

# District Process Used to Determine the Existence of a Specific Learning Disability

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Each local educational agency and public school academy in Michigan is required to publicly post the process used to determine the existence of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD).

Consistent with this requirement, Livingston Educational Service Agency reports the following:

For determination of an SLD a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) process is used for students in kindergarten through 12th grade across all areas of SLD, which are: Oral Expression, Listening Comprehension, Written Expression, Basic Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency, Math Calculation, and Math Problem Solving.

It is noted that regardless of the process used, all schools must follow all of the regulatory requirements in the IDEA, the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education, and Michigan laws, policies, and procedures for special education.

## What is an SLD?

A **Specific Learning Disability** is “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia that adversely affects a student’s educational performance. An SLD does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.” (34 CFR 300.8(c)(10)).

## What is the **Pattern of Strengths and Weakness (PSW) Process?**

**Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses** is a process that is used to determine if a student has an SLD. This process involves the collection of data to determine the following:

- 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 300.309(a)(1)(i) when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student’s age or State-approved grade-level standards.

- 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 Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (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.