

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE EXISTENCE OF A LEARNING DISABILITY
Fairview Area Schools

Step 1: Universal Screening

MLPP testing
MEAP testing
NWEA testing
Report card grades

Step 2: Data Analysis

MLPP results at or below half of grade level expectancy
“Not proficient” ratings on the MEAP
Percentile scores at or below 12 on the NWEA
Failing report card grades

Step 3: Child Study: Optional

Propose some additional targeted interventions, e.g.:
Tier II “strategic” interventions such as Title One services
Tier III “intensive” interventions—additional, more frequent small group instruction
(over and above the Title One services).
Monitor the student’s progress.

NOTE: The child study team, a teacher, or a parent may request a “REED” meeting if
the student’s progress is deemed insufficient.

Step 4: Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) Meeting

Invite teacher and parents.
Review all of the above data.
Decide to refer for special ed.

Invite teacher and parents.
Review all of the above data.
Decide not to refer for special ed.

Develop an evaluation plan.
Select the evaluation team members:
as a minimum, the general education
teacher and a diagnostic staff person.
Specify the date by which the evaluation
must be completed.

Step 5: The Special Education Evaluation for Identifying a Specific Learning Disability

The Fairview Area school district will assess the referred student in up to eight academic areas (as outlined below) depending on the nature of the concerns. The district will utilize a “hybrid” approach of “response to intervention” and “pattern of strengths and weaknesses.” “Response to intervention” is defined as the student’s not achieving adequately in relation to age or state-wide grade-level standards when provided with appropriate learning experiences and instruction, and not making sufficient progress to meet age or state-wide grade-level standards, when using a process based on his or her response to scientific, research-based intervention. “Pattern of strengths and weaknesses” utilizes the above data and has the additional component of the student’s exhibiting a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to his or her age, state-wide grade-level standards, or intellectual development.

The specific academic areas (depending on the nature of the concerns) to be assessed via the “hybrid” approach are as follows:

Basic Reading Skills

Reading Fluency

Reading Comprehension

Math Calculation Skills

Math Problem Solving

Written Expression

Listening Comprehension

Oral Expression

In addition to the above assessments, a member of the evaluation team will conduct a classroom observation in the student’s general education setting. This observation must address the academic performance and behavior in the specific area(s) of concern.

Further requirements:

The evaluator notes whether the student's academic performance (in one or more of the above eight areas) is unexpectedly low (to a significant degree) in relation to his or her age, grade-level standards, and other abilities and skills. On norm-referenced tests, this usually means at or below the ninth percentile (or standard score of 80).

The evaluator addresses possible "exclusionary" factors such as lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math; limited English proficiency; a visual, hearing, or motor disability; a cognitive impairment; an emotional impairment; and cultural factors such as environmental or economic disadvantage as the primary contributor to the student's unexpectedly low performance.

For those items immediately above, if the answer to the first is "yes" and to the second is "no," a case can be made for recommending that the student is eligible for special education services under the "specific learning disability" designation.

At the conclusion of this evaluation process, the team members convene or confer together for developing a "Multi-disciplinary Evaluation Team" (MET) report that either recommends or does not recommend eligibility for special education. Additional suggested interventions are developed as well. This report is presented by at least one team member at the student's IEP meeting.

Step 6: The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting

The IEP makes the final decision on the student's eligibility and services. The parents are invited, and they are an integral part of this meeting.

The student's services are implemented and then monitored at least quarterly.

The student participates in annual review and tri-annual re-evaluation processes.

(EXIT, when the student demonstrates sustained improved performance or at high school graduation, whichever comes first.)