**Eligibility: AU, Not SLD, Possible OHI for inattention**

**AUTISM (AU)**The Texas Administrative Code and Texas Education Agency define Autism as a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance.

Information for this evaluation was gathered from a variety of sources including review of previous evaluations and educational records, formal testing, observations, parent and teacher interviews, and rating scales. Based on the information gathered, STUDENT has a history of developmental delays associated with speech and language, fine motor skills, learning, and social skills. Sensory processing issues and difficulties with transitions have also been reported. STUDENT currently exhibits qualitative impairment in social communication and social interactions. He demonstrates significant delays with pragmatic language, as he is rarely able to initiate and maintain conversations with others (especially same-age peers), participate in classroom discussion, use eye gaze when communicating, use verbal and nonverbal communication in effective ways, understand perspective taking, and clarify spoken messages when the listener does not understand. At school, STUDENT rarely seeks out the company of peers and tends to play by himself. Although STUDENT exhibits impairments in these areas he also demonstrates some positive social strengths, as his mother reports that STUDENT is interested in playing with others and engages in pretend play. He interacts better with adults than with peers, and he appears to interact and play better in familiar settings or with familiar people, such as family members at home.

In addition to social and communication impairments, STUDENT exhibits significant behaviors related to inattention, distractibility, and difficulty following / understanding directions that interfere with his learning and ability to complete assigned tasks independently. Teacher information suggests that STUDENT also displays some sensory issues, becomes upset if routines are changed, and becomes obsessed with details.

Based on information gathered through this evaluation, STUDENT meetscriteria for the educational disability condition of Autism. It is important to remember that an autism spectrum disorder is a complex developmental disorder, and symptoms present differently in each individual and in different settings. STUDENT’s presentation of impairments in social communication and social interactions may also present differently, since STUDENT does display some strengths, and some of his behaviors have improved over the past few months according to parents. This is likely due to a combination of supports, including speech therapy provided both privately and at school, occupational therapy, academic tutoring, and continued support through special education in the classroom.

**SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD)**According to the federal register (34 CFR 300© 10) a Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematic calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. It does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.    
  
In order to determine if STUDENT meets the criteria for a specific learning disability based on a pattern of strengths and weaknesses, the Dual Discrepancy/Consistency (DD/C) operational definition of SLD was applied. There are six diagnostic markers for the presence of a specific learning disability condition, and the following questions were used to guide the process of determining a specific learning disability on the presence of these markers:   
  
1***- Presence of a Normative Academic Deficit***Review of educational records indicates that STUDENT has a history of academic difficulties. He was retained in kindergarten. STUDENT has received instructional accommodations and in-class support through special education to address academic concerns for the past two years. In addition, teachers provide small group instruction and one-on-one assistance for learning new information and completing assigned tasks. Although some of STUDENT's academic skills have improved, he continues to perform below grade level in reading, writing, and math.   
  
STUDENT’s performance on formal achievement tests (KTEA-3) indicates academic weaknesses in the areas of Reading (81), Writing (70) and Math (71).   
  
***2 - Presence of a Cognitive Processing Deficit***According to the results of formal intellectual testing, STUDENT displays deficits in the cognitive areas of Verbal Comprehension (79), Visual Spatial (75), and Processing Speed (83).  
  
While STUDENT does display academic and cognitive difficulties, a separate educational disability category of Specific Learning Disability is not warranted at this time, as STUDENT’s academic and learning difficulties are accounted for by the developmental delays associated with Autism. Part of STUDENT’s academic difficulties are related to his weakness in understanding language as well as other associated features of Autism, such as difficulty with learning and following directions, inattention, and high distractibility. Although a separate educational disability category is not needed, it is important to note that STUDENT’s academic difficulties can still respond to intervention. The ARD committee should continue to provide instructional accommodations and support to address STUDENT’s specific academic weaknesses.

**OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT (OHI)**In order for a STUDENT to meet eligibility criteria for special education as a student with Other Health Impairment (OHI), a student must demonstrate limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The impairment must adversely affect the student's academic performance. The multidisciplinary team that collects or reviews evaluation data in connection with the eligibility based on OHI must include a licensed physician.

Information gathered through this evaluation indicates that STUDENT exhibits significant difficulties with inattention which interfere with his performance in the classroom. Specifically, STUDENT exhibits a short attention span, is easily distracted, has difficulty following directions, exhibits difficulty remembering previously learned information, and makes careless mistakes. Due to difficulties with inattention and high distractibility, parents may wish to share a copy of this evaluation report with STUDENT’s physician to determine if a specific attention disorder is present. If a Physician’s Report is returned from a licensed physician and a medical diagnosis or impairment is reported, then the ARD committee should consider the additional educational disability condition of Other Health Impairment.