

**Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses  
Standards and Procedures**

**for**

**Identification of Students with Suspected  
Specific Learning Disabilities**



**March, 2010**



# **Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses Methodology**

## **Introduction**

Emerging practices suggest any referral for special education evaluation and services for students experiencing academic difficulties, including English Language Learners, should occur only after the student participates in a pre/referral process that includes instructional intervention and progress monitoring in general education. Federal law implies a need for a pre/referral process which provides all students with high quality instruction in the core curriculum and uses a tiered intervention process that monitors student performance on scientific, research-based and culturally/linguistically responsive instructional interventions that are implemented within the general education classroom.

A pre/referral process incorporates an instructional intervention and progress monitoring framework derived from behaviorist learning theory and a Response to Intervention (RtI) methodology. Response to Intervention is an approach to delivering services to all students that includes the coordinated efforts of general education, supplemental intervention services (Title One), and special education. In an RtI model, intervention is provided through a multi-tiered system of service delivery. Within each tier, the problem-solving framework is utilized. Within the RtI framework, all students in the school are screened for academic difficulties (i.e., reading). Intervention plans are developed and implemented for students identified as at-risk on the universal screening instrument. The effectiveness of the intervention is systematically monitored using curriculum based measures (CBM). Based on progress monitoring data, intervention plans are adjusted and changed as needed. RtI practices are proactive in nature. Systematic interventions are put into place as soon as the student demonstrates a discrepancy from local and national standards. The heart of the RtI model is prevention. The model strives to reduce the incidence of “instructional casualties” by ensuring that students are provided with high quality instruction within the general education classroom and within the provided supplemental services.

In addition to the prevention component of the RtI approach, implementing the model provides an alternative to severe discrepancy method in the identification of students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). Districts are no longer required to consider whether a student has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual abilities when identifying students as SLD. In an RtI model, students who continue to struggle within the general education curriculum despite receiving intensive, explicit and systematic intervention, as evidenced through progress monitoring results, can be found eligible for special education services under the SLD label.

While districts in Lenawee County are in the process of developing a model of prevention and intervention (RtI), this document of utilizing Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses will be used in the interim. Future methods for determining SLD eligibility will include an RtI manual of Standards and Procedures Identification; however, from this date forward, a discrepant model of identification for SLD will no longer be utilized.

## Overview

The Lenawee Intermediate School District's (LISD) Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) Standards and Procedures comprehensive evaluation model was developed to evaluate students for special education eligibility and services for students suspected as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD).

The LISD developed these procedures to provide a framework to organize, review and evaluate assessment data in terms of the student's patterns of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement and intellectual development/basic psychological processes, as related to the specific areas of disability(ies) and the educational needs of the student.

**Prior to consideration of special education eligibility as a student with a SLD, instructional strategies, delivered at the student's instructional level, within the general education setting, must be documented. Additionally, notice regarding interventions delivered by staff other than the student's regular classroom teaching staff must be made in writing to parents/guardians prior to implementation.**

If the "child study team" suspects a disability, it is suggested a Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) be completed to determine if additional data is needed before a referral is sought. This does not supersede any formal request for referral.

### Basic Psychological Processes

These Standards and Procedures require that basic psychological processes be considered. The IEP Team must consider and gather data on the basic psychological processes in the area(s) of concern; i.e., memory, processing, attention, visual, auditory, sensori-motor, mental control, problem solving, and language use.

The District makes distinctions between three concepts:

1. Intellectual development: is used in the following manner on the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team form:

*"Exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to student's age, or to state approved grade level standards or intellectual development."*

Intellectual development is defined to include broad measures of cognitive ability, such as a Full Scale IQ, General Intellectual Ability, or Broad Cognitive Ability. **A broad measure of intellectual development is not always necessary for the IEP Team to obtain.** However, if, as part of the evaluation planning process the team determines some measure of intellectual development is relevant to the working hypothesis, obtaining it may be included in the planning and evaluation process.

2. Cognitive processes: as a term is not referenced in the language of Michigan's SLD regulations. However, the term has been used interchangeably with mental processes and information processing. Cognitive processes refer to specific, and sometimes narrow factors, as measured by an individual assessment instrument (e.g., WJ-III Working Memory).
3. Basic psychological processes: refer to the 9 global processes referenced in the previous section. Because the definition of specific learning disability includes a "disorder in one or more" of these basic psychological processes, the IEP Team must consider data associated with these processes as part of a comprehensive evaluation and when determining eligibility for specific learning disabilities.

## Evaluation Planning

An Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team must undertake a review of existing evaluation data to determine if the student is a student with a disability (§300.305). The IEP team may undertake a Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) at an initial evaluation, if appropriate.

These standards and procedures assure that assessment methods/materials are sufficiently comprehensive to meet the criteria outlined in Section 300.34 – Evaluation Procedures (IDEIA 2004).

### Evaluation Planning

- **Review** with the parents and members of the IEP Team the following information:
  - a. Existing evaluation data;
  - b. Evaluation and information provided by the parents of the child;
  - c. Current classroom-based, local, or state assessments, and classroom-based observations;
  - d. Observations by teachers and related services providers; and
  - e. Exclusionary factors, including the appropriate consideration of cultural and linguistic background information.
- **Determine**, based on the above review and input from the student's parents, if any other evaluation procedures and assessment methods/materials are required to determine whether the student is, or continues to be, a student with a disability. Also complete the following:
  - a. Review any interventions utilized including any used through the evaluation period;
  - b. Assess relevant functional, developmental and academic information about the student; and
  - c. Identify information related to enabling the student to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum.
- **Develop** an individualized evaluation plan designed to assess the specific disability(ies) and areas of educational needs, including a working hypothesis about specific barriers to student learning and/or other referral concerns or questions.
- **Develop** a working hypothesis about a weakness in a basic psychological process.
- **Elicit** parent concerns regarding the evaluation plan.

## Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses – Initial Evaluation

The purposes of the initial evaluation include:

1. To determine if the student meets eligibility criteria for a specific learning disability and the educational needs of the student if appropriate;
2. To develop a statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) and a statement of annual IEP goals;
3. To plan and review instructional interventions and develop Annual Goal(s) and Short-term Objectives to meet learner needs and characteristics (e.g., language and cultural background); and
4. To provide a description of how the student's progress towards meeting the IEP goals will be measured and reported.

### Data Analysis – Initial Evaluation

- **Organize** data gathered across any pre-referral and evaluation procedures, conduct a thorough review of the data, and identify if there are any patterns of strengths and weaknesses in a student's performance, achievement or intellectual development / basic psychological processes.
- **Review** the PSW Standards and Procedures as an approach to address any relevant exclusionary factors and measure outcomes from the working hypothesis as developed during evaluation planning.
- **Utilize** PSW Data/Measures Guidance and decision rules to help determine the Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses relevant in determining any suspected disability(ies).

### Data/Measures Guidance – Initial Evaluation

- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) and decision rules are applied through the eligibility determination (criterion-referenced assessments, curriculum based or grade level assessments, norm referenced assessments, anecdotal information, and consideration of basic psychological processes).
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), a single assessment which can be scored either as a criterion referenced assessment or a norm-referenced assessment, must only be used in one or the other area and may not be used for both.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) must include at least one measure of Academic Achievement; i.e., a criterion assessment, a norm referenced assessment, or both, as an area of Weakness when determining eligibility.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) may include more than one Classroom Performance with respect to age; however, only one Strength or Weakness will be counted toward determining eligibility.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) must include at least one measure of Classroom Performance as an area of Weakness when determining eligibility.

- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), used in assessment, are for determining statistical (not occurring by chance) and normative (unusual in the population) occurrences of the obtained scores.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), for determining weaknesses and strengths, may be specific for the instrument used. For standardized measures with a 100 mean/15 standard deviation, the District has determined a weakness as the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile (SS=80) or below and a strength as the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile (SS=90) or above.
- Statistically significant differences, along with unusual prevalence rates, could be used when a weakness in a basic process is somewhat high (e.g., near SS=90) and the strength is well above (e.g., near SS=120+). Similarly, it could be used when strengths are near average (e.g., near SS=90) and weaknesses are substantially below (e.g., SS<70).
- If considering eligibility in one of the language processes, a Speech and Language Pathologist must be a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team member. [Refer to section titled Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension.]

### **Decision Rules – Initial Evaluation**

The SLD eligibility statement criteria, “The child: Exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to...” is met when the IEP Team identifies:

- Two points of evidence of specific performance or achievement strengths in the same Pattern Area; and
- Four points of evidence of specific performance or achievement weakness in each Pattern Area for suspected impairment.
- The same Pattern Area may not be identified as both an overall Area of Strength and Area of Weakness.

### **PSW Methodology Assumptions – Initial Evaluation**

The IEP Team may identify a pattern of strengths and weaknesses when the majority of evaluation data (including standardized assessments and professional observations) supports the minimum eligibility requirements, and when exclusionary factors can be rejected by the data.

Hypotheses developed during evaluation planning must be confirmed by the assessment, refuted by the assessment, or found to be inconclusive. If evaluation results are inconclusive, the IEP team must determine an additional course of action. Acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis by the team following evaluation, however, is only one factor to be considered when determining eligibility.

## Chart: Data/Measures Guidance – Initial Evaluation

The following chart lists the areas of assessment, anecdotal information and consideration of basic psychological processes. Examples of assessments and Cut-off scores are included.

<p><b>Criterion-referenced Assessments</b>  <i>Investigating student's academic achievement with respect to grade-level expectations</i></p>	
<p>Example: DIBELS            MLPP            Aimsweb</p>	<p>Strength = at "benchmark" or equivalent            Weakness = "at-risk" or equivalent            * Using local norms when available</p>
<p><b>Norm-referenced Standardized Academic Assessments</b>  <i>Investigating student's academic achievement with respect to age-level expectations</i></p>	
<p>Example: Wechsler Individual Achievement Test            Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement            Kaufman Tests of Educational Achievement            Oral and Written Language Scales</p>	<p>Strength <math>\geq</math> 25<sup>th</sup> percentile            Weakness <math>\leq</math> 10<sup>th</sup> percentile</p> <p style="text-align: right;">*Using age-norms to score</p>
<p><b>State / District Assessments</b>  <i>Investigating student's classroom performance with respect to grade-level expectations</i></p>	
<p>Example: MEAP</p>	<p>Strength = meets/exceeds            Weakness = does not meet</p>
<p>Example: Chapter assessments from adopted curricula            Informal Reading Inventories            Writing Prompts</p>	<p>Strength = average or above            Weakness = below average</p>
<p><b>Classroom Performance Information (Grades, Anecdotal, Observations)</b>  <i>Investigating student's classroom performance with respect to age-level expectations</i></p>	
<p>Example: Anecdotal/observation information of a student's classroom performance compared to age/grade peers</p>	<p>Strength = supportive data            Weakness = supportive data</p>
<p><b>Consideration of Basic Psychological Processes</b>  <i>Investigating student's academic achievement and classroom performance with respect to his/her intellectual development</i></p>	
<p>Example: Norm-referenced intellectual assessments            (i.e., WISC-IV / WAIS-III, WJ-III, CAS, KABC-II, DAS)</p>	<p>Strength <math>\geq</math> 25<sup>th</sup> percentile            Weakness <math>\leq</math> 10<sup>th</sup> percentile</p>
<p>And/or Rating Scales            (i.e., BRIEF, Connors-3, BASC-2, PPC-R)</p>	<p>Strength = non-clinical range            Weakness = clinical or at-risk ranges</p>
<p>And/or Structured observational data</p>	<p>Strength = supportive data            Weakness = supportive data</p>
<p><i>*Basic Psychological Processes include Memory, Attention, Processing, Problem solving /judgment, Visual, Auditory, Sensory-motor, Language Use and/or Mental Control (Exec funct)</i></p>	



## Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses – Reevaluation

The purposes of the reevaluation include:

1. To determine if the student continues to meet eligibility criteria for specific learning disability and the educational needs of the student if appropriate;
2. To develop a statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) and a statement of annual IEP goals;
3. To plan and review instructional interventions and develop/revise Annual Goals and Short-term Objectives to meet learner needs and characteristics (e.g., language and cultural background); and
4. To provide a description of how the student's continued progress towards meeting the IEP goals will be measured and reported.

The reevaluation process is similar to the initial evaluation. The Data Analysis and PSW Data/Measures Guidance and Decision Rules for reevaluation process include a determination of the student's progress toward achieving IEP goals; i.e., age and grade level academic expectations.

### Data Analysis – Reevaluation

- **Organize** data gathered across evaluation procedures, including data required for reevaluations, conduct a thorough review of the data, and identify if there are patterns of strengths and weaknesses in a student's performance, achievement or intellectual development / basic psychological processes.
- **Review** the PSW Standards and Procedures as an approach to address any relevant exclusionary factors and measure outcomes from the working hypothesis, as developed during evaluation planning.
- **Utilize** the reevaluation PSW Data/Measures Guidance and Decision Rules to help determine the Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses relevant in determining if a student continues to meet eligibility for Specific Learning Disability(ies).

### Data/Measures Guidance - Reevaluation

- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) and decision rules are applied through the reevaluation process and the eligibility determination (criterion referenced assessments, State / district level assessments, norm-referenced assessments, anecdotal information and consideration of basic psychological processes).
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), a single assessment which can be scored either as a criterion referenced assessment or a norm-referenced assessment, must only be used in one or the other area and may not be used for both.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) must include at least one measure of Academic Achievement; i.e., a criterion assessment, a norm-referenced assessment, or both, as an area of Weakness when determining eligibility.

- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) may include more than one Classroom Performance with respect to age or grade-level expectation; however, only one Strength or Weakness will be counted toward determining eligibility.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) must include at least one measure of Classroom Performance as an area of Weakness when determining eligibility.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) must include one or both of the Academic Achievement areas; i.e., a criterion assessment, a norm-referenced assessment, or both.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), used in assessment, are for determining statistical (not occurring by chance) and normative (unusual in the population) occurrences of the obtained scores.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), for determining weaknesses and strengths, may be specific for the instrument used. For standardized measures with a 100 mean/15 standard deviation, the District has determined a weakness as the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile (SS=80) or below and a strength as the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile (SS=90) or above.
- Statistically significant differences, along with unusual prevalence rates, could be used when a weakness in a basic process is somewhat high (e.g., near SS=90) and the strength is well above (e.g., near SS=120+). Similarly, it could be used when strengths are near average (e.g., near SS=90) and weaknesses are substantially below (e.g., SS<70).
- If considering eligibility in one of the language processes, a Speech and Language Pathologist must be a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team member. [Refer to section titled Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension]
- Reevaluation: Specific Data/Measures Guidance
  1. The reevaluation process determines a student's progress toward age and grade level academic expectations.
 

A student may demonstrate adequate progress (strength) when s/he is:

    - a. Meeting IEP goal criteria when the goal is aligned near or at grade level standards; and
    - b. Performing within or above the average range on academic assessments.

A student may demonstrate lack of progress (weakness) when s/he is:

    - a. Not meeting the IEP goal criteria when the goal is aligned at or below grade level performance standards; and
    - b. Performing below the average range on academic assessments.
  2. The reevaluation process continues to review and/or identify strengths and weaknesses in the student's basic psychological processes.

## **Decision Rules - Reevaluation**

The SLD eligibility statement criteria, “The child: Exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to...” is met when the IEP Team identifies:

- Two points of evidence of specific performance or achievement strengths in the same Pattern Area; and
- Three points of evidence of specific performance or achievement weakness in each Pattern Area for suspected impairment.
- The same Pattern Area may not be identified as both an overall Area of Strength and Area of Weakness.

## **PSW Methodology Assumptions – Reevaluation**

The IEP Team may identify a pattern of strengths and weaknesses when the majority of reevaluation data (including standardized assessments and professional observations) supports the minimum eligibility requirements, and when exclusionary factors can be rejected by the data.

Hypotheses developed during reevaluation planning must be confirmed by the assessment, refuted by the assessment, or found to be inconclusive. If evaluation results are inconclusive, the IEP team must determine an additional course of action. Acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis by the team following reevaluation, however, is only one factor to be considered when determining continuing eligibility.

If the reevaluation data do not support the identification of a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in basic psychological processes, the IEP Team must consider and document if there were any areas not evaluated or considered in the course of assessment. If there were other assessment concerns (such as inadequate assessment instruments, poor testing conditions and/or other factors), the IEP Team must either address the concerns with documentation or conduct additional assessment.

The reevaluation process specifically reviews the student’s response to the IEP goals and other academic areas when compared to age and grade level academic expectations. A student may demonstrate adequate progress (strength) when s/he meets IEP goal criteria when the goal is aligned near or at grade level standards and/or performs within or above the average range on academic assessments.

## Chart: Data/Measures Guidance - Reevaluation

The following chart lists the areas of assessment, anecdotal information and consideration of basic psychological processes. Examples of assessments and Cut-off scores are included in the chart. In the reevaluation process, a student's strengths and weaknesses are determined by both percentile Cut-off scores and IEP goal criteria related to age/grade level expectations or standards.

<b>Criterion-referenced Assessments</b> <i>Investigating student's academic achievement with respect to grade-level expectations</i>	
<i>Example: DIBELS MLPP Aimsweb</i>	Strength = at "benchmark" or equivalent Weakness = "at-risk" or equivalent
<i>Example: Response to Specifically Designed Instruction/ IEP goals</i>	Strength = Meets IEP criteria when goals are aligned near or at grade level standards Weakness = Meets/Does not meet IEP criteria when goals are below grade level standards
<b>Norm-referenced Standardized Academic Assessments</b> <i>Investigating student's academic achievement with respect to age-level expectations</i>	
<i>Example: Wechsler Individual Achievement Test Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement Kaufman Tests of Educational Achievement Oral and Written Language Scales</i>	Strength $\geq 25^{\text{th}}$ percentile Weakness $\leq 10^{\text{th}}$ percentile  *Using age-norms to score
<b>State or District Assessments</b> <i>Investigating student's classroom performance with respect to grade-level expectations</i>	
<i>Example: MEAP</i>	Strength = meets/exceeds Weakness = does not meet
<i>Chapter assessments from adopted curricula Informal Reading Inventories Writing Prompts</i>	Strength = average or above Weakness = below average
<i>Example: Response to Specifically Designed Instruction/IEP goals</i>	Strength = Meets IEP criteria when goals are aligned near or at grade level standards Weakness = Meets/Does not meet IEP criteria when goals are below grade level standards
<b>Classroom Performance Information (Grades, Anecdotal, Observations)</b> <i>Investigating student's classroom performance with respect to age-level expectations</i>	
<i>Example: Anecdotal/observation information of a student's classroom performance compared to age/grade peers</i>	Strength = supportive data Weakness = supportive data
<i>Example: Response to Specifically Designed Instruction/IEP goals</i>	Strength = Performing within or above the average range compared to peers Weakness = Performing below average range compared to peers
<b>Consideration of Basic Psychological Processes</b> <i>Investigating student's academic achievement and classroom performance with respect to his/her intellectual development</i>	
<i>Example: Norm-referenced intellectual assessments (i.e., WISC-IV / WAIS-III, WJ-III, CAS, KABC-II, DAS)</i>	Strength $\geq 25^{\text{th}}$ percentile Weakness $\leq 10^{\text{th}}$ percentile
<i>And/or Rating Scales (i.e., BRIEF, Connors-3, BASC-2, PPC-R)</i>	Strength = non-clinical range Weakness = clinical or at-risk ranges
<i>And/or Structured observational data</i>	Strength = supportive data Weakness = supportive data
<i>*Basic Psychological Processes include: Memory, Attention, Processing, Problem solving/judgment, Visual, Auditory, Sensory-motor, Language Use and/or Mental Control (Exec funct)</i>	

## Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension

The following information pertains only to Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension and is to be used for both initial evaluations and reevaluations.

### Data Analysis

- **Organize** data gathered across evaluation procedures, conduct a thorough review of the data, and identify if there are patterns of strengths and weaknesses in a student's performance, achievement or intellectual development / basic psychological processes.
- **Review** the PSW Standards and Procedures as an approach to address any relevant exclusionary factors and measure outcomes from the working hypothesis, as developed during evaluation planning.
- **Utilize** the Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension PSW Data/Measures Guidance and Decision Rules to help determine the Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses relevant in determining if a student continues to meet eligibility for Specific Learning Disability(ies).

### Data/Measures Guidance

- If considering eligibility in one of the language processes, a Speech and Language Pathologist must be a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team member.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) and decision rules are applied through the evaluation process and the eligibility determination.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) evaluation must include at least one norm-referenced academic assessment (full and comprehensive battery), at least one norm-referenced language assessment (full and comprehensive battery), a Language Sample, observation(s), and at least one measure of Classroom Performance.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) Language Samples must include oral and written language samples to further investigate the student's language function within the curriculum. Samples would be further analyzed at the Word level, Sentence level, and Discourse Level.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores) may include more than one Classroom Performance with respect to age-level expectations; however, only one Strength or Weakness will be counted toward determining eligibility.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), used in assessment, are for determining statistical (not occurring by chance) and normative (unusual in the population) occurrences of the obtained scores.
- Data/Measures Guidance (Cut-off scores), for determining weaknesses and strengths, may be specific for the instrument used. For standardized measures with a 100 mean/15 standard deviation, the District has determined a weakness as the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile (SS=80) or below and a strength as the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile (SS=90) or above.

## **Decision Rules**

The SLD eligibility statement criteria, “The child: Exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to...” is met when the IEP Team identifies:

- Two points of evidence of specific performance or achievement strengths in the same Pattern Area; and
- Four points of evidence of specific performance or achievement weakness in each Pattern Area of concern for suspected impairment.
- The same Pattern Area may not be identified as both an overall Area of Strength and Area of Weakness.

## **PSW Methodology Assumptions**

The IEP Team may identify a pattern of strengths and weaknesses when the majority of evaluation data (including language sample and professional observations) supports the minimum eligibility requirements, and when exclusionary factors can be rejected by the data.

Hypotheses developed during evaluation planning must be confirmed by the assessment, refuted by the assessment, or found to be inconclusive. If evaluation results are inconclusive, the IEP team must determine an additional course of action. Acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis by the team following evaluation, however, is only one factor to be considered when determining continuing eligibility.

If the evaluation data do not support the identification of a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in basic psychological processes, the IEP Team must consider and document if there were any areas not evaluated or considered in the course of assessment. If there were other assessment concerns (such as inadequate assessment instruments, poor testing conditions and/or other factors), the IEP Team must either address the concerns with documentation or conduct additional assessment.

The reevaluation process specifically reviews the student’s response to the IEP goals and other academic areas when compared to age and grade level academic expectations. A student may demonstrate adequate progress (strength) when s/he meets IEP goal criteria when the goal is aligned near or at grade level standards and/or performs within or above the average range on academic assessments.

## Chart: Data/Measures Guidance – Oral Expression/Listening Comprehension Evaluation

The following chart lists the areas of assessment, anecdotal information and consideration of basic psychological processes. Examples of assessments and Cut-off scores are included in the chart. In the reevaluation process, a student's strengths and weaknesses are determined by both percentile Cut-off scores and IEP goal criteria related to age/grade level expectations or standards.

<p><b>Criterion-referenced Assessments</b> Investigating student's academic achievement with respect to grade-level expectations</p>	
<p>Example: Language Sample</p>	<p>Strength = average or above Weakness = below average</p>
<p>Example: Response to Specifically Designed Instruction/ IEP goals</p>	<p>Strength = Meets IEP criteria when goals are aligned near or at grade level standards Weakness = Meets/Does not meet IEP criteria when goals are below grade level standards</p>
<p><b>Norm-referenced Standardized Academic Assessments</b> Investigating student's academic achievement with respect to age-level expectations</p>	
<p>Example: Clinical Evaluation Language Fundamentals Test of Language Development</p>	<p>Strength <math>\geq</math> 25<sup>th</sup> percentile Weakness <math>\leq</math> 10<sup>th</sup> percentile *Using age-norms to score</p>
<p><b>Checklists</b> Investigating student's classroom performance with respect to grade-level expectations</p>	
<p>Example: Teacher Checklist Parent Checklist</p>	<p>Strength = supportive data Weakness = supportive data</p>
<p><b>Classroom Performance Information (Grades, Inventories, Observations)</b> Investigating student's classroom performance with respect to age-level expectations</p>	
<p>Example: Informal Reading Inventories Informal Spelling Inventories</p>	<p>Strength = average or above Weakness = below average</p>
<p>Example: Anecdotal/observation information of a student's classroom performance compared to age/grade peers</p>	<p>Strength = supportive data Weakness = supportive data</p>
<p>Example: Response to Specifically Designed Instruction/IEP goals</p>	<p>Strength = Performing within or above the average range compared to peers Weakness = Performing below average range compared to peers</p>
<p><b>Consideration of Basic Psychological Processes</b> Investigating student's academic achievement and classroom performance with respect to his/her intellectual development</p>	
<p>Example: Norm-referenced intellectual assessments (i.e., WISC-IV / WAIS-III, WJ-III, CAS, KABC-II, DAS)</p>	<p>Strength <math>\geq</math> 25<sup>th</sup> percentile Weakness <math>\leq</math> 10<sup>th</sup> percentile</p>
<p>And/or Rating Scales (i.e., BRIEF, Connors-3, BASC-2, PPC-R)</p>	<p>Strength = non-clinical range Weakness = clinical or at-risk ranges</p>
<p>And/or Structured observational data</p>	<p>Strength = supportive data Weakness = supportive data</p>
<p>*Basic Psychological Processes include: Memory, Attention, Processing, Problem solving/judgment, Visual, Auditory, Sensory-motor, Language Use and/or Mental Control (Exec funct)</p>	

## Eligibility Determination

- **Provide** written Parental Notification in the parent's native language as specified under IDEIA 2004 and invite parents to attend the meeting; i.e., IEP notice for determining the student's eligibility for special education services.
- **Ensure** that the required members of the team attend the eligibility IEP determination meeting, including the parents, and qualified professionals in accordance with IDEIA 2004.
- **Include** an interpreter in the meeting to ensure the parents understand and can be fully involved in the process.
- **Review** all background, evaluation and assessment results including information from any Pre/Referral Process and/or progress monitoring data.
- **Apply** the PSW Methodology as an approach to organize, review and evaluate assessment data.
- **Apply** PSW Data/Measures Guidance and decision rules to help determine a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses.
- **Review** exclusionary factors when considering the student's performance.
- **Elicit** parent input regarding eligibility. School personnel should assist parents in becoming familiar with the special education disability category(ies) being considered, so they can be active participants in the eligibility decision-making process. Parents should receive verbal and written notification in their native language of their right to agree or disagree with eligibility decisions and to receive appropriate eligibility documentation.
- **Determine** student eligibility by following these procedures and the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education.
- **Document** all assessment data and conclusions including a statement of eligibility for special education, noting any inconsistencies in data, and a record of the discussion regarding the significance of the significance of cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, environmental factors and the student behaviors and learning factors related to the assessment data.
- **Refer** students who do not meet the Special Education eligibility requirements or who have learning difficulties that result from exclusionary factors, to the building's Team for continued instructional interventions and progress monitoring.



## **Appendix A: Definitions - Basic Psychological Processes**

### **Visual**

The Visual Process is defined by cognitive mechanisms that are involved in the retention, processing and organization of visual information so as to demonstrate accurate perception. For PSW, these should not be confused as a measure of the sensory mechanism of sight, but rather as indicators of the more complex underlying cognitive activities. Measures of the visual process may include factors, such as spatial awareness, visual perceptual skills, perceptual organization, visual mental manipulation, and perceptual discrimination.

### **Auditory**

The Auditory Process is not intended to be a measure of acuity of the sensory mechanism. Rather, it is intended to be the underlying cognitive mechanism involved in using auditory information for the purpose of learning. Measures of the auditory process may include phonemic awareness (including rhyming, segmentation, sound-symbol association, etc.), auditory perception, sound discrimination, and auditory mental manipulation.

### **Attention**

The Attention Process involves the individual's ability to attend to, or to selectively attenuate, perceptual stimuli in a systematic and effective manner. This process includes measures of selective attention, sustained attention, response inhibition, attention shifting, and focus.

### **Memory**

The Memory Process is a complex and multifaceted domain related to many areas of learning. Specific kinds of memory are utilized depending on task demands. The memory process involves the ability to store and retrieve information in a useful manner. Measures of this process include short-term memory, working memory, associative memory, and long-term retrieval.

### **Processing**

Processing can be globally defined as the ability to make efficient and rapid decisions or quickly perceive distinctions in stimuli. Processing involves input and output mechanisms, and frequently is demonstrated under timed conditions. Measures of processing include processing speed, automaticity and rapid decision-making. Processing may also include aspects of Rapid Automatic Naming facility, though this is an overlapping domain with memory.

### **Mental Control**

The Mental Control Process may be thought of as an individual's ability to manage and prioritize perceptions to facilitate decision making and problem solving. Mental control allows the individual to recognize the nature of a problem, plan a course of action, and sequence multiple actions to solve a problem. Mental Control abilities may be identified through measures of executive functioning, planning, organization, and self-regulation.

## **Problem Solving/Judgment**

Like memory, the Problem-Solving Process is a complex activity that involves multiple processes. The Problem-Solving Process is defined by an individual's skill at analysis and synthesis of multiple elements to resolve problems. The capability to engage in interpersonal interaction and social learning is involved. Measures of Problem Solving and Judgment include social awareness, reasoning skills, decision making, fluid reasoning, and emotional control.

## **Language Use**

The Language Use Process involves the individual's skill at using verbal information to define concepts and solve problems. Language Use includes both the understanding and production of meaningful speech and communication. Language Use may include measures of receptive language, expressive language, listening comprehension, vocabulary development, and general knowledge.

## **Sensori-Motor (Action/Output)**

The Sensori-Motor Process involves integration of perceptual and cognitive skills to organize physical output. The Sensory-Motor Process can include all types of motor output including speech, gross motor and fine motor skills. For the use as a basic psychological process involved in learning, Sensori-Motor primarily involves fine motor output. The Sensori-Motor Process may include measures of visual-motor integration, motor speed, and overall fine/gross motor skills.

## Appendix B: Basic Psychological Processes – Specific Learning Disabilities

This chart provides the IEP Team with a starting point when considering academic skill weaknesses and associated basic psychological processes. It is important to note research suggests there is an overlap between basic psychological processes and across academic skill areas.

	Memory	Processing	Auditory	Mental Control	Problem Solving	Language Use	Sensori-motor	Visual	Attention
Basic Reading Skills	*	*	*			*			
Reading Fluency	*	*		*					*
Reading Comprehension	*			*	*	*			
Math Calculation	*	*		*					*
Math Problem Solving	*			*		*		*	
Written Expression				*	*	*	*		
Oral Expression						*			
Listening Comprehension						*			

Name:

District/Building:

Date:

**Charting Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses**

Source: Adapted from Eugene School District 4J, Oregon

Pattern Areas	Academic Achievement with respect to <b>grade-level</b> expectations	Academic Achievement with respect to <b>age-level</b> expectations	State or District Performance with respect to <b>grade-level</b> expectations		Classroom Performance with respect to <b>age-level</b> expectations			Basic Psychological Processes
	Criterion Assessment	Norm-ref. Assessment	Statewide Assessment Data	District or Common Assessment Data	Grades	Anecdotal	Observations	
Basic Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N
Reading Fluency	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N
Reading Comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N
Written Expression	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N
Math Calculation	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N
Math Problem Solving	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N
	<b>Language Sample</b>	<b>Norm-ref Assessment</b>		<b>Teacher Checklist</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Inventories</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Psychological Processes</b>
Oral Expression	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N
Listening Comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> S W N

S = Strength

W = Weakness

N = Neither Strength / Weakness

**Summary of Findings:**

Area(s) of Strength:

Area(s) of Weakness: