

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MODEL FORM GUIDANCE

Specific Learning Disabilities Eligibility – Method B: Combination of RtI and Discrepancy Analysis

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to help groups of professionals understand how to document their data on the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Model Form 5jb: Group Evaluation Summary Report and Prior Written Notice of Eligibility Determination: Specific Learning Disabilities – Method B: Combination of RtI and Discrepancy Analysis.

In Utah, there are three approved methods for determining eligibility for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD): 1) Response to Intervention (RtI), 2) Combination of RtI and a discrepancy analysis, 3) An alternative research-based method (e.g., Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses [PSW]). Local education agencies (LEAs) must use the method outlined in their LEA policies and procedures that has been approved by USBE and their local board. In addition to the USBE Special Education Rules (Rules), groups must refer to the USBE SLD Eligibility Guidelines when using any of the three approved methods. The model form aligns with the Rules and the SLD Guidelines but does not replace the requirement for groups to refer to them when making eligibility determinations.



Utah State
Board of
Education

Special
Education
Services

INSTRUCTION INFORMATION FOR EVALUATION

Question 1

Did the group consider data demonstrating that prior to, or as part of, the referral process, the student was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel? (Only required for initial evaluation; use N/A for reevaluation.)

Guidance for Question 1

To mark yes, the group determining eligibility needs to review documentation that shows the student has received appropriate instruction in the regular education setting delivered by qualified personnel. This may include a review of the student's educational history, interviews with parents, observations of teacher instruction, and data collected from the classroom.

Question 2

Did the group consider data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction which was provided to the student's parent(s) or the student who is an adult? (Only required for initial evaluation; use N/A for reevaluation.)

Guidance for Question 2

To mark yes, the group needs to review **a variety of data sources** evaluating the student's academic performance. The most useful data are those comparing the student's performance to state standards, showing how the student measures up to what's expected for the grade level.

This can include district and school-wide screenings, statewide assessments, classroom assessments, and other formative and summative assessments used by the school.

Question 3

Is an observation of the student in the student's learning environment (including the regular classroom setting) documenting the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of concern attached?

Summary of the relevant behavior, if any, noted during the observation of the student and the relationship of that behavior to the student's academic functioning.

Guidance for Question 3

The student needs to be observed in the regular classroom in the area(s) of concern. For example, if the area of concern is mathematics, the observation needs to occur in the regular education mathematics classroom. The observer also needs to watch the student's behavior and note any relevant behaviors that may impact the student's learning.

Question 4

Are there educationally relevant medical findings? If yes, attach supporting data.

Guidance for Question 4

This portion of the model form is where the group can indicate if there are medical issues that may be relevant to the student's difficulty in making progress in the regular education curriculum. The group can use this information to determine if SLD is the student's primary disability as well as for educational planning purposes.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES INFORMATION

Question 5

Document data from a variety of sources (e.g., Acadience, RISE, classroom data, common formative assessments, progress monitoring, etc.) in one or more of the following areas. Indicate whether the data show the student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or State-approved grade-level standards.

Guidance for Question 5

Question 5a: Area of Concern

SLD can manifest itself in several academic achievement areas. This column lists those areas defined under SLD in the Rules. It is not necessary to document data in each of these areas, only in the area(s) of concern.

Question 5b: Date

List the dates each assessment was administered to the student in each area of concern.

Question 5c: Measurement Tool/Method

List the names of the assessments that were administered to the student in each area of concern. **Document a variety of data sources from the classroom** for each area of concern. This can include district and school-wide screenings,

statewide assessments, classroom assessments, and other formative and summative assessments used by the school. For initial evaluations, this can be the same pre-referral or referral data reviewed in Question 2. This is not the section to document standardized, norm-referenced assessment results (see Question 9).

Question 5d: Results

Document assessment results with clear descriptors to ensure all members, including the parent(s), can understand the data and how they align with grade-level expectations. Low achievement should be apparent across multiple measures in each area of concern.

Question 5e: Do the data show the student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards?

Mark yes if there is enough data to show the student does not meet State-approved grade level standards in the identified area(s) of concern. Mark no if the data do not indicate the student is not meeting grade-level standards. It is not necessary to mark yes or no for each area listed in column 5a; only the ones where the group has concerns.

Question 6

Are the student's learning problems primarily the result of any of the following external factors? Basis for Decision.

- *A visual, hearing, or motor disability*
- *An intellectual disability*
- *An emotional behavioral disability*
- *Cultural factors*
- *An environmental or economic disadvantage*
- *Limited English Proficiency*

Guidance for Question 6

Students may present with some of the factors. However, the intent of this requirement is to ensure none of these factors are the **primary** cause of the student's learning and academic challenges.

The group needs to discuss each factor, look at the available data, and indicate Yes or No for each factor.

The "Basis for Decision" portion is optional but providing an explanation is recommended to ensure each factor has been thoroughly addressed. Data can include screeners, formal and informal assessments, parent information, classroom observations, etc.

Question 6a

While none of the factors above may be the primary factor in determining eligibility, is there any effect of these factors on the student's achievement level?

Guidance on Question 6a

Although certain factors may not be the primary contributors, they can still influence student achievement. While this question is optional, answering it is recommended, as it provides valuable insight into how these factors impact the student's educational programming during IEP development.

Question 7

Parent Input

Guidance on Question 7

Parents are an integral part of the eligibility determination group. Document information provided by parents regarding the student's strengths and needs, as well as any other information the parents may provide.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC, EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS AND THE STUDENT-CENTERED DATA COLLECTED

Question 8

The intervention process must include high quality research-based instruction delivered by qualified staff in the general education setting; assessment of student performance that specifically includes universal screening and progress-monitoring; multiple tiers of evidence-based interventions to address individual student difficulties; and strategies for increasing the student's rate of learning (Rules II.J.11.c.(5)(f)).

Guidance on Question 8

Question 8a: Area of Concern

List the area(s) of concern for which evidence-based interventions were implemented. The area(s) of concern listed here need to align with the area(s) of concern identified in Question 5 such as reading fluency, math calculations, written expression, etc.

Question 8b: Instructional Strategy Used

List the name of the intervention used (if using an evidence-based intervention program) and/or the instructional strategies used to target the skill deficits. For example: "Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness." The key word in this section is *instruction*. Therefore, listing an accommodation or the name of a class would be inappropriate.

Reevaluations: Students who are currently in special education should be receiving instructional interventions and specially designed instruction (SDI) in either the general education or special education setting. These interventions and SDI need to be documented. It is important to specify the evidence-based instructional strategies used rather than just stating "specially designed instruction" or "special education services."

Question 8c: Duration (start and end dates)

List the most recent start and end dates for each intervention provided to the student.

Questions 8d: Results (including progress monitoring data)

Document the data used to determine how the student responded to each intervention. List several data points, including the starting data, to get a clear picture of progress, as reliance on a single data point is insufficient. If the group decides to reference a progress monitoring tracker, they need to summarize the data to ensure the eligibility form includes all required components.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND INTELLECTUAL ABILITY SCORES

Question 9

Document the student's performance on a standardized, norm-referenced, individually administered achievement measure in the area of the suspected disability and the student's performance on a standardized, norm-referenced, individually administered measure of intellectual ability (USBE Rules II.J.11.c.(5)(g)(i)).

Guidance on Question 9

Question 9a: Area

To conduct a discrepancy analysis, the group needs to assess the student's level of achievement on a standardized, norm-referenced, individually administered achievement measure in each area of concern. This column lists multiple areas for achievement. It is not necessary to document data in each of these areas, only in the area(s) of concern. If there is an area of concern not listed in this section, it can be included in Question 10.

Question 9b: Date

Enter the date each achievement measure was administered to the student.

Question 9c: Measurement Tool/Method

List the standardized, norm-referenced achievement measure used (e.g., Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement, Weschler Individual Achievement Test, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement) to assess each area of concern. The area(s) of concern assessed needs to align with the area(s) of concern identified in Question 5.

Question 9d: Results/Data

Document measurement results with clear descriptors to ensure all members, including the parent(s), can understand the data and the student's level of achievement.

Question 9e: Intellectual Ability

In addition to assessing the student's level of achievement, to conduct a discrepancy analysis, the group also needs to assess the student's intellectual ability.

As with the achievement section, include the date of the assessment, the name of the standardized, norm-referenced intellectual ability measure used (e.g., Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children), and the results/data. Document the results with clear descriptors to ensure all members, including the parent(s), can understand the data and the student's intellectual ability. Include the scores from each cognitive domain (Fluid Reasoning, Short-Term Memory, Auditory Processing, etc.) as well as the full-scale IQ score.

ADDITIONAL EVALUATIONS

Question 10

If the group completed additional evaluations, summarize below.

Guidance on Question 10

Any additional evaluations the group considered can be documented in the table in this section. This can include oral language assessments, social-behavioral, communication, adaptive measures, etc.

Question 11

Did the student score above the intellectual disability range on a standardized, norm-referenced, individually administered measure of intellectual ability (USBE Rules II.J.11.c.(5)(g)(ii))?

Guidance on Question 11

Mark yes or no according to the results from the intellectual ability measure. A student with SLD has normal or above normal intelligence. If this question is marked no, the student cannot be found eligible under the category of SLD.

Question 12

Attached is the comparison of the standard scores on the tests of achievement and intellectual ability using an LEA board-approved and USBE-reviewed discrepancy analysis (USBE Rules II.J.11.c.(5)(g)(ii)(A)).

Guidance on Question 12

For the combination method, the group must review a discrepancy analysis. Mark yes if there is a document showing the comparison between the tests of achievement and intellectual ability. If there is no discrepancy analysis, the student cannot be found eligible under the category of SLD.

Question 13

Did the group determine the discrepancy analysis represents a severe discrepancy (USBE Rules II.J.11.c.(5)(g)(ii)(A))?

Guidance on Question 13

Mark yes or no based on the review of the discrepancy analysis.

Question 14

Document the group's consideration of the discrepancy analysis as part of this evaluation (USBE Rules II.J.11.c.(5)(g)(ii)(A)):

Guidance on Question 14

The group needs to analyze the data and document their consideration of the comparison. The group must document how they determined the presence or lack of discrepancy to determine if the student has SLD. This is not a yes or no answer, but rather where the group writes out their analysis of the data and if a severe discrepancy is or is not present.

PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Question 15

Using the Combination method, did the group determine if the student meets the criteria for SLD?

Guidance on Question 15

To mark yes, the group determining eligibility must ensure the requirements above (Questions 1–14) have been met. It is not appropriate to determine eligibility based on a single criterion.

Question 16

Did the group determine if the SLD adversely affects the student's educational performance?

Guidance on Question 16

A student can have a disability, but that disability does not always negatively impact the student's educational performance. The group needs to look at data and determine if the disability has a negative impact on the student's ability to progress in the general curriculum.

Question 17

Did the group determine the student requires special education and related services?

Guidance on Question 17

Even if the disability is negatively impacting the student, not all students require special education. Some students can make progress with accommodations or other supports provided in the classroom.

For this requirement, the group needs to determine if the student needs special education services, which require specially designed instruction (SDI). SDI is adapting as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction.

To mark yes, the group needs to determine that without SDI, the student would not be able to make sufficient progress in the general curriculum.

Question 18

Did the group determine if the SLD is the student's primary disability?

Guidance on Question 18

The group needs to ensure other disability categories have been considered. A student can meet the requirements of other categories, but for this question, the key word is *primary*, meaning SLD is causing most of the difficulties the student is experiencing in school.

Questions 19 and 20

Did the group determine that a lack of appropriate instruction in reading is not the primary factor in determining eligibility?

Did the group determine that a lack of appropriate instruction in mathematics is not the primary factor in determining eligibility?

Guidance on Questions 19 and 20

Using the data gathered in Questions 1 and 2, the group can address these questions. The focus is on determining the primary issue. Although the student may have experienced some gaps in instruction, the group can assess whether the difficulties stem mainly from the SLD or from insufficient instruction.

Question 21

All the above are "Yes." The group determines the student is eligible for special education and related services under the categorical classification of SLD.

At least one of the above is "No." The group determines the student is not eligible for special education and related services under the categorical classification of SLD.

Guidance on Question 21

Questions 15–20 must all be answered Yes for the student to be found eligible for special education and related services under the SLD category. If any are answered No, the student is not eligible under this category.