



## South Haven Public Schools

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### **Announcement from the South Haven Special Education Department September, 2010**

#### **Determining The Existence Of A Specific Learning Disability**

Dear Parents and Community Members,

We hope that the following notice will assist you in understanding how students who are learning disabled can qualify for special education programs and services in the South Haven Public Schools. We encourage you to follow your child's education, and if you notice that they are not making expected progress, please talk to your son/daughter's principal and ask for help. It is the principals' responsibility to meet with you, and make sure the district provides you with whatever it can to meet your child's needs.

If you have specific questions about learning disabilities and/or special education please contact Patrick Campbell, Director of Special Education for South Haven Public Schools at 269-637-0521 or email him at [pcampbell@shps.org](mailto:pcampbell@shps.org)

#### **Change In Laws:**

Changes in both state and federal laws regarding how to determine the existence of a specific learning disability are requiring each local educational agency in Michigan to post the process they use in their district to determine the existence of a specific learning disability.

#### **Two Current Ways To Determine Eligibility:**

South Haven Public Schools uses two different ways to determine eligibility for learning disabilities:

##### **(1) Response to Scientific, Research-Based Intervention Process (Rtl)**

The District uses the Rtl process when identifying students for possible learning disabilities in the **area of Basic Reading in grades kindergarten through grade three.**

This process involves providing the student with a number of scientific/ research based reading interventions appropriate for the student's age or State-approved grade-level standards. If a student is not successful responding to the interventions, the student will be referred for special education assessment and possible placement.

## **(2) Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW)**

The District uses the Patterns of Strengths/Weaknesses (PSW) when identify students for possible learning disabilities in the **area of Basic Reading in grades four through grades twelve. It also uses Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses across all other areas of potential learning disabilities from kindergarten through grade twelve.**

- Oral Expression
- Listening Comprehension
- Written Expression
- Reading Comprehension
- Reading Fluency
- Math Calculation
- Math Problem Solving

The Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses process involves the collection of data to determine if, over a period of time, a student demonstrates a pattern of strengths/weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both that is relevant to the identification of a student as having a learning disability.

### **Eligibility Criteria:**

Regardless of whether the district uses the Rtl, or the Process of Strength/Weaknesses approach, when determining whether is learning disabled or not, the students must meet the following criteria:

The student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified under federal law (34 CFR 300.309(a)(1)(i) when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or State-approved grade-level standards.

### **Team Decision:**

The determination of a specific learning disability is made by a Multi-disciplinary Evaluation Team (MET). The team must use appropriate assessments, consistent with state/federal evaluation and reevaluation requirements. The Individualized Education Team (IEPT) then meets to determine eligibility for special education programs and services.

Questions:

Again, if you have any comments, questions or concerns please call Patrick Campbell, Director of Special Education at 269-637-0521 or email him at [pcampbell@shps.org](mailto:pcampbell@shps.org)

Respectfully,

Robert Black, Superintendent  
South Haven Public Schools