

To determine the existence of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Commonwealth Development Academy utilizes a method that evaluates the student's Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) called the Aptitude-Achievement Consistency Model, which is based on CHC Theory and detailed in Sections 10 thru 13 (pages 99-132) of the Wayne County RESA Guidance for the Determination of Specific Learning Disabilities (2009). See the links at the end of this document for further information.

Definition of a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses Process:

1. The student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified at 34 CFR §300.300.309(a)(1)(i) when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or State approved grade-level standards; and
2. The student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the MET to be relevant to the identification of an SLD, using appropriate assessments, consistent with the IDEA Evaluation Procedures and Additional Requirements for Evaluations and Reevaluations.

Students attending the Academy receive appropriate evidenced based instruction in regular education setting by qualified personnel. A variety of assessment tools are used to measure the student's academic achievement in the general education setting. These assessments may include, but are not limited to, chapter tests and State assessments. If there are concerns about a student's academic achievement, strategies and interventions are developed and implemented to help the student improve their academic performance. The student's progress is monitored, on average, at intervals of approximately two to four weeks. This timeline can be extended if deemed necessary.

The Evaluation Process

The Review of Existing Evaluation data (REED) is used to review data that will be used to help in determining if the student has an SLD. The school must obtain consent from the student's parent prior to conducting an evaluation for an SLD. Parents have the right to request additional interventions and strategies be implemented in the general education setting before granting consent to conduct the evaluation for an SLD.

The sources reviewed to determine the existence of an SLD include, but are not limited to:

- School Records – (teacher reports, attendance records, report cards/transcripts, discipline records)
- Previous Assessments (classroom, district, state) the student's level of proficiency with State standards, as measured by State assessments and/or district benchmark assessments

- Parent Input - (Including physical/medical condition, social or cultural background, adaptive behavior)
- Limited English Proficiency
- Direct observation of the student in the general education setting (including relevant behavior and its relationship to academic functioning in the area(s) of suspected disability §330.310) by qualified educational personnel
- History of, and response to, supplemental interventions
- Academic work samples
- Interview student, parents and teachers regarding concerns related to the areas of suspected disability
- Academic Achievement levels using multiple assessments tools (i.e., Curriculum-Based, Criterion Referenced, Norm-Referenced and Benchmark Assessments) Cognitive Testing, Diagnostic Achievement Testing

After the evaluation for an SLD is conducted, a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) meeting is held to evaluate the documents for the student and makes recommendation of eligibility to the IEP team. The IEP team then determines SLD eligibility for the student.

If parents have questions, they can contact the special education department at the Academy. Parents can also find additional information on the PSW approach that Commonwealth Development Academy uses on the Wayne County RESA website.

<http://resa.net/services/spedcompliance/learningdisabilities/>,

http://resa.net/downloads/special_education/trifold_brochure_for_parents_20100415_081414_4.pdf

http://resa.net/downloads/special_education/overview_sld_determination_20100805_140910_10.pdf