

EVALUATION REPORT (Annotated)

School Age

ANNOTATION:

Purpose of Evaluation Report: The Evaluation Report (ER) documents the results of the initial multidisciplinary evaluation conducted on a student and the multidisciplinary evaluation team's decision regarding the student's eligibility for special education. Initial evaluations are conducted when: a general education student is being evaluated for special education; a special education student, identified in another state, moves in to Pennsylvania; a student, identified in Early Intervention with a disability not recognized in school-age eligibility, transitions to school-age services. The ER should contain information and direction for the family, school staff and other professionals that interact with the student. More than a summary of assessment results, the ER provides recommendations and information that will promote the overall functioning of the student.

Intended Audience: An ER must be written with many different potential audiences in mind. These audiences can include parents, education and clinical professionals, school administrators and other service providers. As such, the ER should be written in a manner that ensures all readers of the document understand and gain information from the document. All contributing writers should attend to the length, readability levels and use of jargon in each section. ERs should be written with the intention of allowing the reader to utilize the information provided to address the educational needs of the student and allow them to make progress in the general education curriculum.

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:

Dates: The *Date of Report* is the date that the writing of the ER is completed. The Date of Report can be no more than 60 calendar days from receipt of written parental consent for an initial evaluation and no more than 30 calendar days from the IEP team meeting.

The *Date Report Provided to Parent/Guardian/Surrogate* is the date the LEA provided the report to the parent. That date should be no more than 60 calendar day from the receipt of parental consent for initial evaluation.

The 60 calendar days allowed in these timelines do not include the days commonly thought of as summer vacation - the day after the last day of the spring school term up to and including the day before the first

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day of the subsequent fall school term. School terms are defined by the first day the school staff returns in the fall until the last day the school staff reports in the spring.

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 Reason for Referral section should clearly, thoroughly and concisely describe why the evaluation is being conducted. The reason(s) an evaluation is being conducted are generally framed as "referral questions." Information such as areas of concern, the person requesting the evaluation and suspected area(s) of disability should be provided.

The information in this section should:

- Match the areas of concern/reasons for referral section of the *Prior Written Notice for Initial Evaluation and Request for Consent* form
- Direct the assessments conducted throughout the evaluation. All referral questions must be addressed through the evaluation process and results of those assessments included in the ER.

To determine if a student is eligible for special education, the multidisciplinary evaluation team must answer a two-prong question:

- 1) Does the student have a disability?
- and -
- 2) Does the student need specially designed instruction?

Referral questions should reflect this two-prong question requirement so the evaluation process begins with enough direction to choose appropriate assessments. Teams are not limited to assessing only issues related to referral questions as the evaluation process occurs. If assessment results lead the evaluation team to new questions, they may follow through on answering those questions provided they only administer assessments the parent allows.

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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.

ANNOTATION:

This section will contain all of the assessment results and information collected throughout the evaluation process. While it is necessary to report on all assessments conducted, the results obtained and the interpretation of those results, care should be taken to ensure all readers find the information provided here clear and user friendly.

If the possibility of the student having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) was addressed during the evaluation, the Determination of Specific Learning Disability section, at the end of this document, will need to be completed. If there is overlap between these two sections, it is permissible to copy information between the sections or refer the reader between the sections, as long as all questions in each section are addressed.

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

ANNOTATION:

The parents are a required and valued member of the multidisciplinary evaluation team. Information provided by parents offers a unique and comprehensive perspective on the student. As such, this section is dedicated to the information the parent provides. This section can include information gathered directly from the parent and/or information the parent has obtained from other sources such as a pediatrician or independent evaluator. Information provided by the parent is included in this section and taken in to consideration as decisions regarding eligibility for special education and program design are made.

Multidisciplinary teams can obtain information from the parent in many ways. It can be collected from written responses from parents, interviews, standardized rating scales or other appropriate methods. Parent input should be thoroughly documented in this section, clarifying how the information was collected and what responses were provided.

If schools are unable to gather input from a parent despite attempts, documentation of the attempts made will be documented within this section.

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

ANNOTATION:

This item will include information gathered through observations of the student. Observations should be planned and conducted by appropriate personnel in settings related to the referral question(s). When referral question(s) relate to specific academic subjects or behaviors, structured observations in those settings will provide insight that will aid in the understanding of the students skills and areas of need. The type and setting of student observation(s) will be determined by the multidisciplinary team, conducted and documented in this section.

C. Recommendations by teachers:

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ANNOTATION:

Input from a student's teacher(s) can provide valuable insight in to that student's comprehensive level of functioning. Recommendations from teachers, documented in this section, should be rooted in data they have collected on the student. Teachers can provide recommendations formulated through review of a student's formative, diagnostic and benchmark assessments, permanent products and progress monitoring data. Information related to classroom performance, interventions tried and the results of interventions, strengths and needs of students can be utilized to provide instructional recommendations, goals, objectives or specially designed instruction.

- 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:

ANNOTATION:

This item allows for documentation of any physical, social or cultural background or adaptive behavior that may affect a student's school performance.

There are many reasons outside of the presence of a disability that may lead to a student having difficulty in school. This section documents relevant information necessary for the multidisciplinary evaluation team to make an accurate decision about the student's eligibility for special education and education programming. Document either the presence of an issue (e.g. chronic health problems) or the lack of an issue (e.g. hearing and vision screening results within normal limits).

Appropriate assessments must be conducted and information gathered to address these issues thoroughly.

- 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:

The multidisciplinary evaluation team will determine the type of assessments needed to complete a comprehensive evaluation of a student based on the referral questions that led to the evaluation, and any additional questions that may arise during the evaluation process. The results of those assessments are reported in this section. In addition to assessments conducted as a result of this evaluation, it is appropriate to include other data available such as classroom work, state and local assessments, discipline referrals, or assessments related to secondary transition.

In addition to answering referral questions, the multidisciplinary evaluation team must plan assessments that will allow them to address the Special Considerations found on the IEP. Special Considerations include 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.

Results should be written in a way that is easy for the reader to understand. ERs serve as more than a record of the evaluation results and team decisions. The ER is a document based on assessment results that can influence behavior by providing clear, concise direction for those working directly with the student.

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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:

As the multidisciplinary evaluation team considers the results of the assessments utilized throughout this evaluation process, it is important to have access to any information regarding variances from standard assessment conditions.

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 concise 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 all assessments and other evaluation materials were provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information.

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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:

Regulations state that a student must not be identified as a student with a disability if the reason they are not achieving is due to a lack of appropriate instruction in reading, math or due to limited English proficiency. This section requires a decision in each of those three areas, along with the evidence the team used to make the decision.

A "Yes" response means the team believes that, yes, the student is struggling due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading, math or English language proficiency level.

A "No" response means the team agrees that, no, the student's struggles are not due to a lack of appropriate instruction in reading, math or English language proficiency level.

Teams must provide clear evidence as to why they chose their response to the "Yes" or "No" question. Describe why the team determined the student received appropriate instruction or possesses adequate language skills. Do not leave that section blank.

This section must be completed for all students, regardless of the suspected disability.

Yes No

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

ANNOTATION:

Provide evidence that supports either the Yes or No response. Indicate whether the student had access to appropriate instruction, including the essential components of reading instruction.

If "yes" is checked, describe why reading instruction was not appropriate 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, professional development in implementation of the interventions, the use of fidelity checks, and the certifications and qualifications of the teacher.

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Yes No

Lack of appropriate instruction in math. Provide evidence:

ANNOTATION:

Provide evidence that supports your Yes or No response. Indicate whether the student had access to appropriate math instruction.

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:

Provide evidence that supports your Yes or No response. Indicate whether the student's level of English language proficiency had a negative impact on their progress or not.

A student cannot be found to have a disability if lack of achievement is due to limited English proficiency.

If "yes" is checked, provide evidence on how the student's level of English language proficiency is having a negative impact on their ability to make progress in the general education curriculum.

If "no" is checked, In this section, provide evidence that limited English proficiency has not been a factor in the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.

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:

At this point in the document, the team will summarize and organize the data collected throughout the evaluation process. This section is where the document makes connections across the data and analyzes the assessment results. Using all of the information gathered, the team must answer the two-prong question: 1) does the student have a disability and 2) does the student need specially designed instruction. In addition, the team will be making recommendations that, if the student is eligible, will lead to developing an IEP. To that end, include concise information in this section that will provide the team with all they need to make their decisions. This is not intended to be a repeat of all assessments conducted but a summary of the assessment and results. The information provided should relate to the referral questions as well as other concerns that may have been discovered through the assessment process.

- 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:

Summarizing the assessment results, provide concise information regarding the student's current level of functioning. Include information on their present levels, strengths and needs. If the student is found to be eligible for special education services this information is 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:

Functional performance is related to activities of daily living such as hygiene, dressing, basic consumer skills, community-based instruction, etc. Provide information on the student's current functioning level in these areas. Report on areas of both strengths and needs. If the student is found to be eligible for special education services this information is 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

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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, problem behaviors or evidence of resiliency. Results of a functional behavioral assessment are included in this section. If the student is identified as eligible for special education and an IEP is developed, the IEP team will need to address the Special Consideration question regarding a student's behavior interfering with learning. Sufficient information should be included in this section to answer the Special Consideration question accurately. If the student is determined to be eligible for special education services, this information is 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

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:

Utilizing the information gathered throughout the assessment process, the evaluation team must determine whether the student will be identified as eligible for special education. Eligibility decisions are made by answering the two-prong question:

1) _____ Does the student have a disability?

-and-

2) _____ Does the student need specially designed instruction?

Eligibility for special education requires a "Yes" answer to both questions. This section of ER offers the team three possible responses to the eligibility question:

A. There is no disability

B. There is a disability but no need for specially designed instruction

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C. Both a disability and the need for specially designed instruction are present

Choosing response A or B indicates that the team found that the student is not eligible for special education.

Choosing response C indicates the student is eligible for special education. Further information is required with this choice, including listing the identified disability(s) and recommendations for the IEP team to use as they develop the student's IEP.

Two spaces are available to list identified disabilities: Primary and Secondary. The team will choose the order they believe the disabilities impact the student. If more than two disabilities exist, identify those as well. Listing the order of the disabilities will have no impact on possible services or placements for the student. Services and placement will be determined based solely on the needs of the student.

When making decisions regarding eligibility, teams must remember that 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.

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

ANNOTATION:

Names and titles of the evaluation team participants are to be provided in this section of the evaluation report. The names of the members can be added electronically or by signatures.

Evaluation Team Participation		Agreement and Disagreement required ONLY when evaluating students for specific learning disability.	
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"/>

ANNOTATION:

Certified school psychologists are required members of the multidisciplinary evaluation team when specific disability categories are under consideration.

* 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.

ANNOTATION:

The “Agree” and “Disagree” boxes are only required when the team is considering eligibility of a student due to a specific learning disability. If specific learning disability is not being considered, team members are not required to indicate whether they “Agree” or “Disagree.”

If the Evaluation Team Participants names were added electronically and the team is considering eligibility due to a specific learning disability, team members should initial near the checked “Agree” or “Disagree” box to indicate their choice.

If a team member chooses to “Disagree” with the team’s decision regarding a specific learning disability, they must provide a statement of dissent to the LEA.

** 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:

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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. 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 at least 10 school days prior to the IEP meeting (unless a waiver is signed).

DETERMINATION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

ANNOTATION:

This component of the ER is completed only if the student was being evaluated to determine if they met the criteria to be identified as having a specific learning disability. All ten items in this section must be completed whether the student was found to be eligible or not. If the student was not evaluated for the possibility of a specific learning disability, it is advisable, but not required, to answer "Not Applicable" to each of the ten questions.

When there is overlap of information between sections of the ER, it is permissible to refer the reader to the other sections or to copy information from one section to another.

Refer the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) initiative available at www.pattan.net for additional information on identification of specific learning disabilities.

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 making adequate achievement in the eight areas listed above. Sources of data used to make this determination 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. To warrant identification, the student's achievement level should be significantly deficient. The regulations do not explicitly define the term significantly deficient. Making the determination to identify a student is a team decision. 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.

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. Limited English proficiency (as addressed in section 4 Determining Factor) is a disqualifying factor in determining eligibility. A student is not to be identified as eligible for special education if the reason they are struggling is due solely to their limited English language skills.

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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 as their method of identification. However, LEA's must seek approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to use the Response to Intervention model to make an eligibility decision regarding a specific learning disability. 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. In that case, the data collected as the child progressed through the tiers is available for use during the evaluation process but the decision is 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 chooses the discrepancy model for identification of a secondary student even though both models are available on the special education plan.

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:

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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.

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

ANNOTATION:

Explicitly describe the instructional strategies and/or interventions used with the student and the impact those interventions had on their achievement. Provide information gathered through progress monitoring and/or classroom work. This information can come both from before and after this multidisciplinary evaluation process began. In addition, this section should document the data collected on the student as part of the evaluation process.

Information on successful, and unsuccessful, strategies used in the classroom will prove valuable if an IEP is to be developed for the student. If the student is not going to receive special education services, this information will be valuable in providing recommendations for best ways to work with a student.

4. The educationally relevant medical findings, if any:

ANNOTATION:

Provide a summary of the student's relevant medical history or current state. Describe any evidence that medical issues could account for the deficits in the student's academic performance. Information provided by the family, vision and hearing screening results and information from outside sources is included in this section.

If there are no relevant medical issues in the history or at the time of this evaluation, provide a statement to that effect.

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. Clarify the issue, the impact it is having and any strategies that may have been attempted to eliminate the negative impact.

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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 general 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, PSSA scores or local assessments.

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:

Regulations regarding observations for students being evaluated for the possibility of a specific learning disability vary slightly than for other disability categories. 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, is added in this section.

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:

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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 may 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 at that time.

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 may 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, now "intellectual disability", 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 an intellectual disability with measures of intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. These methods remain the most valid way of identifying 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 intellectual disability 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

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mathematics and otherwise displays appropriate adaptive behavior, the evaluation team may choose to rule out intellectual disability 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.

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 observable 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 a specific learning disability. Assessments for emotional disturbance include the use of behavior rating scales and functional behavior assessments.

The evaluation team is responsible for ruling out that these factors as a cause of 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 having a disability when the reason for their academic or other difficulties are related to cultural factors. If a student is operating from their cultural framework and it is resulting in difficulties in school, those are teachable moments not evidence of a disability.

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 must also 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, chronic stress and other factors can have an adverse impact a student's ability to learn. Interviews with the family and developmental histories are useful tools to assess and document these issues.

EVALUATION REPORT (ANNOTATED)

Student's Name:

A student may not be identified as having a specific learning disability if their academic difficulties are a result of environmental or economic disadvantage.

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 the cause for academic inadequacies is Limited English Proficiency.

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