activities. In *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), Module 2*, Louisa Moats provides the following guidelines for teaching phonological skills:

- Build proficiency at segmenting and blending individual phonemes in words with two or three phonemes.
- Gradually move through the developmental progression of task difficulty. The object is to 'roam around in phonological space' at the appropriate level of difficulty.
- Emphasize oral production of words, syllables, and sounds. After hearing sounds, children should say them, paying attention to how the sounds feel when they are formed.
- Always show children what you want them to do [model]. Do one together, and then let the children do one.
- Give immediate corrective feedback. For example, if the child gives a letter name instead of a sound, tell him or her the difference and elicit the correct response.
- Think 'multisensory:' Use concrete objects—such as fingers, chips, blocks, coins, or felts—to represent speech sounds. Inject movement into the activity.
- Letters reinforce awareness once children have the idea. Phoneme awareness, reading and spelling are reciprocal; each benefits the others.

(Moats, p.19)

There are many reading programs that incorporate these guidelines. As Sally Shaywitz explained, "the specific program chosen from among them is far less important than the provision of systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, and then teaching children how to apply this knowledge to reading and writing" (Shaywitz, p. 263).

When teaching phonics, all of the rules around systematic, explicit and direct instruction continue to apply. There are many ways to teach phonics well, however, it works best if there is a daily routine at the beginning of each reading lesson. Again, Louisa Moats provides recommendations from her LETRS Module 7 for what the routine should include:

- Set up a goal and purpose for the lesson.
- Review what has been taught, with the goal of accurate and fluent response.
- Identify and isolate phonemes: Listen for sounds, pronounce sounds, and use oral-motor cues to enhance speech sound awareness.
- Teach alphabet names, sequence, and letter formation, until they are known.
- Link the sound with its symbol: Introduce a new sound-symbol concept or association, following a planned progression.
- Apply phoneme-grapheme associations to reading real and nonsense words.
- Extend to word study: sorts, chains, maps, families.
- Spell by sound-symbol association; say word, segment sounds, spell, check, say word again.
- Recognize and spell irregular ('memory') words.
- Use speed drills as necessary to increase fluency in well-learned skills.
- Write words, phrases, and sentences to dictation.
- Read decodable sentences and books for fluency and meaning.

(Moats p. 19-20)

While interventions for BRS deficits tend to result in more rapid success with younger children, there is ample research to show that older students *can* learn these skills and become effective readers with the right instruction. It is never too late to teach someone how to read.

Progress Monitoring

Progress Monitoring should occur at the student's instructional level and should be specific to the skills they are being taught. However, periodic benchmark assessment should occur to compare student performance with that of peers.

Curriculum Based Measures (CBM) are well researched and can be used to monitor student's progress toward mastery of concepts. CBM were developed to permit frequent assessment of student growth on targeted skills. They also help to guide instructional practices and determine when changes in intensity, duration, or intervention are needed.

Tools that can be used to monitor progress in BRS include DIBELS, Aimsweb, Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP), and other Curriculum Based Measures (CBM).

Websites and references are provided at the conclusion of *Reading Comprehension* for all three areas of reading.

READING FLUENCY SKILLS

Definition and Implications

Reading fluency refers to the ability to read words accurately, quickly and effortlessly. Additionally, fluency skills include the ability to read with appropriate expression and intonation or prosody. Fluency therefore relies on three key skills: accuracy, rate, and prosody.

Reading fluency can and should vary, even for skilled readers, depending on the type of text (narrative, expository, poetry), familiarity with the vocabulary, background knowledge of the content, and the amount of practice the student has had with a particular text or type of text. Fluency comes from many successful opportunities to practice reading (Lambert, 2007).

Fluency is a necessary but not sufficient component for comprehension. It is, however, the bridge that links accurate word decoding to comprehension (Rasinski, 2004). The ability to read fluently allows readers to free up processing "space" so that they can comprehend, make connections to the text and acquire new vocabulary. Typically, students who cannot read fluently show a significant lag in reading comprehension skills as well.

Characteristics and Assessments

It is important to understand the difference between a basic reading skill (BRS) deficit and a reading fluency deficit. Students who struggle with fluency typically present in two distinct profiles. The first includes students who struggle with accuracy, rate and prosody; the second includes those who struggle with rate and prosody only. Students who struggle with reading accuracy should be assessed for possible BRS deficits. Typically, these students need instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, and therefore, the fluency interventions alone will not result in as great an improvement.

Students who only struggle with reading rate and prosody (how fast they read and if they read with expression) are those who truly have a fluency disability and will benefit most from fluency interventions. Typically these students will also struggle with any rapid automatic naming tasks such as identifying colors, letter names, numbers, names of familiar items and so on.

Fluency deficits may compound other reading deficits. Disfluent readers are exposed to significantly fewer words than those who are strong readers. If these skills are not remedied early, the cumulative lack of exposure to words becomes extremely challenging to reconcile. Students who are struggling to read are less motivated to read, reducing exposure to vocabulary, a critical element of reading comprehension. As a student progresses through school, a breakdown in fluency can make it extraordinarily difficult to keep up with the intensity and high volume of reading required for secondary and post-secondary education.

There are many assessments that can measure reading fluency. Again, it is important to attend to accuracy while conducting fluency measures. If a student struggles with accuracy, it is important to assess the underlying basic reading skill.

Some examples of assessments that measure fluency or that include fluency measures are: Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE); Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF); Gray Oral Reading Test-4 (rate and accuracy scaled score combined); Aimsweb progress monitoring measures; Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS); Qualitative Reading Inventory-4 (QRI-4); and Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI).

Intervention and Progress Monitoring

The earlier reading fluency intervention is provided, the more likely it is that students will respond. "Once serious fluency problems have developed, they can be resistant to remediation." (Spear-Swerling, 2006) Joe Torgesen and his colleagues have found that reading fluency is the hardest area to improve when intervention has not occurred early enough. This is not to say that fluency cannot be improved, rather that early identification and intervention are most likely to result in complete remediation.

It is important to note that when intervening for reading fluency, an overemphasis on rate alone can have a detrimental affect on overall reading ability. Direct, explicit instruction is required for students to improve all three components of fluency: accuracy, rate and prosody. Reading rate develops as a function of efficient decoding skills, opportunities for successful practice, and learning to read with expression (Rasinski, 2004, B).

A good fluency intervention program includes frequent opportunities to practice reading. According to the National Reading Panel, guided oral reading in small groups is sufficient for "typical" children, however, it should not be the sole technique used for teaching fluency to students with an identified disability in this area (NRP, 2000). Teachers should model reading fluency, students should work in pairs, and chunking or phrasing should be explicitly taught. Other strategies include simultaneous oral reading, reader's theater, and having students chart fluency rates as they improve.

J.J. Pikulski and D.J. Chard identified the following nine steps to building fluency in their article *Fluency: Bridge between decoding and reading comprehension:*

- Develop orthographic/phonological foundations (phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, phonics).
- Increase vocabulary and oral language skills.
- Effectively teach high-frequency vocabulary and provide adequate practice.
- Teach common word-parts and spelling patterns
- Effectively teach decoding skills and provide adequate practice.
- Provide students with appropriate text to assist in building fluent reading.
- Use guided, oral repeated reading strategies for struggling readers.
- Support, guide and encourage wide-reading.

- Implement appropriate screening and progress monitoring assessments. (Pikulski & Chard, 2005)

There are numerous tools available to monitor fluency. As listed above, Aimsweb, DIBELS and other Curriculum Based Measures are available with multiple forms that allow frequent administration. The key to progress monitoring fluency is to do the frequent monitoring at the student's instructional level (student can read accurately with 95-100% accuracy), but to benchmark at least 3 times per year at grade level. The progress monitoring will be sensitive enough to show growth and gain as a result of instruction, and the benchmarking will help keep the ultimate goal in mind.

Websites and references are provided at the conclusion of *Reading Comprehension* for all three areas of reading.

READING COMPREHENSION

Definition and Implications

A disability in the area of reading comprehension affects a student's ability to understand and make meaning of text. The RAND Reading Study Group defines reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (RRSG, 2002). Reading comprehension is a complicated set of processes that has been studied relatively little compared to the other areas of reading. In spite of the lack of research on reading comprehension *only* disabilities, there is consensus that all students with any type of reading disability benefit from direct, systematic, explicit instruction in reading comprehension skills and strategies.

It is most common for students to have basic reading skill (BRS) deficits combined with comprehension deficits, and/or fluency deficits. If this is the case, it is critical to instruct on the basic skill deficits *as well as* the comprehension deficits. Although it tends to be more unusual for a student to have a comprehension only deficit, this can occur. A reading comprehension deficit assumes that basic reading skills are intact and that the student can read fluently without errors. Students with a reading comprehension disability are typically not identified until the shift occurs from *learning to read,* to *reading to learn.* In most cases, this is around the third or fourth grade.

Characteristics

Reading comprehension encompasses a multi-faceted set of skills. First, and foremost, children with this deficit may have more basic struggles in the area of oral language including new vocabulary development. In *Overcoming Dyslexia,* Sally Shaywitz determined that a child learns about seven new words per day, which amounts to three thousand words per year (Shaywitz, 2003). If students struggle with acquiring oral language, this will certainly impair their ability to comprehend written language. Typically students who struggle in this area use smaller words and need significantly more exposure to new words. These students may also be challenged by how to form sentences. Their ability to understand what makes a complete sentence and what order to put words in may be impaired.

For students with breakdowns in language comprehension, phonological processing is often intact. Nevertheless, a student must be able to understand oral language before they can comprehend written language. If there are gaps in listening comprehension, it is likely there will be gaps in reading comprehension as well. While gaps in oral language are often a contributing factor to reading comprehension, not all students with reading comprehension disorders have oral language deficits.

Another area that can affect comprehension is working memory. The demands of reading new information, holding on to it, connecting it with previously learned information and applying the new learning can be overwhelming for some students. In addition, it is significantly more

difficult for students with working memory deficits to learn new vocabulary introduced in a novel setting than when it is directly taught.

There are also several other processes that must occur for a student to comprehend well. These include the ability to infer, monitor comprehension, and be sensitive to story structure. To make inferences the student must draw conclusions from text or "read between the lines." Comprehension monitoring is one of the most important and effective strategies used by effective readers. It requires the reader to "identify inconsistencies in the text, gaps in understanding, or the need to seek information from other parts of the text" (Catldo & Cornoldi, 1998). Students who are poor readers do not stop when they are confused by text and will not check for understanding during the reading process.

Finally, story structure sensitivity is an important contributor to reading comprehension. Each genre in literature has its own distinctive linguistic style and structure clues. Understanding the implications of story titles, paragraph beginnings and conclusions, bulleted points, and use of illustrations, for example, fosters stronger comprehension of text. Poor readers do not attend to these details.

Assessments

Unfortunately, there are not assessments for accurately measuring all aspects of reading comprehension. As was noted in the RAND Reading Study Group Report,

> Currently, widely used comprehension assessments are heavily focused on only a few tasks: reading for immediate recall, reading for the gist of the meaning, and reading to infer or disambiguate word meaning. Assessment procedures to evaluate learners' capacities to modify old or build new knowledge structures, to use information acquired while reading to solve a problem, to evaluate texts on particular criteria, or to become absorbed in reading and develop affective or aesthetic responses to text have occasionally been developed for particular research programs but have not influenced standard assessment practices. Because knowledge, application, and engagement are the crucial consequences of reading with comprehension, assessments that reflect all three are needed (RRSGR, 2002).

The easiest aspect of comprehension to measure is that of vocabulary. Two common assessments are the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and the Test of Word Knowledge (TOWK). A speech-language pathologist (SLP) should be consulted to rule out speech-language impairments if a deficit in expressive or receptive language is suspected. The SLP can also be very helpful in assessing any area related to vocabulary development.

Examples of assessments for passage comprehension (typically retell and inference) include the Diagnostic Assessment of Reading Second Addition (DAR-2), Qualitative Reading Inventory-IV (QRI-IV), Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA-2), and other Informal Reading Inventories. Passage reading fluency assessments that are related to reading comprehension include the Aimsweb Maze CBM or other CBM maze passages.

Intervention and Progress Monitoring

In spite of the fact that assessment tools are limited for identifying specific reading comprehension deficits, there is good news about reading comprehension interventions. Both specific skills instruction and strategy instruction have been shown to result in very positive outcomes.

As the name implies, specific skills instruction includes direct instruction on improving the skills required to be a successful reader and can include vocabulary instruction, instruction on how to find the main idea, fact finding and making inferences. Teachers should model and coach students in these skills. Instruction must be explicit.

Strategy instruction is "viewed as [instruction in] cognitive processes requiring decision making and critical thinking" (Clark & Uhry, 1995). This includes instruction on activating prior knowledge, comprehension monitoring, and understanding how to read for different purposes.

Regardless of the type of intervention, in order to be effective, comprehension instruction must be explicit, systematic, and provide multiple opportunities for practice. The National Reading Panel outlined the following seven categories of text comprehension instruction which have a solid, established scientific basis:

1) Comprehension monitoring, where readers learn how to be aware of their understanding of the material;
2) Cooperative learning, where students learn reading strategies together;
3) Use of graphic and semantic organizers (including story maps), where readers make graphic representations of the material to assist comprehension;
4) Question answering, where readers answer questions posed by the teacher and receive immediate feedback;
5) Question generation, where readers ask themselves questions about various aspects of the story;
6) Story structure, where students are taught to use the structure of the story as a means of helping them recall story content in order to answer questions about what they have read; and
7) Summarization, where readers are taught to integrate ideas and generalize them from the text information

(National Reading Panel, 2000)

While many of these strategies are effective in isolation, they are far more powerful and produce greater effect sizes when used in combination in a multiple-strategy method.

As with the area of assessment, there are significantly fewer progress monitoring tools available to measure the specific areas of comprehension. Aimsweb and Ed Checkup do have maze progress monitoring tools that measure overall comprehension.

Websites with information on research and instruction (Reading/Literacy):

The Access Center: http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php

Center on Instruction: http://www.centeroninstruction.org/

Colorado Basic Literacy Act: http://www.cde.state.co.us/action/CBLA/index.htm

What Works Clearinghouse: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

National Reading First Technical Assistance Centers:

- The University of Texas at Austin: Center for Reading and Language Arts http://www.texasreading.org/utcrla/
- Florida State University: Florida Center for Reading Research http://www.fcrr.org/
- University of Oregon: Center on Teaching and Learning http://reading.uoregon.edu/

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MATHEMATICAL CALCULATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Definition and Implications

The federal and state statutes identify two specific areas of math disability. Mathematical calculation includes the knowledge and retrieval of facts and the application of procedural knowledge in calculation. Mathematical problem solving involves using mathematical computation skills, language, reasoning, reading, and visual-spatial skills in solving problems; essentially it is applying mathematical knowledge at the conceptual level.

Math disabilities have not been researched as extensively as reading disabilities. In a recent analysis, it was approximated that between 1996 and 2005, reading studies outnumbered mathematical studies by a ratio of 14:1 (Berch & Mazzocco, 2007). As a result, defining a math disability is somewhat challenging. Terms that have been associated with math disabilities include "developmental arithmetic disorder," "dyscalculia," and "specific mathematic disability." (Fletcher et al., 2007)

The National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) divides math into two categories: content strands and mathematical processes.

The content strands include: 1) number and operations, 2) algebra, 3) geometry, 4) measurement, and 5) data analysis and probability (NCTM, 2000). These areas can be more simply thought of as the *what* of mathematical learning. Because of the diversity of skills required for these 5 areas, it is difficult to clearly define a construct or set of characteristics for students with a math disability (Berch & Mazzocco, 2007).

The area of mathematical processes in NCTM includes: 1) problem solving, 2) reasoning and proof, 3) connections, 4) communication, and 5) representation. These more closely align with mathematical problem solving disabilities and can be thought of as the *doing* of mathematics.

Typically, students with a mathematical calculation disability struggle in the area *number and operations* of the content strand. Students with a mathematical problem solving disability will often have problems within the category of mathematical processes. There is considerably more research available in the area of mathematical calculation than in the area of mathematical problem solving.

There is some evidence suggesting two subtypes of students who have disabilities in mathematics. One is a subset of children with a *math only* disability, the other has both *math and reading* disabilities. It is known that when reading and math deficits co-exist, both areas tend to be more severely impaired than when occurring in isolation.

In spite of the fact that relatively little research has been done in the area of math in general, a disability can have significant implications for students. "Mathematics, like literacy, is a primary method of communicating thoughts and ideas in our world. ...Without an appropriate

level of competency in mathematics, students will find it difficult to manage many important aspects of their lives such as: budgeting; purchasing; practicing household tasks involving measurement including cooking and dispensing cleaning supplies, pesticides and medication; planning for retirement; and so forth" (Allsopp, Kyger & Lovin, 2007). Poor comprehension and achievement in mathematics can also limit students' career opportunities.

Characteristics and Assessment

The most commonly identified deficit in the area of mathematical calculation involves *number sense and operations*. Characteristics of students who have difficulties in calculation can include an inability to consistently identify written numbers and poor association of written numbers with the concrete representation of a quantity (number sense). Operations include the ability to understand calculations such as adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. This involves not only the ability to follow the procedures but to understand the meaning of the operations.

Developmentally, in most areas of mathematics, learning begins by using concrete materials, then moving to representational or semi-concrete drawings, and finally proceeding to abstract levels that use written symbols to represent mathematical constructs (Allsopp, Kyger & Lovin, 2007). Therefore, students with poor number sense may have the ability to add by counting on their fingers, but may not have moved to a more abstract and fluent stage of having memorized their math facts. Conversely, a student who has memorized their math facts may not understand operations at the conceptual level and this gap can impede future success in mathematics, as well. Teachers should assess for both the procedural and conceptual level of understanding in all areas.

Students with mathematical problem solving disabilities may have difficulties that include the inability to: identify important information; filter out unimportant information; and determine necessary steps in problem solving. An additional area of weakness can include metacognition or the inability to monitor one's own learning. Students with poor metacognition may not be able to evaluate their own work or implement strategies needed. Students may also have a passive approach to problem solving. For these students, math is a just a series of rote actions with no purpose other than to attain a right or wrong answer. They do not easily activate previously learned strategies or knowledge. Students with mathematical problem solving disabilities tend to use simple strategies such as counting on fingers when adding or counting each number rather than "counting up" (starting with the bigger number and counting from there) or retrieving memorized math facts.

Diagnostic mathematical assessments include both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced measures. Error analyses and student interviewing may also be very informative in determining specific areas of deficit and mastery (Fleishman & Manheimer, 1997). Curriculum-based measures are particularly helpful for monitoring progress. Textbooks may provide assessments that can provide useful information, as well.

Examples of norm-referenced mathematical diagnostic assessments are: KeyMath3 which assesses the understanding and application of critical math concepts and skills from counting

through algebraic expressions; Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test, 4th ed. which provides both a screening assessment and a full diagnostic test; and Early Math Diagnostic Assessment (EMDA) which is designed to screen/assess students PreK through grade 3.

Of course, numerous broad achievement test batteries sample components of mathematics (often computation and reasoning/application/problem solving) in conjunction with other skill areas. Common examples are the Wide Range Achievement Battery, 4th ed. (WRAT IV) and the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III (WJ-III).

Progress Monitoring

Curriculum-based measures (CBM) for math include *early numeracy, computation,* and *concepts and applications,* with most of the research/technical work being done with computation (*The ABCs of CBM,* Hosp, Hosp, and Howell, 2007). Estimation measures are also now being developed. *Early numeracy* measures include missing numbers, number identification, oral counting, and quantity discrimination. *Computation* measures usually include specific skills within the curriculum such as multiplication facts. *Concepts and applications* taps various math skills related to specific curricula. Scoring of CBM for Math typically involves a determination of correct digits (CD) rather than correct problems. Another similar measure is the Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP) which provides a sampling of a year's curriculum and thus it differs for each grade level (Fuchs, Hamlett, & Fuchs, 1990, 1994, Pro-Ed).

For the secondary level, CBMs addressing *concepts and applications* tap mathematical skills taught in the upper grades, such as measurement, time, and graphical interpretation. *Maths Mate* is another tool that contains curriculum-based measures in all areas of math for grade levels 5-10. It consists of worksheets to be completed weekly followed by a test at the end of each month.

Foegen (2006) cites several progress-monitoring options for general mathematics at the middle school level. These include estimation, facts, and concepts-based measures. High school content areas such as algebra are being studied and tools developed. Currently, there are some measures for algebra basic skills, foundations, and content analysis (Foegen, 2006). Curriculum-embedded progress monitoring would also be appropriate for secondary students.

Tools are available from several publishers including AIMSweb, AAIMS (Algebra Assessment and Instruction – Meeting Standards), and Yearly Progress Pro (McGraw-Hill).

Interventions

Research on effective math interventions is emerging, but lags behind that found in the reading area (Fletcher et al., 2007). Some general research-based practices relating to math instruction have been identified below.

CRA is an intervention for mathematics instruction that research suggests can enhance the mathematics performance of students with learning disabilities. (See *The Access Center:* www.k8accesscenter.org which is endorsed by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs.)

The CRA instructional sequence consists of three stages: concrete, representation, and abstract:

- *Concrete.* In the concrete stage, the teacher begins instruction by modeling each mathematical concept with concrete materials (e.g., red and yellow chips, cubes, base-ten blocks, pattern blocks, fraction bars, and geometric figures).
- *Representational.* In this stage, the teacher transforms the concrete model into a representational (semiconcrete) level, which may involve drawing pictures; using circles, dots, and tallies; or using stamps to imprint pictures for counting.
- *Abstract.* At this stage, the teacher models the mathematics concept at a symbolic level, using only numbers, notation, and mathematical symbols to represent the number of circles or groups of circles. The teacher uses operation symbols (+, –, ×, ÷) to indicate addition, multiplication, or division.

The CRA instructional strategy of progressing from concrete to representational to abstract is cited as being effective (Fleischner and Manheimer, 1997). This practice involves teaching students first at the concrete level, for example, learning that multiplication is just repeated addition using objects such as toothpicks or blocks. From the concrete, students can then start to generalize and apply this knowledge to representations of concrete items such as images of a yard with a fence for learning how to find area. Using the representation, students can identify how many squares fill the space. Finally, students can then move into abstract conceptual knowledge application in order to become more fluent. Fluency in math includes both accuracy and rate with the ultimate goal being able to apply mathematical understandings in relevant, authentic ways. An example is applying the formula for area (length x width) to determine how much tile is needed for a bathroom floor. In this example, memorized formulas as well as math facts are abstract concepts, but highly valuable in terms of building fluency toward solving the problem. If a student doesn't understand the practical application of why the formulas work the way they do, they are less likely to retain the information or generalize it.

Practice is a critical instructional component for supporting struggling learners. In this case, ample practice opportunity does not mean skill drills. While many teachers provide students with timed worksheets for practicing day after day, this is in fact negatively correlated with improving outcomes. Drill practice creates a lack of interest in students and typically results in frustration and anxiety. (Allsopp, Kyger and Lovin, 2007, p. 146)

Practice opportunities should be varied, motivational and whenever possible should occur in authentic contexts. For example, rather than doing paper and pencil activities around measuring perimeter and area, students can measure tiles on a floor or the area of a bulletin board, window or desk-top. Combining these activities with a specific purpose, for example, how to rearrange the classroom or design a new bulletin board, enhances the authenticity and meaning of these activities. It also shows students how mathematical concepts can be generalized to other life activities.

The following are important to remember when planning practice for struggling learners (Allsopp, Kyger and Lovin, 2007, p. 147):

1. Practice activities involve mathematics concepts and skills with which students have already demonstrated initial understanding.
2. Practice activities provide students with multiple opportunities to respond using the target mathematics concept or skill.
3. Practice activities match students' levels of understanding (e.g., concrete, representational, or abstract)
4. Practice activities are designed to complement students' unique learning characteristics so that the students can best demonstrate their understanding. Students' responses (e.g. writing, speaking, drawing) are not significantly affected by their disability.
5. The teacher provides directions and models how to perform the task required by the practice activity before the students begin.
6. The teacher continually monitors students as they practice, providing corrective feedback and positive reinforcement for accuracy and effort.
7. Practice activities include a process for measuring individual student performance.
8. Subsequent instructional planning is based on the degree to which students demonstrate mastery of the concept or skill being practiced.

Other research-based strategies that have been demonstrated to improve mathematical outcomes for students are identified below:

- *Structured Language Experiences*: Students are encouraged to use their own language to describe their mathematical understandings. This practice helps students develop and improve metacognition (important to problem solving) through talking, writing, drawing or performing.
- *Structured Cooperative Learning Groups* or *Peer Tutoring*: For struggling learners, the activities should be highly structured with clearly defined tasks.
- *Progress Monitoring Students' Mathematical Understandings*: Progress monitoring should be used to: provide students with immediate, tangible feedback about their learning; provide teachers with data for making instructional decisions; and, help students with setting goals and enhancing metacognition. Progress monitoring data should also be used to communicate with parents regarding their child's progress.
- *Maintenance of Mastered Concepts and Skills*: Because memory is sometimes an area of difficulty for students with math disabilities, it is important to periodically review previously learned concepts and skills. An effective practice is to provide 5-10 minutes of daily "maintenance" time that could be done as a warm-up activity at the start of each class period.

(Allsopp, Kyger and Lovin, 2007)

Websites with information on research and instruction in math:
The Access Center: http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php
Center on Instruction: http://www.centeroninstruction.org/
Colorado Math: http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradomath/index.htm
National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM): http://www.nctm.org/
What Works Clearinghouse: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

References (Mathematics):

Allsopp, D.H., Kyger, M.M., & Lovin, L.H. (2007). *Teaching Mathematics Meaningfully*. Paul H. Brookes.

Berch, D.B. & Mazzocco, M.M.M. (2007). *Why Is Math So Hard for Some Children?* Paul H. Brookes.

Fletcher, J. M., Lyon, G. R., Fuchs, L. S., & Barnes, M. A. (2007). *Learning disabilities: From Identification to Intervention*. New York: Guilford Press.

Fleischner, J.E., & Manheimer, M.A. *Math Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities: Myths and Realities*. School Psychology Review, 1997, 26:3, 397-413.

Foegen, A. (2006). Monitoring student progress in algebra. Presentation at the annual Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network conference: University Park, PA.

Hosp, M.K., Hosp, J.L. & Howell, K.W. (2007). *The ABCs of CBM: A Practical Guide to Curriculum-Based Measurement*. New York/London: Guilford Press.

anxiety, lack of motivation, obsessive compulsive disorder, or difficulties in reading or writing) through focused interventions. Instead of immediately evaluating for special education, the implementation of interventions that make both instructional and diagnostic sense should be initiated. This model allows for those interventions to be identified and implemented immediately rather than having school personnel spend their time administering assessments that may not be helpful in guiding instruction.

The major advantage to providing interventions at the earliest indication of difficulty is that twice-exceptional students often respond very quickly to the appropriate interventions and, thus, can greatly benefit from both early screening of specific skills or content and the provision of targeted interventions.

As indicated in the Colorado definition of "twice-exceptional," 504 Accommodation Plans are appropriate for many twice-exceptional students. They may have a need for accommodations (e.g. extended time or use of assistive technology) within their learning environment to be successful. A student need not be determined eligible for special education – 504 Accommodation Plans can serve to identify specific accommodations that will benefit them throughout their schooling.

For those students formally identified within their district as gifted and talented, a plan should be written. This GT plan (e.g., Advanced Learning Plan) should align with other learning plans in the building so that one comprehensive learning plan can be developed for the child.

G/T and SLD Determination/Eligibility:
Eligibility for special education services in the category of SLD will still be appropriate for some students whose skills are significantly low (in one or more areas of SLD) as compared to grade or age-level benchmarks and who are not sufficiently responding to specific interventions through the RtI process. It is likely that fewer students will be made eligible but, as with any student with learning difficulties, they will have had instructional opportunities to address/remediate areas of difficulty without the necessity of a "label."

With the implementation of the newly revised criteria, the data gathered through interventions over time will contribute to a body of evidence that may illustrate the need for ongoing and intensive support. Because of the specificity of the criteria and the opportunity for diagnostic/prescriptive assessment and intervention throughout the process, twice-exceptional students who are found to be eligible for special education will be more appropriately identified. Those who are not found eligible will have had the opportunity to receive intervention and may be determined to be appropriately served through a 504 Accommodation Plan.

<u>Speech-Language Impairment vs. SLD Determination</u>
The sequence and process of normal language and speech development provide the framework for determining if a student exhibits a listening comprehension and/or oral language disorder, delay or difference. In younger children, birth through preschool, an oral language and/or

listening comprehension deficit may more appropriately lead to a determination of Speech-Language Impairment (SLI) as the primary disability. However, as the student enters the early primary grades many of these oral language and listening comprehension deficits begin to manifest themselves as learning disabilities impacting academic achievement and not as clearly categorized as a communication disability. The Speech-Language Communication Rating Scale provides a consistent method of describing overall communication functioning. The Communication Rating Scale helps to substantiate eligibility or dismissal criteria for special education in the category of SLI.

Learning disabilities are a heterogeneous group of disorders composed of various clinical subgroups. The speech pathologist focus is with those students that exhibit learning deficits as manifested by continuous problems in the acquisition and development of oral language and listening comprehension. The speech-language pathologist should be the one to assess and determine deficits in regards to oral language and/or listening comprehension. The speech-language pathologist must be able to provide both direct and consultative services by collaborating with the classroom teacher in regards to language programs for children identified with learning disabilities. They should be participating in analyzing the language of the curriculum and conduct language intervention services for students where appropriate.

English Language Learners & RtI

[See also Section 4 where limited English proficiency is addressed as a possible "exclusionary factor" for SLD determination.]

The RtI process with English language learners requires special considerations. Specific, recommended best practices in RtI implementation, as well as eligibility consideration, with English language learners are as follows (adapted from Cherry Creek Schools, 2005):

- In the general classroom, teacher planning and curriculum are aligned with ELD (English Language Development) standards and grade level content standards.
- The selection of interventions must be based on knowledge in culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction.
- A professional who is knowledgeable about stages of language acquisition and the student's cultural background must participate in the RtI and eligibility process.
- The use of an interpreter should be considered when discussing strategies, supports, and/or special education eligibility with parents.
- A thorough medical and social/cultural history is a crucial data source in decision-making and should be obtained early in the process.
- English language learners should be compared with other English language learners similar in background, age, and amount of exposure to English acquisition services and NOT be compared to native English speakers in making initial RtI decisions and in assessing progress.
- Data for English language learners should always include the home language survey, informal language proficiency scores, and CELA assessments, when available.

- English language learners move through stages of language acquisition: these should always be considered when planning interventions and when analyzing progress monitoring data to determine intervention effectiveness. (See Appendix for information about *Stages of Language Acquisition.*)
- ELA programs should not be considered a scientific, research-based intervention in and of themselves; specific instruction/interventions within these programs may be considered as such. (See Appendix for an *Intervention Analysis* tool.)
- Any focused, diagnostic assessments must be sensitive to the cultural and linguistic background of the students and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate results. Scores must always be interpreted with caution.
- A specific learning disability determination should not occur unless it can be demonstrated that the difficulties producing the problems are pervasive across languages.

Appendix B

EXCLUSIONARY FACTORS WORKSHEET

Specific Learning Disability

Mark each exclusionary factor. Each factor must be ruled out as the PRIMARY FACTOR for the student's inability to progress in the general education curriculum.	**Yes**	**No**
1. Lack of instruction in essential components of reading and math		
Does information obtained during assessment indicate lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math as the determinant factor in this student's inability to progress in the general education curriculum? Report Page ____		
2. Limited English Proficiency		
Answer the following questions		
• Is there a language other than English spoken by this student?		
• Is there a language other than English spoken by the student's home?		
• Are there any specific dialect or cultural influences that would affect the student's ability to speak or understand English?		
Is limited English proficiency the primary reason for the student's deficit scores? Rpt. Page_____		
3. Cognitive Impairment		
Document all information gathered in assessment that would exclude cognitive impairment as the determinant factor for this student's academic deficits.		
• Do you have evidence, through interviews, observations and/or testing that the student has a cognitive impairment? Report Page ____		
4. Emotional Impairment		
Document all information gathered in assessment that would exclude emotional impairment as the determinant factor for this student's academic deficits.		
• Does the student exhibit emotional difficulties that interfere with learning?		
• Does the student have a medical history and/or school history of emotional difficulties?		
Is emotional disturbance the primary reason for the student's deficit scores? Rpt. Page_____		
5. Vision, Hearing, or Motor Impairments		
Document all information gathered in assessment that would exclude vision, hearing, or motor impairments as the determinant factor for this student's academic deficits.		
• Do vision screening results indicate concern?		
• Do hearing screening results indicate concern?		
• Does the student have a history of significantly delayed motor development?		
Is visual, hearing or motor disability the primary reason for the student's deficit scores? Rpt. Pg. ___		
6. Environmental, Cultural, or Economic Disadvantage		
Document all information gathered in assessment that would exclude environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage as the determinant factor for this student's academic deficits.		
a. Lack of Opportunity		
• Does the assessment data indicate that lack of opportunity to learn due to environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage is not the cause of the student's academic deficits.		
b. Motivational Factors		
• Does the student attempt classroom assignments and/or homework?		
• If no, is the student's performance on grade level during classroom activities?		
• Are group achievement scores consistent with the student's grades?		
• Does information gathered indicate lack of motivation is the determinant factor?		
c. Situational Trauma		
• Has the student's academic performance fallen dramatically within the last 6-12 months?		
• Is there knowledge of any situations within the student's family that would contribute to a drop in academic performance?		
• Does information gathered indicate situational trauma is the determinant factor?		
d. Attendance		
• Does the student have a high absentee rate either due to illness, disciplinary issues or other factors?		
• Does information gathered indicate that absences are the determinant factor?		
Are environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage the primary reason for the student's academic deficits? Report page ____		

Appendix C

Worksheet to Determine Appropriate Instruction

	Elements of Instruction	Evidence of Effectiveness	Other Evidence of Effectiveness
What	Documented curriculum	School district has a written curriculum that is aligned with State content expectations.	At least 80% of all of the school district's students within a grade are meeting district or state standards after being instructed with the district's core instructional program. At least 80% of students using an intervention within the school have showed improved progress. Observations of interventions during the evaluation period indicate that they are being implemented with fidelity.
	Core/intervention curriculum materials	Materials systematically teach and review skills and have scientific-research evidence of effectiveness. (See Worksheet for Evaluating Explicit Instruction and Systematic Curriculum)	
	Reading	Instruction emphasizes the following big ideas: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.	
	Math	Instruction emphasizes the following big ideas: conceptual understanding, computational and procedural fluency, fact fluency and problem solving skills.	
	Writing	Instruction emphasizes the following areas: basic mechanics and conventions, the content aspects of writing that convey meaning, and higher-level cognitive processes involved in planning and revising.	
	Oral Expression	Instruction emphasizes the use of syntax, semantics and morphology.	
	Listening Comprehension	Instruction emphasizes the understanding of syntax, semantics and morphology.	
Who	Teacher Qualifications	Teacher meets NCLB highly qualified standards and has been trained to use the curriculum materials.	
How	Instructional techniques/strategies	When teaching new skills, teacher uses explicit instructional techniques. (See Worksheet for Evaluating Explicit Instruction and Systematic Curriculum)	
	Differentiated/tiered instruction	Students are provided with the appropriate intensity of instruction to meet their individual needs. All students receive core instruction, some students receive targeted, strategic instruction, a few students receive targeted intensive instruction.	
	Fidelity of instructional implementation	There is documentation that the core and intervention programs are implemented with fidelity. (See Program/Instruction Fidelity Checklist)	
	Assessments / Use of data	School screens all students three times a year to assess their progress. Students receiving strategic interventions are assessed weekly/monthly with formative assessments (e.g., progress monitoring tests) and students receiving intensive interventions (through general or special education) are assessed weekly. Schools regularly use assessment data to evaluate their instructional programs and modify accordingly.	

Fidelity Checklist
Tier I

Student: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Grade: _____ **Age:**_____ **School:** _____

Scientific, research-based core curriculum instruction and behavioral supports in general education have been implemented with fidelity for this student.

___Yes ___ No **Evidence of Quality Tier I Core Level Standards-Based Learning**

The student is placed in a general education classroom where a highly qualified teacher is providing appropriate curriculum and instructional strategies.

If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

___Yes ___ No **Fidelity of Instruction**

The curriculum was implemented with fidelity for this student.

If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

___Yes___ No **Differentiation of Instruction**

Instruction is differentiated to include appropriate accommodations and scaffolds to meet the needs of the student.

If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

___Yes ___ No **Repeated Measures of Student Performance**

Data for universal benchmark screening was collected at least three times a year and compared to grade-level peers in the district. The student scores in the lowest 25th percentile of his/her peer group based on this data.

If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

Administrator/Designee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Fidelity Checklist
Tier II

Student: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Grade: _____ **Age:**_____ **School:** _____

Tier II targeted supplementary instruction was provided to this student as planned.

____Yes ____ No **Evidence of Tier II Strategic Needs-Based Learning**
The student has received targeted scientific, research-based interventions for 4 - 9 weeks.
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

____Yes ____ No **Fidelity of Intervention**
The intervention(s) was (were) implemented with fidelity for this student (including core curriculum, supplemental curriculum, and strategies).
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

____Yes ____ No **Progress Monitoring Data**
The student's progress was monitored with repeated measures of the student performance, which was reported to parents. Assessment data was compared to peers, and the student's performance is less than the 15th percentile and/or less than 67% of bench mark proficiency.
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

____Yes ____ No **Data-Based Decision Making.**
The student's individualized or small-group interventions were reviewed, revised, and/or discontinued based on the student's performance and progress with 2 – 5 data points. Performance less than 25th percentile.
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

Administrator/Designee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Fidelity Checklist
Tier III

Student: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Grade: _____ **Age:**_____ **School:** _____

Tier III direct, targeted, and intensive instruction was provided to the student with fidelity.

___Yes ___ No **Evidence of Tier III Intensive Needs-Based Learning**
The student has received targeted intensive, scientific, research-based interventions for 12-18 weeks.
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

___Yes___ No **Fidelity of Intervention**
The intervention(s) was (were) implemented with fidelity for this student (including core curriculum, supplemental curriculum, and strategies).
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

___Yes ___ No **Progress Monitoring Data**
The student's progress was monitored with repeated measures of the student performance, which was reported to parents. Assessment data was compared to peers, and the student's scores are below the 10^{th} percentile or in the lowest 67% of the grade level peer group.
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

___Yes ___ No **Data-Based Decision Making**
The student's individualized or small-group interventions were reviewed, revised, and/or discontinued based on the student's performance and progress with at least 12 weekly probes.
If no, describe actions to improve fidelity:

Administrator/Designee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix D

Glossary of Terms & Key Concepts

Assessment Types

There are four major types of assessment used to drive instructional decisions. They are 1) screening; 2) progress monitoring; 3) diagnostic/prescriptive; and 4) outcome.

Body of Evidence

A body of evidence is a collection of information about student progress and learning. This information incorporates data from multiple sources and multiple assessment tools/methods. No single data point is adequate for a body of evidence. The convergence or triangulation of data guides a team of parents and professionals in making educational decisions such as: prescribing/developing interventions, assessing progress, and possibly determining disability status or access to other eligibility-driven services.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)

A very effective assessment available for monitoring student progress on a specific skill is Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM). CBM is an alternative to other procedures that may be too costly, time consuming, disruptive to instruction, or ineffective for identifying progress frequently. CBM is comprised of standard directions, materials, scoring rules, and is a timed assessment. CBM is characterized by several attributes:

1. Alignment – students are tested on the curriculum being taught.
2. Technically adequate – CBM has established reliability and validity.
3. Criterion-referenced – CBM is used to determine if students can demonstrate their knowledge by reaching specified performance levels on certain tasks.
4. Standard procedures are used to administer CBM.
5. Performance sampling – CBM employs direct, low-inference measures through which correct and incorrect student behaviors, on clearly defined tasks, are counted within a set time interval.
6. Decision rules are in place to provide those who use the data with information about what it means when students score at different levels of performance or illustrate different rates of progress on the measures over time.
7. Repeated Measurement – CBM can be used over time and to identify insufficient progress as well as level of performance.
8. Efficient – Training is minimal and measures can be given quickly.
9. Summarized efficiently – a variety of techniques are available that make data accessible to classroom teachers and students.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

The process of planning for student success (both academic and behavioral) through the use of ongoing progress monitoring and analysis of its data

Duration

For the purposes of documenting response to intervention, duration refers to the length

(number of minutes) of a session multiplied by the number of sessions per school year. "Sufficient duration" is dependent on a number of factors including the program or strategy being used, the age of the student, and the severity of the deficit involved. Some programs offer guidelines or recommendations for duration.

Evidence-Based Instruction/Interventions
See research-based instruction/intervention/practice

Family-School Partnerships
Parents and school staff collaborate to ensure student success. Parents and students (as appropriate) are included in data collection and decision-making through participation in the RTI/Problem-Solving Process. The collaboration includes developing effective intervention for both school and home.

Fidelity
Fidelity of intervention implementation includes two key factors that must align with the intervention's evidence/research base. The first, integrity, refers to the degree to which an intervention is implemented (taught) as intended. The second factor, sufficiency, refers to the intervention being implemented for an adequate amount of time (minutes per week and overall duration) to achieve desired results.

Flexible Grouping
Groups are formed according to specific student needs that arise. Prescriptive, focused, research-based interventions are provided to these groups by any trained or skilled staff member, regardless of special or general education categorization of the students or the educator's special or general education job description. These groups are not permanent – students are moved in and out of groups according to need.

Focused Assessment
Formal and informal assessment targeted to specifically plan program service delivery and/or appropriate interventions for student success.

Frequency
Frequency of an intervention (e.g., number of times per week) is an important element of a student's prescribed intervention and should be monitored as an element of implementation fidelity.

Gap Analysis
Gap analysis is a method of measuring the difference between the student's current level of performance and benchmark/targeted expectations. It is also used to determine progress of learning over time.

Intensity

The adjustment of duration, length and teacher-to-student ratio to a child's academic or behavioral intervention – may also refer to narrowing the focus of the intervention.

Intervention
The systematic and explicit instruction provided to accelerate growth in an area of identified need. Interventions are provided by both special and general educators (based on expertise rather than titles). They are designed to improve performance relative to a specific, measurable goal. Interventions are based on valid information about current performance, realistic implementation, and include ongoing student progress monitoring.

Multi-Tiered Model
The multi-tiered intervention model provides instruction/intervention at differing levels of intensity – Tier I (universal), Tier II (targeted) and Tier III (intensive) –according to student need and response to intervention. Essential to the model is ongoing progress monitoring and focused assessment.

Problem-Solving Process
The problem-solving process is an interdisciplinary, collaborative team process which is based on a multi-tiered model and includes data-driven decision making, parent-school partnerships, progress monitoring, focused assessment, flexible service delivery, and prescriptive, research-based interventions.

Problem-Solving Team
A collaborative team (which includes parents, general and special educators) that meets to evaluate student data and to plan and monitor prescribed interventions.

Progress Monitoring
Progress Monitoring is the ongoing process that involves collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress toward specific skill attainment or general outcomes. The data generated is essential to making instructional decisions. Monitoring student progress is an effective way to determine if the instruction being delivered is meeting the needs of the student.

Research-based Instruction/Intervention/Practice
A *research-based* instructional practice or intervention is one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. In the absence of definitive evidence, the instruction/ intervention must be considered "best practice" based on available research and professional literature.

Screening
Refers to a quick checklist, survey, or probe that measures a student's development or skills and that is used to determine if further evaluation is needed. Universal screening measures are administered to all students in a class or grade level.

Specific, Measurable Outcome

The statement of a single, specific desired result that is expected from implementation of an intervention. To be measurable, the outcome should be expressed in observable and quantifiable terms (e.g., Johnny will demonstrate mastery of grade-level basic math calculation skills as measured by a score of 85% or better on the end-of-the-unit test on numerical operations).

Standard Protocol Interventions

A standard protocol intervention refers to the implementation of a specific intervention that is supported by research to be effective with students with similar needs/deficits. There are usually well defined entry criteria and clear progress monitoring tools. A standard protocol intervention is often chosen as an initial intervention for struggling students with similar problems. The standard protocol can be implemented in any tier, but is most commonly applied at the universal or targeted levels. When students are unresponsive to the intervention trial, more intensive or individually designed interventions might be necessary.

Functional assessment – it is the process for collecting meaningful, relevant information about student problems. These problems may have to do with skills deficits or performance deficits. They may be related to academic and/or non-academic behaviors. The purpose of data collection is to answer specific questions about student functioning in a particular setting. The information is used to plan effective individualized interventions; to make specific educational decisions, and to write appropriate goals. ***Excerpt from www.fasp.org***

Motivational Factors – it is the process for determining "can't do" versus "won't do". Children's perceptions of their own ability (self-efficacy) related to outcome and beliefs; external locus of control, attributions that are internal, stable and global. Learned helplessness may set in after the age of ten with continued failures. Teacher variables: behavior, planning of instruction to guarantee high to moderate rates of success. Parents variables: accepting the problems, encouragement of ability and control, building confidence in areas of strength. ***Excerpts from article***

Formative Assessment – it is the process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. The key points are: this is a process and not a particular test. This is used by both teachers and students. This takes place during instruction. This provides assessment-based feedback to students and teachers. The function is to help teachers and students make adjustments that will improve students' achievement of intended curricular aims. ***Excerpt from ASCD document***

Appendix E

Worksheet for Charting Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses

	Academic achievement with respect to grade-level expectations						Academic achievement with respect to age-level expectations			Classroom performance with respect to grade-level expectations												Cognitive Abilities			
	Progress monitoring, CBM screening, or criterion referenced assessments			MEAP			Norm-referenced achievement tests			Curriculum assessments			Grades			Teacher Reports			Classroom Observation			IQ Assessment			
Basic Reading	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	Verbal Reasoning	S	N	W
Reading Fluency	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	Perceptual Reasoning	S	N	W
Reading Comp.	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	Working Memory	S	N	W
Math Calc.	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	Processing Speed	S	N	W
Math Prob. Solving	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	Other _____	S	N	W
Written Expression	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	Other _____	S	N	W
Oral Expression	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	
Listening Comp.	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	S	N	W	

S = Strength N = Neither W = Weakness

Area(s) of Strength (at least 3 'S' for each area)

Area(s) of Weakness (at least 4 'W' for each area. Must include at least 1 individually administered academic achievement assessment)

Appendix F

Suggested Guidelines for Determining Strengths and Weaknesses

Assessment Type	Strength	Weaknesses
Benchmark Screening/CBM	At 'benchmark' level or above grade-level median score if using local norms.	At 'at-risk' level or below 10%ile if using local norms.
Progress monitoring	Meeting/exceeding aimline	Falling below aimline for at least 4 consecutive weeks on most recent tests.
Criterion-referenced assessment	Skills at or above grade level	Skills well below grade level
MEAP	Level 1 or 2	Level 3 or 4
Norm-referenced tests (Achievement, IQ)	Percentile rank ≥ 30	Percentile rank ≤ 9
Curriculum assessments	Scores ≥ 80%	Scores ≤ 70%
Grades	A / B or 'meets/exceeds' expectations	D / E or 'does not meet' expectations
Teacher report	Based upon professional judgment of teacher in comparing student to others in classroom.	Based upon professional judgment of teacher in comparing student to others in classroom.
Observations- Academic	Student demonstrates average understanding of academic content in comparison to other students in classroom.	Student demonstrates that s/he does not understand the academic content.
Observations/Interview/Scales-Functional	Student demonstrates typical functional skills in comparison to other students the same age or in the same grade. Percentile rank on scale ≥ 30.	Most of the student's functional skills appear to be well below average in comparison to other students the same age or in the same grade. Percentile rank on scale ≤ 9.

Assessment Type	Examples:
Benchmark screening/CBM	DIBELS, AIMSweb, DRA, STAR, Jerry Johns
Progress monitoring	DIBELS, AIMSweb Yearly Progress Pro, EdCheckup
Criterion-referenced assessments	Brigance
Norm-referenced achievement tests	WRMT-2/NU, Key Math 3, KTEA-2, PIAT-2/NU, WIAT-2, WJ-3/NU, DAB-3, OWLS, GORT-4, TERA-3, TEMA-3, TOWL-4, TOLD:P-4, TOLD:I-4; TSW-4, CASL, CELF-4
IQ tests	WISC-4, WAIS-4, KABC-2, KAIT-2, CTONI-2, KBIT-2, WASI
Curriculum assessments aligned with CE's and classroom instruction	District assessments, Classroom assessments
Adaptive/functional behavior scales	Adaptive Behavior Scales-2, Adaptive Behavior Inventory, AAMR, Adaptive Behavior Scale-School, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales-2

Appendix G

Suggested Questions for Parent Input for Initial Evaluation

Student's Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Method of Interview (Check one): ☐ Personal Interview ☐ Telephone ☐ Written
Person collected input: _____ Date: _____

1. What are some of your child's strengths, interests and/or favorite activities?

_____

_____

2. What does s/he like best about school? _____

least? _____

3. If your child has homework, does s/he complete it without help? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If no, what type of help is given?

_____

4. What goals do you have for your child for this school year? For older students, long range goals/plans?

_____

5. Do you have any concerns about your child's progress? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what are they when did you first notice these concerns?

_____

_____

6. Have you seen any recent changes in your child's behavior or school performance? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain:

_____

7. Medical information:
Vision concerns? _____
Wears glasses? _____
Hearing concerns? _____
Wears hearing aid(s)? _____
Any other medical/health concerns?

_____
Medical history: accidents, injuries, surgeries? _____
Taking medication (Type, reason, side effects)?

_____
Any psychological (thinking/emotional) concerns?

_____

8. Has your child had a psychological or education evaluation from outside of the school? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, who did it, when was it done, and what were the results?

_____

_____

9. Has your child had additional community services in the last 3 years (tutoring, counseling, residential care)?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

_____

10. Home life:

With whom does your child live at home? _____

What language is spoken at home? _____

How well does your child sleep at night? _____

Length of time sleeping? _____

Does your child have a good appetite? _____

Eats a variety of foods? _____

11. Have there been any significant changes in your home or family relationships recently?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

_____

12. Optional Functional Questions – Younger students

a. Communication skills at home: Understands directions? Communicates needs? Converses?

_____

b. Types of chores or responsibilities at home?

_____

c. Self care skills: (Bathing, brushing teeth, toileting, etc.)

_____

d. Behavior in the community: (Behavior in public places, can get to places nearby, orders meals, etc.)

_____

e. Follows safety rules at home and in the community (walking, riding bike).

_____

f. Leisure: Shares, has friends

_____

Optional Functional Questions – Older students

a. Communication skills at home: Understands directions? Communicates needs? Converses?

_____

b. Types of chores or responsibilities at home?

_____

c. Behavior in the community: Can get to places independently? Shops independently? Knowledge about places in the community like banks, post offices, gas stations, grocery stores, clothing stores? Other?

_____

d. Follows safety rules and home and in the community (walking, riding, driving)?
Self-care for minor injuries?

_____

e. Leisure: Has friends? Participates in school or community activities?

_____

13. Do you have any suggestions for improving the school services being given to your child? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what are they?

_____

14. Is there any other information about your child that you think may be helpful to your child's evaluation?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what? _____

Suggested Questions for Parent Input for Re-evaluation

Student's Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Name: _____
Method of Interview (Check one): ☐ Personal Interview ☐ Telephone ☐ Written
Person collected input: _____ Date: _____

1. What are some of your child's strengths, interests and/or favorite activities?

   _____
   _____

2. What goals do you have for your child for this school year? For older students, long range goals/plans?

   _____

3. Have you seen improvement in your child's academic performance / behavior / speech and language during the past 3 years? ☐ Yes ☐ No Please describe:

   _____
   _____

4. Do you have any current concerns about your child's progress?

   _____
   _____

5. Have you seen any recent changes in your child's behavior or school performance? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   If yes, please explain:

   _____

6. Medical information:
   Vision concerns? _____
   Wears glasses? _____
   Hearing concerns? _____
   Wears hearing aid(s)? _____
   Any other medical/health concerns?

   _____
   Medical history: accidents, injuries, surgeries? _____
   Taking medication (Type, reason, side effects)?

   _____
   Any psychological (thinking/emotional) concerns?

   _____

7. Has your child had a psychological or education evaluation from outside of the school in the last 3 years?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, who did it, when was it done, and what were the results?

   _____
   _____

8. Has your child had additional community services in the last 3 years (tutoring, counseling, residential care)?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

   _____

9. With whom does your child live at home? _____

10. Have there been any significant changes in your home or family relationships during the last 3 years?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

    _____

11. Optional Functional Questions – Younger students

a. Communication skills at home: Understands directions? Communicates needs? Converses?

b. Types of chores or responsibilities at home?

c. Self care skills: (Bathing, brushing teeth, toileting, etc.)

d. Behavior in the community: (Behavior in public places, can get to places nearby, orders meals, etc.)

e. Follows safety rules at home and in the community (walking, riding bike).

f. Leisure: Shares, has friends

Optional Functional Questions – Older students

a. Communication skills at home: Understands directions? Communicates needs? Converses?

b. Types of chores or responsibilities at home?

c. Behavior in the community: Can get to places independently? Shops independently? Knowledge about places in the community like banks, post offices, gas stations, grocery stores, clothing stores? Other?

d. Follows safety rules and home and in the community (walking, riding, driving)? Self-care for minor injuries?

e. Leisure: Has friends? Participates in school or community activities?

12. Do you think your child continues to need special education services? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Why?

13. Do you have any suggestions for improving the school services being given to your child? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what are they?

14. Is there any other information about your child that you think may be helpful to your child's 3-year re-evaluation? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what?

Appendix H

Teacher Anecdotal Report – Elementary

Student's Name: _____ **Teacher:** _____
Grade: _____ **Absences to Date:** _____

Part 1 – Academic information. Check one item.

_____ The student currently meets or exceeds the minimal academic expectations in all subjects.

_____ The student does not currently meet the minimal grade-level academic expectations in the following areas (check all that apply):

___ Reading decoding ___ Reading fluency ___ Reading vocabulary
___ Reading comprehension ___ Writing meaningful, accurate sentences/passages
___ Writing mechanics ___ Spelling ___ Math computation
___ Math problem solving ___ Math facts ___ Speaking skills
___ Understanding directions, lecture, discussions or demonstrations (listening comprehension)
___ Other/ Comments: _____

_____

Part 2 – Behavioral information – Rate each item.

	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom/Never	N/A
On time for class				
Brings necessary materials				
Turns in completed assignments				
Turns in assignments on time				
Willing to make-up assignments				
Follows teacher's directions				
Attends to lecture/discussion				
Participates in class discussions				
Stays on-task during work time				
Appropriate peer interactions				
Appropriate teacher interactions				

Part 3 – Student's Strengths / Other Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher Anecdotal Report – Secondary/Intermediate

Student's Name: _____ **Teacher:** _____
Grade: _____ **Subject:** _____ **Absences to Date:** _____

Part 1 – Academic information. Check one item.

_____ The student currently meets or exceeds the minimal academic expectations of this class.
Current letter grade or percent: _____.

_____ The student does not currently meet the minimal academic expectations of this class.
Current letter grade or percent: _____.

Check concerns in the following areas (check all that apply).

___ Reading decoding ___ Reading fluency ___ Reading vocabulary
___ Reading comprehension ___ Writing meaningful, accurate sentences/passages
___ Writing mechanics ___ Spelling ___ Math computation
___ Math problem solving ___ Math facts ___ Speaking skills
___ Understanding directions, lecture, discussions or demonstrations (listening comprehension)
___ Other / Comments: _____

Part 2 – Behavioral information – Rate each item.

	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom/Never	N/A
On time for class				
Brings necessary materials				
Turns in completed assignments				
Turns in assignments on time				
Willing to make-up assignments				
Follows teacher's directions				
Attends to lecture/discussion				
Participates in class discussions				
Stays on-task during work time				
Appropriate peer interactions				
Appropriate teacher interactions				

Part 3 – Student's Strengths / Other Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix I

Classroom / Academic Observation Checklist – Pre-school / Kindergarten

Student: _____ Grade: ___ Teacher/Location: _____
Observer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Activity: _____

Directions: First, identify the area(s) of concern in the box below. Your observation should focus on the identified area(s). During the observation, place a check mark next to the behaviors that are listed within each domain that correlates with the noted area(s) of concern. These checklists are not exhaustive, so you may want make notes regarding other additional behavior observed, including strengths and behaviors which may interfere with the student's learning. In order to obtain a full and accurate picture of the student's performance, it may be necessary to observe the student more than once, possibly in different settings and at different times of the day. If a child 3-5 years old is not yet in a public school program, observations should be conducted in the child's natural environment or early intervention program.

Check area(s) of concern for SLD evaluation:			
☐ Oral Expression	☐ Basic Reading	☐ Reading Comprehension	☐ Math Calculation
☐ Listening Comprehension	☐ Reading Fluency	☐ Written Expression	☐ Math Problem Solving

Academic Skills

Language (Oral Expression, Listening Comprehension, Basic Reading - Phonemic Awareness) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty re-telling what has just been said
☐ Difficulty modulating voice (e.g., too soft, too loud)	☐ Slow/halting speech, using fillers (e.g., uh, you know, um)
☐ Difficulty naming people or objects	☐ Difficulty with pronouncing words
☐ Difficulty staying on topic	☐ Difficulty rhyming
☐ Difficulty in explaining things (e.g. feelings, ideas) due to lack of vocabulary, articulation, and/or grammar skills	☐ Difficulty with phonemic awareness tasks (e.g., saying initial sounds, saying sounds of words, saying words fast)
☐ Difficulty understanding instructions or directions	☐ Limited interest in books or stories

Notes:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reading (Basic Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty reading short, irregular sight words
☐ Difficulty identifying sounds	☐ Difficulty retelling what has been read
☐ Difficulty blending sounds into words	☐ Difficulty with retention of new vocabulary
☐ Difficulty reading short, regular words	☐ Difficulty demonstrating comprehension of sentences/stories

Notes:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Written Language (Written Expression) - - Student has	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with drawing familiar shapes
☐ Difficulty with holding writing instruments	☐ Difficulty with naming, copying or writing letters
☐ Difficulty copying / tracing	☐ Frequent letter, number, and symbol reversals

Notes:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Math (Math Calculation, Math Problem Solving) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty in recognizing numbers
☐ Difficulty counting aloud	☐ Difficulty in comparing relative size (e.g. numbers, objects)
☐ Difficulty in one-to one correspondence when counting objects	☐ Difficulty in matching number symbol to corresponding objects

Notes:

Functional Skills

Social Emotional (All Areas) - - Student has:	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with self-control when frustrated.
☐ Difficulty 'joining in' and maintaining positive social status in a peer group.	☐ Difficulty using other students as models to cue self on appropriate behavior
☐ Difficulty with sharing (e.g., objects, teacher's time)	

Notes:

Attention (All Areas) - - Student has	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty sustaining attention in work or play activities

Notes:

Gross and Fine Motor Skills (All Areas) - - Student:	
☐ Has age appropriate skills	☐ Demonstrates poor ability to color or write 'within the lines'
☐ Appears awkward and clumsy, dropping, spilling, or knocking things over	☐ Grasps writing instruments awkwardly, resulting in poor handwriting, drawing
☐ Has trouble with buttons, zippers, hooks, snaps and tying shoes	☐ Has difficulty using small objects or items that demand precision (e.g., legos, puzzle pieces, scissors)
☐ Creates art work that is immature for age	☐

Notes:

Summary:

Classroom / Academic Observation Checklist – Grades 1 - 4

Student: _____ Grade: ___ Teacher/Location: _____
Observer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Activity: _____

Directions: First, identify the area(s) of concern in the box below. Your observation should focus on the identified area(s). During the observation, place a check mark next to the behaviors that are listed within each domain that correlates with the noted area(s) of concern. These checklists are not exhaustive, so you may want make notes regarding other additional behavior observed, including strengths and behaviors which may interfere with the student's learning. In order to obtain a full and accurate picture of the student's performance, it may be necessary to observe the student more than once, possibly in different settings and at different times of the day.

Check area(s) of concern for SLD evaluation:			
☐ Oral Expression	☐ Basic Reading	☐ Reading Comprehension	☐ Math Calculation
☐ Listening Comprehension	☐ Reading Fluency	☐ Written Expression	☐ Math Problem Solving

Academic Skills

Language (Oral Expression, Listening Comprehension, Basic Reading - Phonemic Awareness) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate	☐ Difficulty re-telling what has just been said
☐ Difficulty modulating voice (e.g., too soft, too loud)	☐ Slow/halting speech, using fillers (e.g., uh, you know, um)
☐ Difficulty naming people or objects	☐ Difficulty with pronouncing words
☐ Difficulty staying on topic	☐ Difficulty rhyming
☐ Difficulty in explaining things (e.g. feelings, ideas) due to use of imprecise language and limited vocabulary	☐ Difficulty with phonemic awareness tasks (e.g., saying initial sounds, saying sounds of words, saying words fast)
☐ Difficulty understanding instructions or directions	☐ Poor grammar or misuses words in conversation
☐ Inserts malapropisms into conversation	☐ Difficulty with pragmatic skills (e.g., understands the relationship between speaker and listener, staying on topic, making inferences)

Notes:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reading (Basic Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Slow oral reading skills that may interfere with comprehension
☐ Difficulty identifying sounds, blending sounds into words	☐ Difficulty retelling what has been read
☐ Difficulty reading regular words	☐ Difficulty with retention of new vocabulary
☐ Difficulty reading irregular sight words	☐ Difficulty demonstrating comprehension of sentences/stories
☐ Difficulty when reading sentences; may frequently lose place, omit words, insert words, substitute words, guess from initial sounds, reverse words, make self-corrections	☐

Notes:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Written Language (Written Expression) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Frequent reversals of letters and numbers
☐ Difficulty with holding writing instruments	☐ Uneven spacing between letters and words, has trouble staying 'on the line'
☐ Messy and incomplete writing, with many cross-outs and erasures	☐ Inaccurate copying skills (e.g., confuses similar-looking letters and numbers
☐ Difficulty remembering shapes of letters and numbers	☐ Poor and inconsistent spelling
☐ Difficulty proofreading and self-correcting work	☐ Complete written assignments

Notes:

Math (Math Calculation, Math Problem Solving) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with comparisons
☐ Difficulty with simple counting and one-to-one correspondence between number and objects	☐ Difficulty telling time or conceptualizing the passage of time
☐ Difficulty counting by other numbers (2's, 5's, 10's)	☐ Difficulty solving one-step word problems
☐ Difficulty estimating quantity (e.g., quantity, value)	☐ Difficulty solving facts and longer operations

Notes:

Functional Skills

Social Emotional (All Areas) - - Student has:	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with self-control when frustrated.
☐ Difficulty 'joining in' and maintaining positive social status in a peer group.	☐ Difficulty using other students as models to cue self on appropriate behavior
☐ Difficulty in 'picking up' on other people's moods/feelings	☐ Difficulty knowing how to share/express feelings
☐ Difficulty detecting or responding appropriately to teasing	☐ Difficulty dealing with group pressure, embarrassment and unexpected challenges
☐ Difficulty in understanding the social hierarchy (students, teachers, administrators) of school	☐ Difficulty in following directions – may be a can't do (lack of vocabulary) or a won't do problem

Notes:

Attention (All Areas) - - Student has:	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty sustaining attention in work or play activities
☐ Difficulty organizing tasks and activities	☐ Difficulty with losing things that are necessary for tasks
☐ Difficulty with remembering daily/routine activities	☐ Difficulty by being easily distracted

Notes:

Gross and Fine Motor Skills (All Areas) - - Student:	
☐ Has age appropriate skills	☐ Demonstrates poor ability to color or write 'within the lines'
☐ Appears awkward and clumsy, dropping, spilling, or knocking things over	☐ Grasps writing instruments awkwardly, resulting in poor handwriting, drawing
☐ Has trouble with buttons, zippers, hooks, snaps and tying shoes	☐ Has difficulty using small objects or items that demand precision (e.g., legos, puzzle pieces, scissors)
☐ Creates art work that is immature for age	☐ Has limited success with games and activities that demand eye-to-hand coordination (e.g. musical instruments, sports)

Notes:

Other Notes or Observed Behavior - - Student:	
☐ Confuses left and right	☐ Is slow to learn new games and master puzzles
☐ Often loses things	☐ Has difficulty generalizing or applying skills from one situation to another
☐	☐

Notes:

Summary:

Classroom / Academic Observation Checklist – Grades 5 - 8

Student: _____ Grade: ___ Teacher/Location: _____
Observer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Activity: _____

Directions: First, identify the area(s) of concern in the box below. Your observation should focus on the identified area(s). During the observation, place a check mark next to the behaviors that are listed within each domain that correlates with the noted area(s) of concern. These checklists are not exhaustive, so you may want make notes regarding other additional behavior observed, including strengths and behaviors which may interfere with the student's learning. In order to obtain a full and accurate picture of the student's performance, it may be necessary to observe the student more than once, possibly in different settings and at different times of the day.

Check area(s) of concern for SLD evaluation:			
☐ Oral Expression	☐ Basic Reading	☐ Reading Comprehension	☐ Math Calculation
☐ Listening Comprehension	☐ Reading Fluency	☐ Written Expression	☐ Math Problem Solving

Academic Skills

Language (Oral Expression, Listening Comprehension, Basic Reading - Phonemic Awareness) - - Student:	
☐ Has grade appropriate skills	☐ Has difficulty re-telling what has just been said
☐ Has difficulty modulating voice (e.g., too soft, too loud)	☐ Inserts malapropisms into conversation
☐ Difficulty naming people or objects	☐ Difficulty with pronouncing words
☐ Difficulty staying on topic	☐ Poor grammar or misuses words in conversation
☐ Has difficulty in explaining things (e.g. feelings, ideas) due to use of imprecise language and limited vocabulary	☐ Difficulty with pragmatic skills (e.g., understands the relationship between speaker and listener, staying on topic, making inferences)
☐ Has difficulty understanding instructions or directions	☐ Has slow/halting speech, using fillers (e.g., uh, you know, um)

Notes:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reading (Basic Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty retelling what has been read
☐ Difficulty reading grade level sight words	☐ Difficulty with retention of new vocabulary
☐ Difficulty reading common words seen in school/community	☐ Difficulty demonstrating literal comprehension of sentences/stories
☐ Difficulty when reading sentences; may frequently lose place, omit words, insert words, substitute words, guess from initial sounds, reverse words, make self-corrections	☐ Difficulty demonstrating inferential comprehension of stories and connections between stories
☐ Slow oral reading skills that may interfere with comprehension	☐

Notes: _____
_____
_____
_____

Written Language (Written Expression) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty proofreading and self-correcting work
☐ Messy and incomplete writing, with many cross-outs and erasures	☐ Poor and inconsistent spelling
☐ Uneven spacing between letters and words, has trouble staying 'on the line'	☐ Difficulty developing ideas in writing so written work is incomplete and too brief.
☐ Inaccurate copying skills (e.g., confuses similar-looking letters and numbers	☐ Difficulty completing written assignments

Notes:

Math (Math Calculation, Math Problem Solving) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with comparisons (e.g., less than, greater than)
☐ Difficulty counting by single digit numbers, 10's 100's	☐ Difficulty telling time or conceptualizing the passage of time
☐ Difficulty aligning numbers resulting in computation errors	☐ Difficulty solving word problems
☐ Difficulty estimating quantity (e.g., quantity, value)	☐ Difficulty solving facts and longer operations
☐ Difficulty interpreting / creating charts and graphs	☐ Difficulty understanding / applying measurement concepts

Notes:

Functional Skills

Social Emotional (All Areas) - - Student has:	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with self-control when frustrated.
☐ Difficulty 'joining in' and maintaining positive social status in a peer group.	☐ Difficulty using other students as models to cue self on appropriate behavior
☐ Difficulty in 'picking up' on other people's moods/feelings	☐ Difficulty knowing how to share/express feelings
☐ Difficulty detecting or responding appropriately to teasing	☐ Difficulty dealing with group pressure, embarrassment and unexpected challenges
☐ Difficulty in understanding the social hierarchy (students, teachers, administrators) of school	☐ Difficulty in following directions – may be a can't do (lack of vocabulary) or a won't do problem
☐ Difficulty with 'getting to the point' (e.g., gets bogged down in details in conversation)	

Notes:

Attention (All Areas) - - Student has:	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty sustaining attention in work or play activities
☐ Difficulty organizing tasks and activities	☐ Difficulty with losing things that are necessary for tasks
☐ Difficulty with remembering daily/routine activities	☐ Difficulty by being easily distracted
☐ Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or other activities	

Notes:

Gross and Fine Motor Skills (All Areas) - - Student:	
☐ Has age appropriate skills	☐ Has limited success with games and activities that demand eye-to-hand coordination (e.g. musical instruments, sports)
☐ Appears awkward and clumsy, dropping, spilling, or knocking things over	☐ Grasps writing instruments awkwardly, resulting in poor handwriting, drawing

Notes:

Other Notes or Observed Behavior - - Student:	
☐ Confuses left and right	☐ Is slow to learn new games and master puzzles
☐ Often loses things	☐ Has difficulty generalizing or applying skills from one situation to another
☐ Finds it hard to judge speed and distance	☐ Has trouble reading charts and maps
☐ Is disorganized and poor at planning	☐ Has difficulty listening and taking notes at the same time

Notes:

Summary:

Classroom / Academic Observation Checklist – Grades 9 - 12

Student: _____ Grade: ___ Teacher/Location: _____
Observer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Activity: _____

Directions: First, identify the area(s) of concern in the box below. Your observation should focus on the identified area(s). During the observation, place a check mark next to the behaviors that are listed within each domain that correlates with the noted area(s) of concern. These checklists are not exhaustive, so you may want make notes regarding other additional behavior observed, including strengths and behaviors which may interfere with the student's learning. In order to obtain a full and accurate picture of the student's performance, it may be necessary to observe the student more than once, possibly in different settings and at different times of the day.

Check area(s) of concern for SLD evaluation:			
☐ Oral Expression	☐ Basic Reading	☐ Reading Comprehension	☐ Math Calculation
☐ Listening Comprehension	☐ Reading Fluency	☐ Written Expression	☐ Math Problem Solving

Academic Skills

Language (Oral Expression, Listening Comprehension, Basic Reading - Phonemic Awareness) - - Student:	
☐ Has grade appropriate skills	☐ Has difficulty re-telling what has just been said
☐ Has difficulty modulating voice (e.g., too soft, too loud)	☐ Inserts malapropisms into conversation
☐ Confuses words with others that sound familiar	☐ Difficulty with pronouncing words
☐ Difficulty staying on topic	☐ Poor grammar or misuses words in conversation
☐ Has difficulty in explaining things (e.g. feelings, ideas) due to use of imprecise language and limited vocabulary	☐ Difficulty with pragmatic skills (e.g., understands the relationship between speaker and listener, staying on topic, making inferences)
☐ Has difficulty understanding instructions or directions	☐ Has slow/halting speech, using fillers (e.g., uh, you know, um)

Notes:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reading (Basic Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty retelling what has been read
☐ Difficulty reading content area sight words	☐ Difficulty with retention of new vocabulary
☐ Difficulty reading common words seen in school/community	☐ Difficulty demonstrating literal comprehension of sentences/stories
☐ Difficulty when reading sentences; may frequently lose place, omit words, insert words, substitute words, guess from initial sounds, reverse words, make self-corrections	☐ Difficulty demonstrating inferential comprehension of stories and connections between stories/ideas
☐ Slow oral reading skills that may interfere with comprehension	☐

Notes: _____
_____
_____
_____

Written Language (Written Expression) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty proofreading and self-correcting work
☐ Messy and incomplete writing, with many cross-outs and erasures	☐ Poor and inconsistent spelling
☐ Uneven spacing between letters and words, has trouble staying 'on the line'	☐ Difficulty developing ideas in writing so written work is incomplete and too brief.
☐ Inaccurate copying skills (e.g., confuses similar-looking letters and numbers	☐ Difficulty completing written assignments

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Math (Math Calculation, Math Problem Solving) - - Student has:	
☐ Grade appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with comparisons (e.g., less than, greater than)
☐ Difficulty counting by single digit numbers, 10's 100's	☐ Difficulty telling time or conceptualizing the passage of time
☐ Difficulty aligning numbers resulting in computation errors	☐ Difficulty solving word problems
☐ Difficulty estimating quantity (e.g., quantity, value)	☐ Difficulty solving facts and longer operations
☐ Difficulty interpreting / creating charts and graphs	☐ Difficulty understanding / applying measurement concepts

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Functional Skills

Social Emotional (All Areas) - - Student has:	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty with self-control when frustrated.
☐ Difficulty 'joining in' and maintaining positive social status in a peer group.	☐ Difficulty using other students as models to cue self on appropriate behavior
☐ Difficulty in 'picking up' on other people's moods/feelings	☐ Difficulty knowing how to share/express feelings
☐ Difficulty detecting or responding appropriately to teasing	☐ Difficulty dealing with group pressure, embarrassment and unexpected challenges
☐ Difficulty in understanding the social hierarchy (students, teachers, administrators) of school	☐ Difficulty in following directions – may be a can't do (lack of vocabulary) or a won't do problem
☐ Difficulty with 'getting to the point' (e.g., gets bogged down in details in conversation)	

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attention (All Areas) - - Student has:	
☐ Age appropriate skills	☐ Difficulty sustaining attention in work or play activities
☐ Difficulty organizing tasks and activities	☐ Difficulty with losing things that are necessary for tasks
☐ Difficulty with remembering daily/routine activities	☐ Difficulty by being easily distracted
☐ Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or other activities	

Notes:

Gross and Fine Motor Skills (All Areas) - - Student:	
☐ Has age appropriate skills	☐ Has limited success with games and activities that demand eye-to-hand coordination (e.g. musical instruments, sports)
☐ Appears awkward and clumsy, dropping, spilling, or knocking things over	☐ Grasps writing instruments awkwardly, resulting in poor handwriting, drawing

Notes:

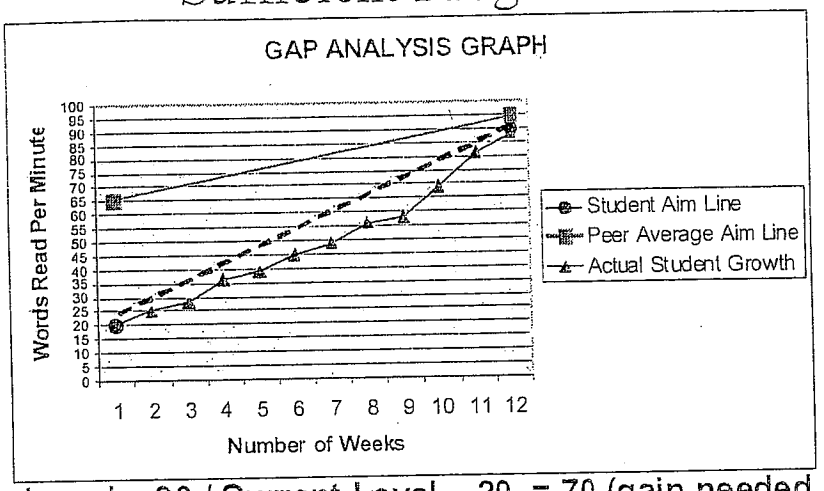
Other Notes or Observed Behavior - - Student:	
☐ Confuses left and right	☐ Is slow to learn new games and master puzzles
☐ Often loses things	☐ Has difficulty generalizing or applying skills from one situation to another
☐ Finds it hard to judge speed and distance	☐ Has trouble reading charts and maps
☐ Is disorganized and poor at planning	☐ Has difficulty listening and taking notes at the same time

Notes:

Summary:

Appendix J

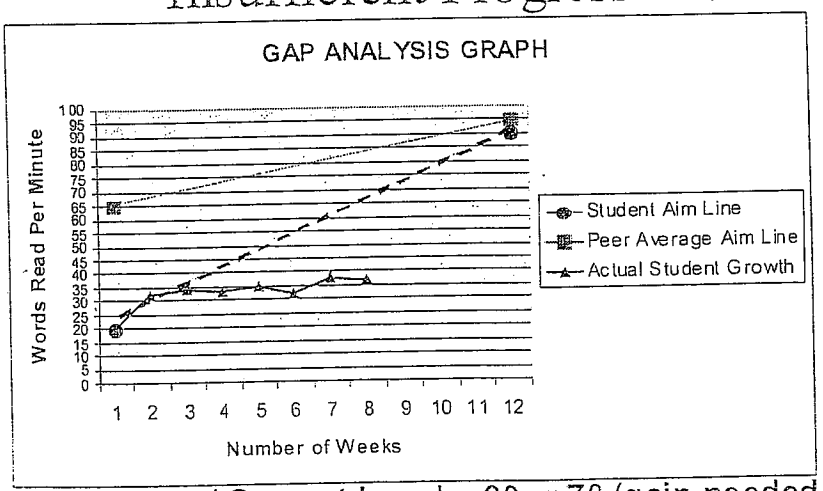
Sufficient Progress



Benchmark - 90 / Current Level – 20 = 70 (gain needed to close the Gap)

Intervention resulted in the 4.6 WPM growth per week necessary to close the Gap with peers.

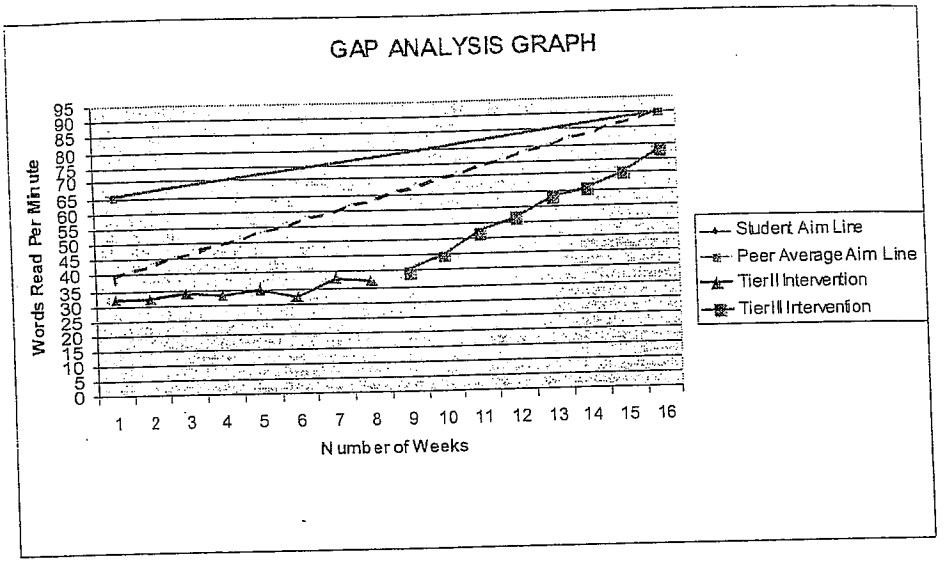
Insufficient Progress



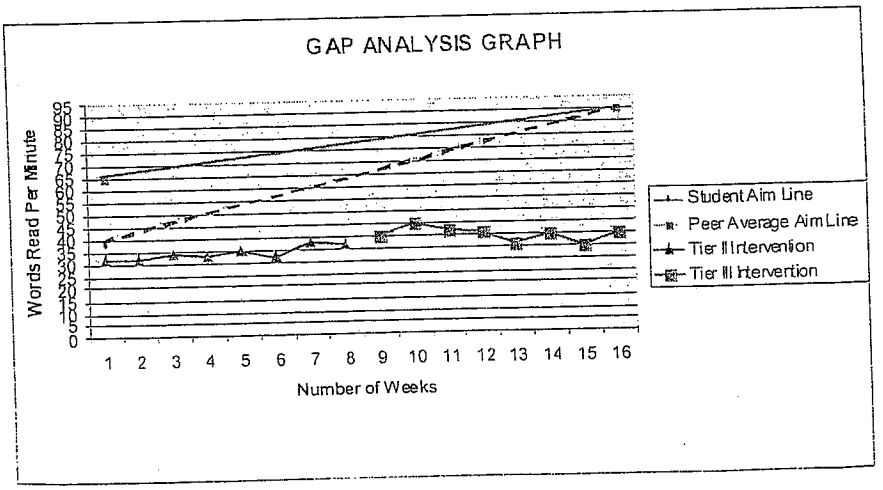
Benchmark - 90 / Current Level – 20 = 70 (gain needed to close the Gap)

Intervention did not close the Gap – student needs more time, intensity or a different intervention.

Sufficient Progress with Intense Intervention



Insufficient Progress – Possible Special Education Referral/Determination



Appendix K

Student Name _____ Birthdate _____

Calhoun Intermediate School District
EVALUATION TEAM RECOMMENDATION
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

MET Date: _____

Student: _____ D.O.B: _____ Age: _____

District: _____ School: _____

Native Language: _____ Grade: _____

PURPOSE

☐ Initial eligibility, MET recommendation/summary.
☐ Redetermination of eligibility for special education. Previous Eligibility:

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND DOCUMENTATION

This section will include all the assessments, evaluator and date completed from the REED and the eval log

ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

The Evaluation Team must consider the following assurance statements before making a recommendation regarding this student's eligibility:

True	False	Assurance Statement	Data Source and Date
☐	☐	This student was provided appropriate instruction by qualified personnel in the general education setting.	Date: Data Source:
☐	☐	This student was provided repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals with data-based documentation available and provided to parents.	Date: Data Source:
☐	☐	The suspected disability is not due to limited English proficiency or a lack of appropriate instruction in math or the essential components of reading.	Date: Data Source:
☐	☐	The suspected disability is not primarily the result of autism spectrum disorder or a cognitive, emotional, visual, hearing or motor impairment nor of an economic, cultural or environmental disadvantage.	Date: Data Source:
☐	☐	The suspected disability of this student is based on the following rationale: (*Check all that apply*)	
		☐ The student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both relative to student's age or to state approved grade level standards or intellectual development.	
		☐ Other: Explain:	
☐	☐	The suspected disability adversely affects this student's educational performance and requires special education.	

The above determinations are related to one or more of the following areas: (Check all that apply)

☐ (a) oral expression ☐ (c) written expression ☐ (e) reading comprehension ☐ (g) mathematics/problem solving
☐ (b) listening comprehension ☐ (d) basic reading skills ☐ (f) math calculation ☐ (h) reading fluency skills

Student Name _____ Birthdate _____

RECOMMENDATION OF ELIGIBILITY

The Evaluation Team **1)** finds **all** the assurance statements to be true; **2)** has considered exclusionary factors; and **3)** recommends, based on the evaluation findings, that this student be considered eligible for special education programs/services under the specific learning disability rule (R340.1713).

Eligibility ☒ Yes, eligible ☐ No, ineligible

SLD is considered to be: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary

* If recommending eligibility, state present levels of academic achievement and functional performance on the back of this form or attach documentation that addresses this issue.

EVALUATION TEAM SIGNATURES

As a member of the Evaluation Team, I agree with the eligibility recommendation:

Psychologist _____ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other/Role _____ Yes ☐ No ☐
Teacher (Gen. Ed) _____ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other/Role _____ Yes ☐ No ☐
Teacher (Spec. Ed) _____ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other/Role _____ Yes ☐ No ☐
Other/Role _____ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other/Role _____ Yes ☐ No ☐

Or

This Evaluation Summary **does not** reflect my/our opinion and a separate statement is attached:

Signature/Title _____

Appendix L

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLD)

Education has recognized the existence of Learning Disabilities for more than 4 decades. These are some of the questions that have been posed over the years. Answers continually change based upon updated research and legislation.

How do I know that a child has a learning disability?
A team of educators, parents, administrators and support personnel review existing evaluation data, documented instructional interventions and then develop & implement strategies that will target specific concerns. The level of support needed to successfully address these deficits may actually be an indicator as to whether or not the child has a learning disability. There will be some kind of indication that the student has a pattern of strengths and weaknesses. The team refers the student for an evaluation. All general education data, as well as additional assessment data that was determined necessary will be reviewed by the team and based upon local, state and federal guidelines the team will determine if the data indicates the student has a learning disability and needs special education services.

My child was evaluated for special education because we suspected a learning disability. My child did not qualify for services but he still cannot read or do math. How can he not have a learning disability?
There are many different reasons for a student to demonstrate problems with learning and many different supports available for struggling learners. Special education is the most restrictive and is based upon eligibility requirements. In the past, we have utilized a "discrepancy model" for determining eligibility for a student under the Learning disabilities category. There needed to be a significant difference between their ability and their actual performance to be eligible for special education. The model has changed, due to new research, and there are specific guidelines for determining eligibility.

What options do I have if my child does not have a learning disability?
It is important to remember is that even if the student is not eligible for special education, that does not mean that they should not have their educational needs met. Every student should be afforded an education that includes appropriate differentiated instruction, accommodations and targeted remediation. Local districts provide levels of interventions to address student needs.

My child was diagnosed with dyslexia by my doctor, but the school said that he does not have a learning disability. I'm confused!

Medical diagnoses are always considered when they are available to the educational evaluation team. Eligibility, under the umbrella of learning disabilities, is based upon the guidelines set by federal, state and local districts for educational evaluation. Dys (not) lexia (reading) is a term that is used in the private sector to indicate that a student is having difficulty with reading. There is also dyscalculia (math) and dysgraphia (writing). Eligibility is based upon student need and their progress in the general education curriculum as compared to their age appropriate peers.

Is special education a lifelong need?
Some students will need ongoing special education support. Others will develop strategies and skills so they do not need ongoing support. Others may respond well to interventions and not continue to need services. Patrick Swartz, author of Disabilities to Possibilities said, "Special education is a service not a sentence."

Why does this child seem so smart and just not progress in reading, math, or writing?
All people have areas of interests and gifts that impact their ability to learn and what areas they excel. Some students with learning disabilities are very "hands on". Their strength and creativity may be in areas that are not traditionally and typically emphasized and utilized in the learning process and the school setting. We often encounter students who are very strong in reading, but have difficulty with math. Sometimes they have great math skills and struggle with reading and/or written language. Sometimes they have great listening skills, but have difficulty visually interpreting what they see/read. There are many specific combinations of strengths and weaknesses that are unique to individuals with learning disabilities. What they all have in common is that they have the ability to learn, but may need to be provided different instructional input and output opportunities.

What is the difference between a learning disability and a cognitive impairment?
A student with a learning disability is assumed to be of average ability. A student with a cognitive impairment is determined to have significantly below average level ability.

What is the best way to teach a child with a learning disability?
The best way to teach any student is to first understand their individual strengths and needs. This must be based on ongoing formative assessment and targeted instruction with sound research based instructional strategies.

Additionally, it is critical to teach individuals with learning disabilities about their strengths and needs. They need to know that it is ok to learn differently and uniquely. They need to be taught how to articulate those needs and how to compensate by utilizing their strengths.

Can you "fix" a student with a learning disability?
A student with a learning disability does not need to be "fixed". They may need a different set of instructional strategies that focuses on their strengths and targets specific

skills that they did not learn through more typical instructional methods. The "learning disability" is just representative of how a student learns. They need to be taught strategies to enhance their success in school and their independence in life.

What is going to happen to my child who has a learning disability?
Based upon each student's strengths, interests and motivation, they can go on to be successful adults and contributing members of society. Having a learning disability should not prevent them from reaching their life goals. All students must be empowered to reach their goals.

Appendix M

Specific Learning Disabilities – Checklist
Note: Use for each sub area of SLD under consideration

☐ **Rule In**

1. ☐ Child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement or both relative to age or state approved grade-level standards or intellectual development.

☐ **Rule Out**

1. ☐ Inadequate achievement and insufficient progress or pattern of strengths and weaknesses are not primarily the result of:

   Other Disabilities or Impairments:
   - Vision disability
   - Hearing disability
   - Motor disability
   - Cognitive impairment
   - Emotional impairment
   - Autism Spectrum Disorder

   Other Factors:
   - Cultural factors
   - Environmental or economic disadvantage
   - Limited English proficiency

2. ☐ Underachievement is not due to the lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math
   - Data that demonstrates that prior to or as part of the referral process the child was provided with appropriate instruction in regular education settings delivered by qualified personnel
   - Data based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the child's parents

☐ **Observation**

- The child's academic performance and behavior in area of difficulty
- In the child's learning environment (including the regular classroom setting)

  Note: Observation may be completed prior to referral (without parental consent) if it is an observation in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the child's performance

☐ **Report – Eligibility Documentation**

- ☐ Statement of eligibility
- ☐ Basis for statement of eligibility
- ☐ Relevant behavior noted in observations and relationship to academic performance
- ☐ Relevant medical findings
- ☐ Inadequate achievement and insufficient progress and/or pattern of strengths and weaknesses
- ☐ Exclusionary Factors: Other disabilities and cultural, economic, environmental or LEP
- ☐ Data that can be used to determine whether the underachievement is primarily due to:
  - ☐ Lack of appropriate instruction
  - ☐ Other impairment/factors
- ☐ Data was collected, analyzed and documented
  - ☐ Instructional strategies used and student centered data collected
  - ☐ The documentation that the child's parents were notified about:
  - ☐ State/district policies regarding amount/nature of student performance data and general education services provided
  - ☐ Strategies used to improve the rate of learning

Appendix N

STUDENT INTERVENTION DATA REVIEW (SIDR)

Checklist

The checklist is a resource to assist SIDR Teams/IEP Teams navigate the SIDR process and to ensure that the data reviewed is complete and comprehensive when making educational decisions for students.

While there is not a particular format to collect and analyze this data, the following components must be collected, maintained and analyzed for each child.

SIDR Process:

Effective instructional practices delivered by highly qualified teachers will maximize the learning outcomes for most students. Some students, after carefully planned and documented educational interventions, will not make expected educational progress leading to less than optimal learning outcomes and consideration as "at-risk" students. The majority of students who are identified as "at risk" will respond to general education interventions. However, there are a small minority, estimated to be approximately 5% of the student population, who will not respond adequately to instruction and will require increasingly intense general education interventions. This process is called Tiered Intervention.

☐ **Local Assessments/Evaluations** –

- ☐ Provide data results that compare the student's performance to overall district and peers within the grade in the area of concern. This data would include:
    - ☐ classroom assessments,
    - ☐ work samples,
    - ☐ district quarterly assessments,
    - ☐ standardized assessments,
    - ☐ district assessments,
    - ☐ universal screeners,
    - ☐ outside agency reports, and
    - ☐ developmental assessments (preschool).

☐ **Student School History** – Data must include:

- ☐ behavioral data,

- ☐ attendance history,
- ☐ medical history and needs,
- ☐ developmental history,
- ☐ report cards,
- ☐ educational services history (Title I, Early On, preschool, etc),
- ☐ any other intervention that have been implemented, and
- ☐ English proficiency information.

☐ **Statewide Assessment results** –

- ☐ Results of data analysis in statewide assessments including comparison of individual to grade, district, and state averages in the area of concern.

☐ **Behavioral: Social/Emotional** – Data must include:

- ☐ review and analysis of the data from discipline referrals,
- ☐ review and analysis of any functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervenetion plan related to the areas of concern,
- ☐ attendance history may also be included in the review as it relates to suspension, expulsion and chronic attendance issues.

☐ **Parental Input** – Data must include:

- ☐ any behavioral concerns at home,
- ☐ attendance issues from the parent perspective,
- ☐ outside agency reports and services,
- ☐ medical needs and history,
- ☐ educational services history,
- ☐ developmental history,
- ☐ primary language spoken within the home,
- ☐ school districts attended and
- ☐ any other interventions that have been implemented within other school districts.

☐ **School-based Observations** – Data must include:

- ☐ documented formal and informal observation of the student in the classroom during the instruction in the area of need,
- ☐ the observation is to be completed by any member of the SIDR Team, and
- ☐ the results shared with parents and SIDR team.

☐ **Sensory & Motor Skills** - Data must include any concerns observed and documented

- ☐ in the areas of gross motor,
- ☐ fine motor, and/or
- ☐ sensory integration.

☐ **Communication** – Data must include documented concerns:

- ☐ with articulation,
- ☐ voice,
- ☐ fluency of speech,
- ☐ expressive and/or
- ☐ receptive language.