

October, 2009

Dear Parents:

This letter is to inform you of the changes in the identification process when determining if a student has a Learning Disability. These new guidelines were released by the Connecticut State Department of Education after July 1, 2009. When determining eligibility of students suspected of having a specific learning disability, we are no longer allowed to consider a discrepancy between academic achievement and cognitive ability. In compliance with these new guidelines, we must determine whether or not a student is achieving adequately for his/her age or meeting state approved grade level standards. Furthermore, we are required to provide Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) in an area of concern with multiple measures of progress monitoring to determine the student's response to the intervention(s) prior to being able to determine whether or not the student meets the criteria of having a specific learning disability. We must now consider if a student has both low performance relative to age or grade level standards and the progress being made when provided with SRBI.

Many of you have already heard about state and federal mandates for Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI), which are designed to improve the quality of instruction for all students in the core subject areas of reading, writing, and math. Some students are already participating in targeted programs of supplemental instruction that meet the standards of SRBI, and are reaping the benefits of those programs in the form of higher test scores and a stronger base of knowledge.

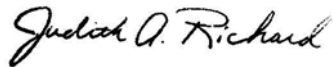
In preparation for the implementation of the new Guidelines, if you would like to obtain more information about the policies of the State of Connecticut for student performance, strategies for increasing student rate of learning, we invite you to visit the following websites, which provide additional information:

1. The SRBI Framework that describes the state's perspective on SRBI can be found at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2604&Q=321716>, and the executive summary of this document can be found at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320730#publications>.
2. Connecticut's framework for the Response to Intervention (RTI) model for identification of children with specific learning disabilities can be found under the heading of Resources for Parents and Families on the SDE website (www.sde.ct.gov) under the heading Publications/Resources-Best Practices, entitled A Family Guide: Connecticut's Framework to RTI.
3. Curriculum standards and CMT/CAPT grade-level goals for students can be found at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/Curriculum/Curriculum_Development_Guide_2009.pdf, <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320866>, <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&Q=322136>, <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320850m>, <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&Q=321834>.

If your child requires supplemental targeted instruction in the SRBI model, you will receive specific notification of that from your child's school, and his or her progress in this supplemental instruction will be tracked so that you can receive periodic updates concerning your child's progress. If you believe that your child is receiving or may require such instruction, please contact your school principal for additional information regarding your school's SRBI process.

We know that this information can be confusing for parents, and we want to provide as much information as we can to help alleviate any concerns that may be raised by this process. Your child's individual progress is important to us, and it is only through parent-school partnership that every child can excel. If you have any questions regarding this notification, please feel free to contact myself or Gina Olearczyk, SRBI/RTI Special Education Coordinator at (860) 742-7317 ext 4.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith A. Richard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Judith A. Richard

Director of Pupil & Staff Support Services