

Evaluation for a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

The determination of whether a student suspected of having a specific learning disability is a student with a disability must be made by the Special Education Department which includes the student's parents and qualified professionals including, but not limited to:

- A representative of the school (e.g. school leader), a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and;
- At least one person qualified to conduct an individual diagnostic examination such as a school psychologist, speech-language pathologist or remedial reading teacher.

Determination of a Learning Disability

Specific Learning Disability ("SLD") means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written.

The Special Education Department may determine that a student has a specific learning disability if:

The student does not achieve adequately for his or her age, or to meet 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 grade level standards):

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

And,

1. The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or grade level standards in one or more of the areas identified in number 1, above, when using a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; or
2. The student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, grade level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the Team to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments.

In addition, the Special Education Department may not identify a student as having a specific learning disability if the suspected disability is primarily the result of:

- A visual, hearing or motor disability;
- Intellectual disability;

- Emotional disturbance;
- Environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage;
- Limited English proficiency; and
- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math.

To ensure that underachievement in a child suspected of having a SLD is not due to a lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, the Team must also consider, as part of the evaluation:

- Data that demonstrates that prior to, or as a part of the referral process, the student was provided appropriate, research-based instruction in regular education settings, including that the instruction was delivered by qualified personnel; and
- Database documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the student's parents.

In determining whether a child has an SLD, our Academy may use a Response to Intervention model or a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses model which determines the existence of a learning disability based upon the progress a student makes over an appropriate period of time when provided with high-quality instruction/intervention and frequent monitoring of progress.

No matter which method our Academy uses to identify a child with SLD (response to scientific, research based instruction, or model of patterns of strengths and weaknesses) we will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the student that will also include an observation of the student's academic performance in the general education classroom setting by at least one Team member other than the student's general education teacher. In the case of a student of less than school age or out of school, a Team member will observe the student in an environment appropriate for a student of that age.