

**WARREN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS
MACOMB INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Recommended process for determining the
existence of a specific learning disability.**

SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

Requirement to Make Public School District Processes for
Determining the Existence of a Specific Learning Disability.

Consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA) regulation § 300.307(a), the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services has established the criteria that must be followed to determine the existence of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Furthermore, on or before September 1, 2010, each local educational agency (LEA) and public school academy (PSA) must publicly post on their web site, or make public through other means, the process or combination of processes which will be used by the LEA or PSA to determine the existence of a SLD. (§ 300.307(b) and § 300.600(d)(2)).

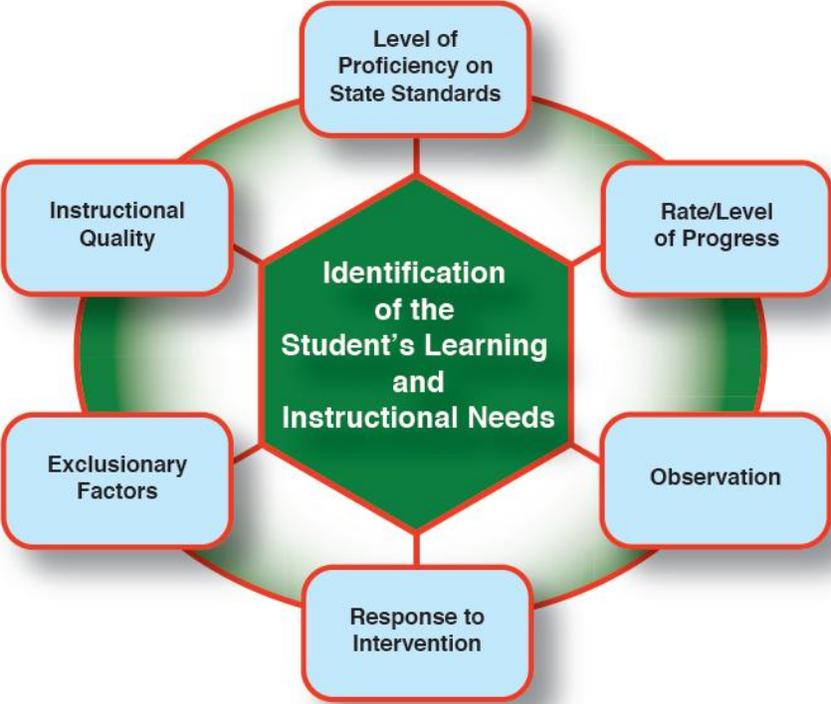
Each local district and public school academy in Michigan is required to publicly post the process used to determine the existence of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). The goal of this document is to outline the Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD) and constituent districts' recommended process for determining the existence of a specific learning disability. In 2008, the State of Michigan modified the definition of a learning disability to (1) no longer require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement, (2) permit the use of a process based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention, and (3) to permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures. The core of the definition remained:

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.

The Macomb County model which follows the Michigan Department of Education guidance and federal regulations for the identification of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) emphasizes the comprehensive, full and individual evaluation as a process of data collection that includes multiple methods of assessing student performance with input from parents, teachers, teacher consultants, speech language pathologists, school psychologists and other pertinent staff. The purpose of the evaluation is to gather the best and most comprehensive information possible to make valid and appropriate recommendations as to the student's eligibility for special education and, more importantly, provide educationally relevant recommendations for instructional strategies, supports and services.

The following factors should be considered as part of an evaluation for specific learning disabilities in Macomb County schools: Instructional Quality, Level of Proficiency on State Standards, Rate/Level of Progress, Observation, Response to Intervention, and Exclusionary Factors.

Figure 1. Factors to be considered in the Identification of Students Learning and Instructional Needs.



Exclusionary Factors: Before making attributions of disability within the student, the team must consider all other factors that could explain the performance patterns and the lack of student response to instruction. The team must consider the student's progress in the context of his/her opportunity, past experiences, sensory, health, language, culture, school attendance and developmental challenges.

Evaluation Plan: The districts will insure that a multisource, multi-method full and individual evaluation consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) evaluation procedures and additional requirements for evaluations and reevaluations is conducted.

The evaluation planning process will incorporate the gathering of information from the variety of sources including, but not limited to, districts' response to intervention (RtI) procedures. The evaluation plan follows from a review of the existing and relevant educational data. Following data gathering, the multidisciplinary evaluation teams will determine the students' eligibility by reviewing the student's pattern of strengths and weaknesses and response to intervention. The multidisciplinary evaluation teams will include instructional recommendations as part of the evaluation process.

Summary

In summary, this document outlines the Macomb ISD and constituent districts' recommended process for determining the existence of a specific learning disability. The integration of the aforementioned areas as part of the comprehensive evaluation leads to the development of educationally relevant recommendations for the student, whether determined eligible as a student with a Specific Learning Disability or not. A comprehensive evaluation should carefully review all evidence from multiple sources over time to make a thoughtful, ethical, and valid determination of eligibility.