



Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities

Beginning in the Fall of 2010 the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services, has required each school district in the State of Michigan to post for public information the approach that will be used to determine the existence of a Specific Learning Disability. In particular, a choice between an individual student's responses to scientific based interventions or a review of an individual student's pattern of strengths and weaknesses, in academic and processing areas.

Ideally, the existence of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) would involve both a data driven review of each student's response to interventions delivered with integrity as well as a review of strengths and weaknesses based on a standardized assessment. At Black River a system of Response to Intervention has been put in place at both the elementary and secondary levels and data is collected on a regular basis to determine student progress. However, we do not believe that a lack of adequate response after a given period of time is sufficient alone for determining an SLD and therefore believe that an in-depth review of strengths and weaknesses is also necessary to establish the existence of a Specific Learning Disability. In particular, the inconsistency between ability and achievement as well as significant differences between and within information processing areas (i.e. verbal vs. nonverbal, visual vs. auditory, etc.) needs to be determined as part of the comprehensive assessment of a suspected learning disability.

For more information on this notice or the Response to Intervention model, the reader is directed to the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention link at website www.michigan.gov/mde.