

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

March 1, 2017

PENN\*LINK

To: School District Superintendents  
School District Special Education Directors  
Charter School Chief Executive Officers  
Charter School Special Education Directors  
Intermediate Unit Executive Directors  
Intermediate Unit Special Education Directors

From: Lynn Dell, Acting Director  
Bureau of Special Education

Subject: Revisions to the Using Response to Intervention for Specific Learning Disability  
Determination School Building Application (K-12) for Approval

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and PA Chapter 14 regulations provide two options for the determination of specific learning disabilities. Pennsylvania local educational agencies (LEAs) may use the Ability-Achievement Discrepancy model or Response to Intervention process.

The purpose of this Penn\*Link is to make LEAs aware that revisions have been made to the “Using Response to Intervention (RtI) for Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Determination School Building Application” and to the overall application process. The primary revision more closely aligns the criteria language of the application process with language consistent with IDEA and the PA Code by distinguishing the RtI/SLD criteria from previously referenced Response to Intervention and Instruction or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.

IDEA includes a provision mandating that states allow, as part of their criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, the use of a process based upon the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention (34 C.F.R. 300.307(a)(2)). In Pennsylvania, the criteria is defined in 22 PA Code §14.125. The option of using RtI for the determination of a SLD may not be utilized until an application has been submitted and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The new application can be located on the PaTTAN webpage ([www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)) at the following link:  
<http://www.pattan.net/category/Resources/Instructional%20Materials/Browse/Single/?id=58b58b35150ba04d028b45a7>

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Jessica Keener Haas, Special Education Adviser, at [jesshaas@pa.gov](mailto:jesshaas@pa.gov) or 610.678.6059.