

## Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

Specific learning disability (SLD) is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken and 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.

The determination of SLD must be made through the use of professional judgment, including considerations of multiple information/data sources to support eligibility determination. Information/data sources may include statewide assessment results, formal evaluation test scores (IQ, achievement, cognitive function/processing), MTSS/Rtl progress monitoring data, informal data (e.g., rating scales, student work samples interviews and anecdotal reports). Such information/ data must include an observation of the child in the child's learning environment as related to the area of SLD.

CFISD uses the pattern of strengths and weaknesses model in identifying a specific learning disability. Diagnosticians are trained and follow a framework that provides a structure for written documentation of a learning disability that is aligned with federal and state requirements. It is adapted from Dawn Flanagan's CHC Framework for identifying a Learning Disability.

### Definition

A student with a learning disability is one who

- Has been determined through a variety of assessment tools and strategies to meet the criteria for specific learning disability AND
- Does not achieve adequately for the child's age or meet state-approved grade-level standards in oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation or mathematics problem solving when provided appropriate instruction, as indicated by performance on multiple measures such as in-class tests, grade average over time (e.g. six weeks, semester); norm or criterion-referenced tests, statewide assessments or a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention AND
  - Does not make sufficient progress when provided a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based interventions, as indicated by the child's performance relative to the performance of the child's peers on repeated, curriculum-based assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting student progress during classroom instruction OR
  - Exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement or both relative to age, grade-level standards or intellectual ability, as indicated by significant variance among specific areas of cognitive function, such as working memory and verbal comprehension or between specific areas of cognitive function and academic achievement.

**NOTE:** A student's failure to pass STAAR should not automatically result in an SLD referral and/or determination. A variety of information sources and measures, including, but not limited to, response to intervention progress monitoring results, in-class tests on grade-level curriculum, or other regularly administered assessments shall be considered. Intervals are considered reasonable if consistent with the assessment requirements of a student's specific instructional

program. Students whose classroom achievement indicates a pervasive weakness that does not constitute a pattern of strengths and weaknesses should not be determined to have an SLD. Students who meet the criteria for having an intellectual disability should not be determined to have a SLD.

### **Required Eligibility Forms**

- If the child has participated in the MTSS/Rtl process,
  - The instructional strategies used, and the student-centered data collected and
  - The documentation that the parents were notified about (a) school policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data that would be collected and the general education services that would be provided, (b) strategies for increasing the child's rate of learning and (c) the parents' rights to request an evaluation
- Data-based documentation of repeated assessments, MTSS/Rtl progress monitoring results, in-class tests based on TEKS, benchmark assessments, criterion-referenced measures or other regularly administered assessments, administered at evenly-spaced intervals over a reasonable period of time (within a 4 to 8-week period)
- FIE (including present levels of performance for students who are eligible)
- Eligibility Report for Learning Disability (required for students who meet eligibility criteria), which should include
  - The basis for making the determination
  - Relevant behavior and medical findings, if any AND
  - Whether the child fails to achieve adequately and does not make sufficient academic progress OR exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses
  - Observation of the student in his/her learning environment (including the general education setting) to document the child's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty. For a child less than school age or out of school, a member of the assessment team must observe the child in an environment appropriate for the child's age.

**NOTE:** Students showing reasonable progress in response to research-based instructional strategies should not be identified as SLD even though they may show deficits on specific norm-referenced achievement tests.

### **ARD/IEP Requirements**

Follow standard ARD/IEP procedures; no specific supplements are required.