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| **.**  **Models of Identifying Specific Learning Disability** | | |
| **Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Defined:** A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may have manifested 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. The basic psychological processes include attention, visual processing, auditory processing, sensory-motor skills, and cognitive abilities including association, conceptualization and expression. Specific Learning Disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. *\*Note: the criteria listed above, including presence of a processing deficit and consideration of exclusionary criteria, applies to all three models of identification: Discrepancy Model, Response to Intervention, and Patterns of Strength and Weakness.* | | |
| **.**  **Models of Identifying SLD** | **Brief Overview** | **Additional Considerations** |
| Discrepancy Model | The IQ-achievement discrepancy model assesses whether there is a significant difference between a student’s scores on a test of general intelligence (e.g., an IQ test such as the WISC-IV) and scores obtained on a test of academic achievement (e.g., the Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test).  The IQ-achievement discrepancy model is the approach traditionally used to identify children with learning disabilities. If a student’s score on the IQ test is at least two standard deviations (23-30 points) higher than his or her scores on an achievement test, the student is identified as having a significant discrepancy between IQ and achievement and, therefore, as having a Specific Learning Disability. | Although the law allows schools the option of using RTI and PSW procedures as part of the evaluation procedures for special education eligibility, comprehensive assessment is still required to ensure that IEP team members have carefully evaluated and considered all relevant aspects of a student's performance and history. Comprehensive assessment must occur prior to determining that a student has a disability which impacts progress in general curriculum, thus making him or her eligible for special education services.  **Final recommendations regarding eligibility and services will be determined by the IEP team.** |
| Response to Intervention (RtI) Model | The term Response to Intervention (RtI) refers to a process that emphasizes how well a student responds to meaningful changes in instruction. The essential elements of the RtI approach are: the provision of scientific, research-based instruction and interventions in general education; monitoring and measurement of student progress in response to the instruction and interventions; and use of these measures of student progress to inform instruction and make educational decisions.  A student is identified as having a Specific Learning Disability if he or she displays insufficient response to scientific, research-based intervention as well as insufficient progress toward grade-level standards. |
| Patterns of Strength and Weakness (PSW) Model | The Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses model refers to a thorough examination of a student’s basic psychological processes (i.e. visual, auditory, memory, attention, etc.) using a range of information gathered through standardized assessment (WISC-IV, WJ-IV Cog), criterion referenced assessment (i.e. DIBELS) and curriculum-based assessment tools.  To qualify as a student with a Specific Learning Disability, the student must display a measured weakness in one or more of the basic psychological processes related to the specific performance and/or achievement weakness (area of concern as reported by observation and assessment data). Student must also display strength in one or more unrelated or minimally related processes. |