

Evaluation and Eligibility Practices

KASP

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Agenda

- Review revisions to Chapter 3 in the Process Handbook: Initial Evaluation and Eligibility
- Review models for conducting initial evaluation
 - Response to Intervention
 - Patterns of strengths and weaknesses
- Review revisions to Eligibility Indicators document.
- Describe plans for training during 2011-12 regarding evaluation and eligibility determination practices
- Working on your own PD

Chapter 3 in Process Handbook—What Has Not Changed

- Laws and regulations have not changed
- Two methodologies continue to be available for evaluation and eligibility determination for all exceptionalities:
 - Response to Intervention
 - Patterns of Strength and Weakness

Chapter 3 in Process Handbook—What Has Changed

- Guidance with regard to using an aptitude-achievement discrepancy has changed. Teams should no longer use aptitude-achievement discrepancy as one of the criteria for identifying students as having a learning disability.

Rationale for Change

- IDEA 2004 clarified that the determination of a severe discrepancy between IQ and achievement is not necessary in order to identify a student as having a specific learning disability. None of the federal regulations addressing special education evaluation requirements, including the additional procedures for SLD identification, indicate that any particular assessment or combination of assessments must be conducted.

Rationale for Change

- There is little scientific basis for using this approach, and a substantial body of evidence has concluded that discrepancy models do not accurately identify students with learning disabilities.
- There is no objective way to separate out the effects of environmental, sensory, cultural, and emotional factors, each of which may contribute to learning problems but fail to meet the exclusionary criterion that they are the primary cause of them.

Models for Evaluation and Eligibility

- Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
 - Most data are collected via a systems approach for screening and monitoring intervention outcomes.
 - Additional data collected for individual students if needed.
- Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses
 - Most data is collected through an individual student approach for screening and monitoring intervention outcomes.
 - Additional data collected for individual students if needed.

Appropriate Testing Practices

- Evaluation teams must decide which tests are appropriate to use given the referral question and what type of assessment is needed to answer questions about an individual student's need for intervention and support.
- Eliminating the use of IQ-achievement discrepancy for eligibility determination does not mean eliminating the appropriate use of IQ and achievement tests.

Eligibility Determination

- Eligibility decisions for all exceptionalities should focus on student achievement within the context of age and/or grade-level standards.
- Classic two-prong test still applies
 - Do the data support the presence of an exceptionality (including examination of the exclusionary factors)?
 - Do the data support the need for specially designed instruction (special education and related services)?

Eligibility Indicators Document

- Prong 1 indicators were reorganized to more explicitly match the definitions
 - This enables teams to compare data to each component of the definition
- Mental Retardation was changed to Intellectual Disability
- New information and indicators were added regarding students 3-5 years old and not yet in kindergarten
- References to aptitude-achievement discrepancy were removed from the indicators for Learning Disability.

Can the evaluation team use severe discrepancy between ability and achievement to determine eligibility for learning disability?

- The use of severe discrepancy between ability and achievement to determine eligibility for learning disability should no longer be used. The evaluation of a severe discrepancy is not good practice and does not contribute meaningfully to the understanding of a student's instructional needs. Additionally it is not an eligibility requirement. Given the research results regarding the use of discrepancy, eligibility decisions should focus on student achievement within the context of age and/or grade-level standards, and not on within-child deficits. Further, under Section 614(b)(6) of IDEA, states are free to prohibit the use of a discrepancy model, as part of their responsibility to develop criteria to determine whether a child is a child with a disability, including whether a particular child meets the criteria for having a specific learning disability. *(Q&A 9, Chapter 3, KSDE Process Handbook)*

So what?

- It is KSDE guidance to discontinue the use of IQ-achievement discrepancy, this is not a regulatory requirement.
- Eliminating the use of IQ-achievement discrepancy does not eliminate the appropriate administration of IQ or achievement assessments.
- However, implications of continued use for identification purposes includes:
 - Using unreliable data for instructional decisions
 - Potentially being found to have inappropriate identification practices relating to disproportionality.

TASN plans for supporting the changes...

- Updated guidance available now:
 - Chapter 3 Process Handbook
 - Revised Eligibility Indicators Document
 - Evaluation and Eligibility Practices webinar
- A webinar reviewing legal requirements for evaluation and eligibility determination will be available no later than November 1, 2011
- Early 2012 State-wide training will begin regarding:
 - Evaluation utilizing both models
 - Eligibility Determination
- We strongly recommend that buildings send evaluation teams to participate in the training

Preparation for Training Addressing Evaluation and Eligibility Determination

- Read Chapter 3 of the KSDE Special Education Process Handbook and the Eligibility Indicators Document
- Review the references provided in the last slide of this presentation
- Do a book study for the book Learning Disabilities: From Identification to Intervention by Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, and Barnes (in the references). There is a study guide for this book under Resources on the www.kansasmtns.org website.

References

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- Restori, Alberto, Gresham, Frank, and Cook, Clayton (2008). “Old Habits Die Hard:” Past and Current Issues Pertaining to Response-to-Intervention. The California School Psychologist, 13, 67-78.
- Shaywitz, Bennett, Fletcher, Jack, Holahan, John, and Shaywitz, Sally (1992). Discrepancy Compared to Low Achievement Definitions of Reading Disability: Results from the Connecticut Longitudinal Study. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 25 (10), 639-648.
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