

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM NOTTAWA SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION

Each local educational agency and public school academy in Michigan is required to publicly post the process used to determine the existence of a Specific Learning Disability. In alignment with the Michigan Department of Education Criteria for Determining the Existence of a Specific Learning Disability dated May 2010, Nottawa Community School has chosen to use the Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) approach.

As part of a full and individual PSW evaluation, the data is considered along with the information about the student being referred. This information includes but is not limited to other assessments, observations, progress monitoring data and other normative assessment data that will be a result of Response to Intervention (RtI) procedures. The evaluation will be based upon the Aptitude-Achievement Consistency model proposed by Flanagan, Ortiz & Alfonso (2007), which is one of the three major research-based PSW models.

What is a SLD?

A Specific Learning Disability is “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia that adversely affects a student’s educational performance. A SLD does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.” (34 CFR §300.8 (c) (10)).

What is Response to Scientific, Research-Based Intervention Process?

The response to intervention (RtI) process is incorporated as a way to address the exclusionary criteria of lack of appropriate instruction and may also function as a signal for the need to conduct an evaluation. Information on how students respond to available and delivered interventions is considered as one factor in determining the existence of SLD within a full and individual PSW evaluation. This process involves the collection of data to determine the following:

- The student does not achieve adequately for the student’s age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified at 34 CFR §300.309 (a) (1) (i) when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student’s age or State-approved grade-level standards.
- The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified at 34 CFR §300.309 (a) (1) (i) when using a process based on the student’s response to scientific, research-based intervention.

What is a PSW Process?

Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses is a process that is used to determine if a student has a SLD. This process involves the collection of data to determine the following:

- The student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified at 34 CFR §300.309(a)(1)(i) when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or State-approved grade-level standards.
- The student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the Multi-disciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) to be relevant to the identification of a SLD, using appropriate assessments, consistent with the IDEA Evaluation Procedures and Additional Requirements for Evaluations and Reevaluations.

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