

To determine the existence of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Allen Park Public Schools use a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses approach (PSW) called the Aptitude-Achievement Consistency Model which is based on CHC Theory and detailed in Sections 10 thru 13 (pages 99-132) of the Wayne County RESA Guidance for the Determination of Specific Learning Disabilities (2009), which is posted on the web at: http://www.resa.net/downloads/special_education_guidelines/sld_guidelines.pdf

This Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses approach (PSW) looks for patterned consistencies among a combination of cognitive and academic skills that directly relate to one another within a broader and otherwise normal ability profile. As part of a full and individual PSW evaluation, the aforementioned data is considered along with other information about the student being referred. This other information typically includes (but is not limited to) periodic DRA and MAP test results (which are used to monitor student progress), performance on state-wide assessments, classroom observational data, parent and teacher input, academic grades and performance on curriculum based measures (which may include common assessments), and information on how students respond to pre-referral strategies and interventions. In fact, it is expected that pre-referral interventions and strategies be attempted and documented prior to a student being formally evaluated for SLD. Sometimes these interventions are encouraged to continue for a period of 4 to 6 weeks (or even longer in some cases—depending on student response). Information on how students respond to available and delivered interventions is considered as one factor in determining the existence of SLD within a full and individual PSW evaluation.

If PSW test data and the other data collected (as part of a full and individual evaluation) do not match or provide some internal consistency, there may be other factors (than SLD) at work which are influencing student performance. However, assuming that the preponderance of the data collected point in a similar direction, exclusionary factors (for SLD) must then be ruled out. Exclusionary factors include such things as environmental and language acquisition issues.

All of the above information is processed by our Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) and presented to IEP Teams for further discussion and planning.

Parents can find more information on the PSW approach that Allen Park Public Schools use in a WCRESA trifold SLD brochure which is posted on the web at: http://www.resa.net/downloads/special_education/trifold_brochure_for_parents_20100415_081414_4.pdf