Glossary

**Academic Language**: the complex components of the English language that is required for success in academic settings such as speeches, workplace discussions, debates, comprehension of content, as well as writing in the content areas.

**Achievement/ability discrepancy**: Difference between a student's academic performance and intellectual (IQ) potential.

**Academic Achievement Gap**: Significant difference in academic performance and attainment when results of performance between American Indian and African American students are compared to their White peers.

**Adequate Yearly Progress**: set of standards used to assess schools and districts to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

**Advocate**: A person who helps parents and children in their communication with school districts about services.

**Assessment**: means of gathering data to make informed decisions about strategies, services, or interventions to benefit the individual student, or to support caregivers and families. Assessment includes screening, focused problem solving observations, use of standardized testing, and progress monitoring.

**Attention**: the control of focus (visual, auditory or combined) in a selective manner.

**Basic Psychological Processing**: Also known as information processing, involves perception, thinking, reasoning, problem solving, learning, storage and retrieval of information.

**Behavior Rating Scale**: a checklist of behaviors or symptoms usually completed by a caregiver and teacher to identify concerns about a student or describe the student’s performance in different settings.

**Bidialectal**: using two dialects of the same language.

**BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills)**: Basic interpersonal skills are language skills used doing social interactions in a meaningful social context, such as at a party, talking with friends, or gaining directions.

**CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency)**: CALP is defined as the ability to comprehend and communicate thoughts and ideas with clarity and efficiency, and to carry on advanced interpersonal conversations. This ability takes approximately 5 to 7 years to develop and is required for academic success. CALP is commonly used in referencing the level of language acquisition of an English Language Learner.
Caregiver involvement: A broad term inclusive of several types of participation to support their child.

Categorical placement: Federally recognized special education programs where students are placed based on meeting specific criteria. Alternative models include non-categorical placement and cross-categorical placement.

Cognitive Ability: referring to reasoning or intellectual capacity.

Continuum of services: A range of services available to students of a school district so that they may be served in the least restrictive environment.

Conference: Generic term that may refer to a special education determination meeting, annual review of a student's progress, or other type of meeting.

Cooperative: Association of school districts that work together to provide special education services using a shared administrative structure.

Cross-Battery Assessment (XBA): The process of using information from multiple tools to evaluate cognitive processing.

Cultural Competence: a set of behaviors, attitudes, and policies within a system, agency, or among professionals, to enable those involved to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Curriculum: The subject matter that is to be learned by students. A curriculum described in terms of its scope (what it covers) and sequence (the order in which domains are covered).

Curriculum-based assessment: A method of evaluating a child's progress by developing tests from their curriculum and measuring the student's skill development, usually done at frequent intervals.

Curriculum-based Measures (CBM): CBM is a method for assessing the growth of basic academic skills. CBM involves the use of standardized assessment procedures that are technically adequate and have specific rules about what skills to measure, and how to measure those skills. CBMs are developed from the student’s curriculum and directly sample skills and knowledge and under timed conditions. CBMs have many equivalent forms to allow for repeated measurement, are very brief, and are easy to teach and use.

Delay: Child or student is behind with development of skills when compared to others his or her age. Delays can be global (multiple areas), or specific (only in speech for example).

Developmentally Appropriate Instruction: Developmentally appropriate instruction and practice involves the consideration of age expectations, individual needs, and cultural factors when preparing classroom settings, designing instruction, or conducting assessments.

---

**Disability**: A physical, sensory, cognitive, or affective impairment that causes the student to need special education to assist in their growth and development.

**Due process**: Legal safeguards for caregivers and parents, including elements of proper notice of meetings, opportunity to be heard, and standards for completing assessments in a timely manner. Due process involves federally defined procedures and safeguards that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.

**Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD)**\(^2\): An established pattern of one or more of the following emotional or behavioral responses: (A) withdrawal or anxiety, depression, problems with moods, or feelings of self-worth; (B) disordered thought processes with unusual behavior patterns and atypical communication styles; (C) aggression, hyperactivity, or impulsivity. The pattern must adversely affect education or developmental performance, including intrapersonal, academic, vocational, or social skills. The concern must be consistently exhibited in at least three different settings, two of which must be educational settings one other setting either the home child, care or community.

**Executive Functioning**: Executive functioning involves mental processes to plan, organize and develop strategies to solve problems and respond to demands.

**Extended school day**: A provision for a special education student to receive instruction for a period longer than the standard school day.

**Extended school year**: A provision for a special education student to receive instruction during ordinary school break periods.

**Evidenced-based interventions**: Interventions that are based on or informed by research, but do not meet the technical standards of scientific research-based interventions. See the definition of scientific research-based intervention for the technical standards.

**FERPA**: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. A federal law that regulates the management of student records and disclosure of information from those records. Records of students should only be seen by those who have a legitimate need to review records.

**FAPE**: free appropriate public education

**Fidelity**: refers to the concept that interventions are implemented as designed without alterations that may lessen the quality of the intervention.

\(^2\) [https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?id=3525.1329](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?id=3525.1329)
**Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA):** A FBA is a process involving the use of a variety of data collection methods and sources to lead to the development of hypotheses and summary statements to explain behavioral patterns of learners, and which leads to the development of supportive interventions.

A good FBA process should include:

1. A description of the concerns in terms that can be measured.
2. Identification of events, times, and situations that predict the occurrence and nonoccurrence of the concern.
3. Identification of triggers (antecedents) occurring slightly before but not immediately before the target behavior (distal), and triggers occurring immediately prior to the target behavior (proximal).
4. Description of reinforcers that maintain the behavior.
5. Hypothesis for functions of the concern (what does the behavior gain for the student?)
6. Description of positive alternative behaviors or replacement behaviors that lead to more successful interactions for the student.

**Functional curriculum:** A curriculum focused on practical life skills that promote independent living.

**Heterogeneous grouping:** An educational practice in which students of diverse abilities are placed within the same instructional groups. This practice is helpful in the integration and full inclusion of children with disabilities.

**Homogeneous grouping:** An educational practice in which students of similar abilities are placed within the same instructional groups.

**IEP (Individualized education plan):** The document developed at an IEP meeting which sets the goals and objectives for the student to achieve when they become involved in special education services. The IPE describes the educational program designed to meet the student’s unique needs and must contain specific information about the child or student such as present level of academic achievement and functional performance that lead to statement of needs. Goals and accompanying objectives are developed based on the student’s assessed needs. An IEP is written for a 12-month period and must be reviewed annually.

**IEP meeting:** A gathering required at least annually under IDEA in which an IEP is developed or reviewed for a student receiving special education.

**Implicit Bias:** refers to bias or attitudes about others that a person may not be aware of, sometimes referred to as hidden bias.
**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Federal law that ensures services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible students. It also includes a description of parent rights and procedural safeguards which support compliance with the law.

**IFSP:** Individual Family Service Plan. A document that outlines the services to be delivered to families of infants and toddlers receiving special services.

**In-home interventions:** Services delivered in a child's own home.

**Joint agreement:** Also called a "cooperative." A joint agreement is a voluntary association of school districts who join together to provide special education services.

**LEA:** local educational agency. i.e., a local public school district.

**MICROAGGRESSIONS:** a theory that suggests that within interactions across some people of different races, cultures, gender, or sexual orientation, subtle interactions that communicate non-acceptance of difference happen. The communication of rejection can be through non-verbal means, such as ignoring the person or profiling the person based on their appearance.

**OCR:** US Office for Civil Rights. An agency of the federal government's executive branch within the Department of Education. It enforces a number of civil rights statutes including Section 504.

**OSEP:** US Office of Special Education Programs. An office within OSERS charged with assuring that the various states comply with IDEA.

**Permanent record:** A document containing information about the student and outcomes of assessment.

**Present levels of educational performance:** Information about the student's level of performance across educational domains at the time of assessment.
**RACE:** The U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards on race and ethnicity that classifies written responses to questions about racial identification.

The racial categories are:

- **White** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

- **Black or African American** – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

- **American Indian or Alaska Native** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

- **Asian** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

**The 1997 OMB standards permit the reporting of more than one race.**

**Referral:** Notice that a child may be in need of special education.

**Related services:** services such as transportation needed to support a student within the special education process.

**Reliability:** from repeated measures, consistent results are obtained. Information gained from the assessment device is consistent from one time to another.

**Response to Intervention:** Response to Intervention is a framework for building a school-wide process for delivering high-quality instruction and interventions and ensuring they are matched to the needs of students requiring additional academic and behavioral supports.

**School –Wide Information System (SWIS)**[^3]: A web-based system designed to help review office referral data and develop interventions based on a review of data.

**School Climate:** quality of experience in the school setting involving goals, interpersonal experiences, learning practices, and organizational structure.

[^3]: http://nyspbis.org/SWIS/SWISintro.cfm
Scientific Research-based Intervention (SRBI):

A. Research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.
B. Includes research that employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment.
C. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn.
D. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators.
E. Uses experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest. It carries a preference for random-assignment experiments.
F. Presents experimental studies in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings.

Accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Section 504: Provision of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits recipients of federal funds from discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Slope: Educators analyze students’ rate of progress against pre-determined aim line, goals, or decision rules. If a student’s growth is below what is desired or expected, action is taken to accelerate growth (knowledge or skill development). If growth exceeds aim line, the goals and aim line for the learner are adjusted upward.

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD): A disorder on one or more of the psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. Difficulties with listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling or performing math calculations can be found.

Standardized tests: Tests that have norms reflecting a large population involving the performance of children throughout the country on the same tests, usually these tests use age or grade based comparisons.

Stereotype threat: Risk factor where a student confirms to negative expectations about their race, gender or other factor (Reducing Stereotype Threat)

Technically adequate assessment: Refers to tests and procedures for which recognized professional standards of construction, validity, reliability, and use have been met.

---

4 http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/SpecEdClass/DisabCateg/SpecLearnDisab/
5 http://reducingstereotypethreat.org/definition.html
**Test**: Any standardized procedure used for measuring a sample of behavior (e.g., observations, student constructed responses, rating scales, checklists, curriculum based measures).

**Testing of Limits**: Altering standardized assessment procedures selectively in order to gain additional qualitative information about a student's abilities and problem-solving strategies.

**Trend**: The direction of a student’s rate of growth across time.

**Validity**: the assessment device measures the defined concepts accurately, rather than unknown or different factors.

**Zone of Proximal Development**: A concept attributed to psychologist Lev Vygotsky, based on the belief that learning occurs best when it is within an area of challenge that is not so easy that it becomes boring or uninteresting, and not so difficult that it creates frustration. Within the zone of proximal development the learner retains curiosity and interest in the task, and is better able to learn.