

EVALUATION REPORT (ANNOTATED)

Student's Name:

**EVALUATION REPORT (Annotated)**

**School Age**

**ANNOTATION:**

The *Evaluation Report* is completed to document the process in which an evaluation team, defined in Federal and State regulations as a group of qualified professionals and the parent of the student, determine if the student is a student with a disability and in need of special education services. This form is used only when evaluating a student who is not yet identified as a school age special education student.

Under Pennsylvania regulations, a certified school psychologist is a required member of the evaluation team when evaluating a student for autism, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, other health impairments, specific learning disability, or traumatic brain injury.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report (mm/dd/yy): \_\_\_\_\_ Date Report Provided to Parent/Guardian/Surrogate: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Education Agency (LEA): \_\_\_\_\_

School Student is Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Educational Program: \_\_\_\_\_

County of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (Home): \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Parent/Guardian/Surrogate: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (Work): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNOTATION:**

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are to include the demographic information listed above. LEAs may include additional information they find useful. The Date of Report is the date all of the information is compiled and the report is written. The date must be no more than 60 calendar days from receipt of written parental consent for evaluation. The calendar days from the day after the last day of the spring school term up to and including the day before the first day of the subsequent fall school term are not to be counted in the 60 calendar days.

Complete Sections 1 through 6 for all students.

If determining eligibility for Specific Learning Disability (SLD), the SLD component near the end of this document must be completed and used to complete Sections 5 and 6.

**1. REASON(S) FOR REFERRAL:**

**ANNOTATION:**

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine 1) the student's eligibility for special education programs and services (i.e., the student has a disability and needs specially designed instruction) and 2) the educational needs of the student. The information in this section should relate to the areas of concern/reasons for referral on the *Permission to Evaluate-Consent Form*. Information should be provided as to who initiated the referral (e.g., teacher, parent). This section should clearly indicate why the evaluation was necessary, and should provide a clear picture of the factors considered in putting together the evaluation components. Input from the parents should relate to, and offer information that would be helpful in addressing, the Reason(s) for Referral.

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The IEP team must address the following special considerations before developing the IEP: visual impairment; hearing impairment; behaviors that impede learning or that of others; limited English proficiency; communication needs; and assistive technology devices and/or services. The information needed to identify the special considerations should be collected during the evaluation, and could be addressed in this section.

2. **SOURCES OF EVALUATION DATA** - In interpreting evaluation data, the school must draw upon a variety of data sources, including those listed below, and carefully consider the information obtained. Document the information obtained from the sources below.

A. Evaluations and information provided by the parent of the student (or documentation of LEA's attempts to obtain parental input):

### ANNOTATION:

An important part of the ER is the input and information that has been provided by (not about) the parents or persons with whom the student lives, as well as the results of any independent educational evaluations that have been completed. The extent to which observed school performance is or is not demonstrated in the home or community can be important in planning a student's educational program. This is especially pertinent to the evaluation of the student's adaptive behavior. Information from the parents should be clearly indicated, with a phrase such as, "As reported by the parents..." The LEA will develop a form and/or process for collecting parent input. This information may be provided in writing, via phone, through conversation, etc. If unable to get input from the parents, attempts made to obtain the information must be documented **within this section**.

B. Observations - Include teacher observations and observations by related services providers, when appropriate:

### ANNOTATION:

This item should summarize observations made by teachers and, when appropriate, other educational professionals, about the student in various settings. The observations should document specific skills that the student is capable of performing, or specific skills that the student lacks. Observations also may include information from more than one subject or class and include task comprehension, task completion, time spent on task, classroom environment and level of peer interaction. This section can include statements made about the student that are not the result of someone doing a formal observation of the student in a particular setting.

C. Recommendations by teachers:

### ANNOTATION:

Teacher recommendations should be based on the review of results and interpretation of the student's formative, diagnostic, and benchmark assessments, including progress monitoring data. Recommendations can be made regarding classroom strategies implemented that assist the student in accessing the general education curriculum and meeting the goals in his/her current IEP. Teachers may recommend supplemental aids and services (e.g., collaborative, instructional, physical, behavioral), modifications and specially designed instruction that would assist the student in meeting his or her goals and participating in the general educational setting.

D. The student's physical condition (include health, vision, hearing); social or cultural background; and adaptive behavior relevant to the student's suspected disability and potential need for special education:

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This item should summarize information reviewed regarding the student's physical, social or cultural background, and other aspects of the student's life that impact on his/her current educational performance. If appropriate, this section should include a statement about the student's proficiency with the English language and the impact his/her skill level may have on participation in the general education curriculum with appropriate supplementary aids and services. Historical information that has no relevance to the recommendation regarding eligibility or programming should not be included. This information should be gathered from current student data.

- E. Assessments - Include, when appropriate, current classroom based assessments; aptitude and achievement tests; local and/or state assessments; behavioral assessments; vocational technical education assessment results; interests, preferences, aptitudes (for secondary transition); etc.:

### ANNOTATION:

This section should include results of assessments of the student's performance within the general education curriculum, including curriculum-based and performance-based assessments. This information should be based on specific data related to the student's suspected disability and be as comprehensive as possible across varied settings, with the identification of as many variables of learning as possible. For example: Does the student demonstrate inappropriate behaviors only in certain settings? Does the student demonstrate partial competency (some phonological awareness, but no knowledge of alphabetic principle)?

Any assessment data used, whether classroom based, local, or state assessments, must take into account the student's English language proficiency level. All of the assessments must have been administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate results. Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a student must be selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis.

Information should be included about the student's performance on state and local assessments and any special circumstances under which the assessments were administered.

3. **IF AN ASSESSMENT IS NOT CONDUCTED UNDER STANDARD CONDITIONS, DESCRIBE THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT VARIED FROM STANDARD CONDITIONS** (including if the assessment was given in the student's native language or other mode of communication):

### ANNOTATION:

If the assessment was conducted under standard conditions, state that the evaluation was conducted under standard conditions.

If an assessment was not conducted under standard conditions, a description of the extent to which it varied from standard conditions must be included. Such deviations might include the qualifications of the person administering the test or the method of test administration. Were tests selected appropriately and properly validated for the student? Were sub sections of the test given instead of the full assessment? Was the student ill? Was the student given extra time?

If appropriate, include a statement indicating that the assessments met the language criteria: Assessments and other evaluation materials are provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information.

4. **DETERMINING FACTOR:** A student must not be found to be eligible for special education and related services if the determining factor for the student's suspected disability is any of those listed below. Respond Yes or No to, and provide evidence for, each determining factor below.

### ANNOTATION:

This section must be completed for students being considered under all disability categories.

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Yes  No

Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction. Provide evidence:

**ANNOTATION:**

The regulations state that a student must not be determined to be a student with a disability if the determining factor is a lack of appropriate instruction in reading. This applies to all disability categories, not just Specific Learning Disability. If "yes" is checked, describe why reading instruction was inappropriate and provide data showing that such instruction negatively impacted the student's involvement in and progress in the general education curriculum. If "no" is checked, include a statement that provides evidence of appropriate instruction in reading including the essential components. Factors to consider can include the use of scientific research-based interventions, staff development in implementation of the interventions, the use of fidelity checks, and the qualified status of the teacher(s).

Yes  No

Lack of appropriate instruction in math. Provide evidence:

**ANNOTATION:**

The regulations state that a student must not be determined to be a student with a disability if the determining factor is a lack of appropriate instruction in math. This applies to all disability categories, not just Specific Learning Disability. If "yes" is checked, describe why instruction in mathematics was not appropriate and provide data showing that such instruction impacted negatively on the student's involvement in and progress in the general education curriculum. If "no" is checked, include a statement that provides evidence of appropriate instruction in mathematics. Factors to consider can include the use of scientific research-based interventions, staff development in implementation of the interventions, the use of fidelity checks, and the qualified status of the teacher(s).

Yes  No

Limited English proficiency. Provide evidence:

**ANNOTATION:**

A student cannot be found to have a disability if lack of achievement is due to limited English proficiency. In this section, provide an explanation that limited English proficiency has not been a factor in the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, even with appropriate support from a bilingual/ESL program. Deficiencies in English for second language learners are not related to intellectual ability. Those students whose English skills suggest that they would not be expected to achieve age and state-approved grade level standards should not be identified as students with disabilities.

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**NOTE: IF DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY, COMPLETE THE *DETERMINATION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY* COMPONENT AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT BEFORE COMPLETING SECTIONS 5 and 6.**

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Complete Sections 5 and 6 for all students.

5. **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/INTERPRETATION OF EVALUATION RESULTS** - Considering all available evaluation data, record the team's analyses of the student's functioning levels.

**ANNOTATION:**

This section should summarize and analyze all evaluation data gathered in the evaluation process, as documented in Sections 1 - 4.

- A. **PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT** - Describe the student's present levels, strengths, and the resulting academic needs, when appropriate. Include communicative status, motor abilities, and transition needs as appropriate. For students with limited English proficiency (LEP), include current level(s) of English language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and understanding/listening:

**ANNOTATION:**

This section considers all evaluation data from Sections 1 - 4 and if appropriate the Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Component, to determine the student's levels of academic achievement. This section summarizes student academic strengths and needs and how the student is progressing in the general education curriculum in relation to his/her peers. If the student is determined to be eligible for special education services, this information would be transferred to the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance section of the IEP.

- B. **PRESENT LEVELS OF FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE** - Describe the student's present levels, strengths, and the resulting functional and developmental needs, when appropriate:

**ANNOTATION:**

This section includes a summary of all evaluation data collected in Sections 1 - 4 and if appropriate the SLD Component related to the student's functional levels. This section should identify student strengths and needs. Functional performance is related to activities of daily living, such as hygiene, dressing, basic consumer skills, community-based instruction, etc. Information included here does not have to indicate a deficit. A statement can be included that the student's functional performance in all areas is age appropriate. If the student is found to be eligible for special education services this information would be transferred to the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance section of the IEP.

- C. **BEHAVIORAL INFORMATION** - Include social and emotional status and behavioral strengths and needs, when appropriate:

**ANNOTATION:**

This section should summarize evaluation data gathered related to student behavior, including social and emotional levels of functioning in various environments. Results of a functional behavioral assessment would be included in this section. If the student is determined to be eligible for special education services, this information would be transferred to the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance section of the IEP.

6. **CONCLUSIONS** - Determination of Eligibility and Educational Needs  
Complete A or B or C

- A.  The student does not have a disability and therefore is NOT ELIGIBLE for special education

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OR

B.  The student has a disability but does not need specially designed instruction, and therefore is NOT ELIGIBLE for special education

OR

C. The student has a disability and is need of specially designed instruction, and therefore IS ELIGIBLE for special education.

1. Disability Category  
Primary disability category: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary disability category(s), if any: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Recommendations for consideration by the IEP team to enable the student to participate as appropriate in the general education curriculum (including special considerations the IEP team must consider before developing the IEP, measurable annual goals, specially designed instruction, and supplementary aids and services):

**ANNOTATION:**

The evaluation team must determine if the student is eligible for special education. To be eligible, the student must have a disability (mental retardation, deafness or hearing impairment, speech or language impairments, visual impairments including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disability) and be in need of specially designed instruction. Federal regulations define specially designed instruction as adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction. to address the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability and to ensure access of the student to the general curriculum, so that the student can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all students.

If the student does not have a disability, the team should check the first option and proceed to the Evaluation Team Participation section.

If the student has a disability, but does not need specially designed instruction, then the second option should be selected, and the team should proceed to the Evaluation Team Participation section.

If the student has a disability and is in need of specially designed instruction, the third option should be checked. The primary disability category must be indicated, as well as additional disability(s) if appropriate. If there are no additional disabilities, indicate *Not Applicable* or *N/A*.

Federal and State regulations specify that a student must not be determined to be a student with a disability if the determining factor is a lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math or limited English proficiency. This applies to all disability categories, not just Specific Learning Disability.

This section should include recommendations regarding modifications, specially designed instruction, and related services that should be included in the student's IEP.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the Local Education Agency will complete and issue the report to the members of the evaluation team.

<b>Evaluation Team Participation</b>	Agreement and Disagreement required ONLY when evaluating students for specific learning disability.
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Student's Name:

Evaluation Team Participants*	Title	Agree	Disagree**
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* A certified school psychologist is required for evaluation of the following disability categories: Autism, Emotional Disturbance, Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities, Other Health Impairments, Specific Learning Disability or Traumatic Brain Injury. A certified school psychologist is not required for Deaf-blindness, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Speech/Language Impairment, Visual Impairment and Orthopedic Impairment.

\*\* For specific learning disability only, if a team member disagrees with the team's conclusion related to the identification of the student as having a specific learning disability, the member must submit a separate statement presenting the member's dissent to the LEA. This information must be attached to the *Evaluation Report*. Please submit this statement to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
LEA Representative Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

A copy of the *Procedural Safeguards Notice* is available upon request from your child's school. This document explains your rights, and includes state and local advocacy organizations that are available to help you understand your rights and how the special education process works.

For help in understanding this form, an annotated *Evaluation Report* is available on the PaTTAN website at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net). Type "Annotated Forms" in the Search feature on the website. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can request the annotated form by calling PaTTAN at 800-441-3215.

**ANNOTATION:**  
The LEA is to provide a copy of the *Evaluation Report* to the parent.

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DETERMINATION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

**ANNOTATION:**

The Specific Learning Disability (SLD) component would be used ONLY if the evaluation team is considering the student to be eligible for special education under the specific learning disability category. All ten items in this component must be completed. Refer to *PA Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities* available at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net) for additional information on this process.

**NOTE:** This component must be completed when determining eligibility for Specific Learning Disability. The information must be attached to and/or incorporated into Sections 5 and 6 of the completed *Evaluation Report*.

Provide documentation for items 1-10.

1. The student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or does not meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas when provided with learning experiences and scientifically based instruction appropriate for the student's age or State-approved grade level standards and level of English language proficiency: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, and mathematics problem-solving.

**ANNOTATION:**

The evaluation team must determine if the student is not adequately achieving in one or more of the eight areas listed above. Sources of data could include (but are not limited to) benchmark assessments; progress monitoring data; performance on district-wide assessments; statewide tests of achievement and norm-referenced tests of academic achievement. Multiple sources of data collected over time should be used during the decision making process. The student's achievement in these areas should be evaluated in relation to their age or State-approved standards. The student's achievement level should be significantly deficient to warrant identification. The regulations do not define significantly deficient. It is the responsibility of individual LEA to establish or define appropriate assessment parameters (see *PA Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities*) available at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net) The team must address the student's English language proficiency and whether this may be impacting on his/her ability to meet age and grade level standards.

2. Check below to identify the process(es) used to determine eligibility.

**ANNOTATION:**

Chapters 14 and 711 allow for the choice of two models of identification of specific learning disabilities: the discrepancy model and the response to intervention model. It is the decision of the LEA which model(s) will be used within the LEA. The LEA's decision as to which model(s) will be used is documented in the district's Special Education Plan and in the Annual Plan for charter schools.

It is the decision of the evaluation team as to which available model is used to evaluate a child. Only one model is to be used during an evaluation for each individual child; even if both models are available to the LEA. An LEA may be moving toward implementation of a Response to Intervention model but still be relying on the Discrepancy Model for identification purposes. All of the data collected on the child as they progressed through the tiers would be used in the evaluation but the decision would still be made using the discrepancy model. Similarly, response to intervention may be available within the elementary grades of an LEA but not at the secondary level. In that case, the team would choose the discrepancy model for identification of a secondary student even though both models are available on the special education plan.

It is the team's decision as to which available model they choose to use for each individual child. Only

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one model is used at a time. The team is responsible for collecting the appropriate information to make the decision using the model they choose. Clarification on what information is required for each model is found below and within the *PA Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities* available at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

Check the box that indicates the model used to determine SLD for this student.

- Response to Scientific Research-Based Intervention (RtI). Document the criteria below.

The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of these areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, and mathematics problem-solving:

**ANNOTATION:**

To identify a student as having SLD, the student must demonstrate a deficit in achievement of age or State-approved standards as well as an inadequate rate of improvement when the student is provided increasingly intense interventions. Documentation of this should include: evidence that the student was provided with appropriate instruction in the general education setting; evidence that the student's rate of improvement (slope) was significantly inadequate when provided with multiple tiers of research-based interventions; and evidence that research-based core instruction and interventions were offered with fidelity for sufficient length of time. Progress monitoring data collected over time will provide information about the level of achievement and rate of improvement.

- Severe Discrepancy between Intellectual Ability and Achievement. Document the criteria below.

The student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement or both relative to age, standards or intellectual development:

**ANNOTATION:**

Teams will evaluate the student's pattern of strengths and weaknesses to determine if there is a discrepancy between intellectual ability and academic achievement. A discrepancy between the two is not enough to identify a student as having an SLD; the student also must be demonstrating achievement significantly below age or grade level. The regulations do not explicitly define significantly below age or grade level. It is the responsibility of individual LEAs to establish or define appropriate assessment parameters (see *PA Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities*) available at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

3. The instructional strategies used and the student-centered data collected:

**ANNOTATION:**

In this section, explicitly describe the instructional strategies and/or interventions used with the student. This information can come both from before and after the evaluation process began. In addition, this section should document the data collected on the student as part of the evaluation process.

4. The educationally relevant medical findings, if any:

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**ANNOTATION:**

Describe any evidence that medical issues could account for the deficits in the student's academic performance. Information provided by the family, school vision and hearing screening results and information from outside sources can be discussed here. Findings that do impact the student's performance or should be included here or a statement that relevant findings were uncovered should be included here.

5. The effects of the student's environment, culture, or economic background:

**ANNOTATION:**

Describe any evidence that an aspect of the student's environment, culture or economic background is negatively impacting his/her academic achievement.

6. Data demonstrating that prior to referral or as part of the referral process for a specific learning disability, the student's regular education instruction was delivered by qualified personnel, including the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, if applicable:

**ANNOTATION:**

Document that regular education was delivered by qualified personnel. This should be evidenced by State certifications and trainings completed in intervention strategies or core curriculum. If the student is in an ESL program, document that the ESL curriculum was being delivered by a qualified teacher.

7. Data based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting progress during instruction, which was provided to the parents:

**ANNOTATION:**

Report the results of academic assessments collected over time that were used to monitor the achievement level of the student and how that information was provided to the parent. Such tools could include universal screenings, progress monitoring reports, 4Sight data, PSSA scores.

8. An observation in the student's learning environment (including the regular classroom setting) to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty. Note the relationship of that behavior to the student's academic functioning:

**ANNOTATION:**

The student must be observed in the student's learning environment to determine if the student's behavior is a possible cause of deficient academic achievement. The observation should take place during the class time in which the student is having academic difficulties and the interactions of the student with peers and teachers should be documented. The observer must comment on the relationship between the student's behavior and academic functioning.

9. Other data, if needed, as determined by the evaluation team:

**ANNOTATION:**

Any other information the evaluation team collects, as well as information from outside sources, such as evaluations completed outside of school, would be added.

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10. Include a statement for each item below to support the conclusions of the evaluation team that the findings are not primarily a result of:

### ANNOTATION:

The evaluation team must determine that the student's academic deficiencies are not the result of the factors below, which are considered contra-indicators of SLD. To rule out these factors, evaluation teams should document, in the *Evaluation Report*, evidence that each of these factors has been excluded from consideration in the screening process, or if necessary, conduct a more extensive evaluation to eliminate them from consideration. Each exclusionary factor is discussed in detail below.

Visual, hearing, motor disability:

### ANNOTATION:

Vision screening is routinely conducted in Pennsylvania schools and is required by Pennsylvania special education regulations. Health records in the school nurse's office should be consulted to determine if the screening results indicated a possible visual problem. If there are lingering concerns about vision, the student can be re-screened. If the screening indicates a possible visual problem, a referral to an optometrist or ophthalmologist would be indicated. If the student is found by the medical professional to have a visual impairment that is the primary cause of the student's academic difficulties, the student is excluded from consideration for SLD.

Hearing screening also is routinely conducted in the schools and is required by Pennsylvania special education regulations. These records should be available and consulted by the evaluation team. If there are lingering concerns about the student's hearing, the student can be re-screened. If the screening indicates a possible hearing problem, a referral to an audiologist for an audiological examination would be indicated. A student who is found to have a hearing impairment that is the likely source of the student's academic difficulties cannot be considered as a student with SLD.

Screening for orthopedic problems can be conducted by the school nurse or other health professional. If there are concerns that orthopedic problems may be the reason for the student's academic difficulties, a referral to a physical or occupational therapist or other medical practitioner should be made. If the student is found to have an orthopedic disability that is causing academic problems, that student cannot be identified as SLD.

Mental retardation:

### ANNOTATION:

Federal regulations define mental retardation as "... significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance." School psychologists have traditionally evaluated students for the possibility of mental retardation with measures of intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. These methods remain the most valid way of determining this disability if there is concern that the student might have sub-average general intellectual functioning. However, it also is appropriate to screen out the possibility of mental retardation if the student displays clear evidence of general intellectual functioning in at least the low average range. For example, if the student displays inadequacies in reading, but performs proficiently in mathematics and otherwise displays appropriate adaptive behavior, the evaluation team may choose to rule out mental retardation without administering intelligence tests or adaptive behavior measures. The rationale for this rule out should be included in the *Evaluation Report*. However, if there are concerns about significant cognitive and adaptive behavior difficulties, assessments of the student's cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior are recommended.

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Emotional disturbance:

**ANNOTATION:**

Students with academic problems often display inappropriate and disruptive classroom behavior. Other students may have emotional problems that do not manifest themselves in externalizing behaviors. It is the responsibility of the evaluation team to determine if a student's academic difficulties are primarily caused by an emotional disturbance rather than SLD. Generally, emotional disturbance is screened through the use of behavior checklists or more comprehensive behavior rating scales. The evaluation team is responsible for ruling out these factors as causative for the student's academic difficulties. Essentially, for students who display behavior problems, the evaluation team must determine whether the student's learning problems are instigating the behavior problems, or whether underlying emotional problems are impacting the student's ability to acquire academic skills. Students whose academic difficulties are predominantly a result of emotional disturbance may not be identified as SLD.

Cultural factors:

**ANNOTATION:**

Students should not be identified as eligible for special education when the reason for their academic inadequacies involves cultural factors. In addition to language acquisition issues, students also may display academic deficiencies that are related to their acculturation experience in the United States. Evaluation teams need to weigh the relative impact of these cultural issues, while not overlooking possible indications of SLD.

Environmental or economic disadvantage:

**ANNOTATION:**

The evaluation team also must assess whether issues regarding environmental or economic problems are the primary source of a student's academic deficiencies rather than SLD. Situations such as homelessness, child abuse, poor nutrition, and other factors may adversely impact a student's ability to learn. Interviews with the family and developmental histories are useful tools to assess these issues. In addition, chronic medical conditions, frequent absences, and sleep disorders should be duly considered. Whether these factors are impacting on the student's academic skills should be documented in the *Evaluation Report*, and may serve to rule out SLD.

Limited English proficiency:

**ANNOTATION:**

Federal laws indicate that all students must be screened to determine if their primary language is other than English. If so, the student's proficiency in the English language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) must be assessed by school personnel. Research has indicated that students who are English language learners (ELLs) take approximately two years to acquire basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and between five and seven years to acquire the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) that is required to function effectively in content subjects. Students who are in the process of learning English often will display academic deficiencies, especially if their education has been disrupted during an immigration experience. Similarly, ELLs may be particularly at risk for lack of instruction issues if interventions that address language issues have not been appropriately provided. Delays in the acquisition of academic skills that are the result of limited English proficiency are contraindications of SLD. Students must not be identified as eligible for special education when

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the cause for academic inadequacies is Limited English Proficiency.

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Upon completion of the SLD Component, attach and/or incorporate this information into Sections 5 and 6 of the completed *Evaluation Report*.