



Understanding the Woodcock-Johnson III

STRATEGIES FOR ADVOCATES

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School Official May Say ...	Advocate May Question ...	Relevant Information ...
The student does not qualify for LD services because there are no significant discrepancies.	Did you consider the impact that the learning disability may have had on the overall score? What type of discrepancy are you using and with what instruments?	Look at cognitive strengths and weaknesses on the intra-cognitive discrepancies and/or the Standard Score/Percentile (SS/PR) rank profile.
The student has average achievement on the cluster scores.	Did you look at the specific test scores within each cluster to see if there are significant differences between those scores?	Look at the SS/PR profile to see if there are significant differences between the tests within a cluster (e.g., perhaps all timed tests are low).
The student has been retained.	Did you score the test with grade norms or age norms?	Check on the computer scoring to see if the test was scored using grade or age norms. Make sure that age norms were used.
The test scores do not indicate that the student has a disability.	Did you consider other types of qualitative information? Even though, you say that the student is not eligible for special education services, what specific accommodations and instructional strategies would be helpful to the student?	Ask to see grades, class work samples, results from informal measures, and teacher reports.

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The standard scores are all in the average range.	Did you look at the RPI scores?	Review RPIs in comparison to standard scores.
The student is bright, but since his scores are average, he does not qualify for services.	Did you consider other information, such as how he performs the task? Did you consider how a cognitive weakness could impact daily functioning?	Look for qualitative information in parent and teacher reports. Look for weaknesses in cognitive processing
The student is no longer eligible for services.	What information are you using to determine that? Will the student move from an IEP to a 504 Plan?	
The student's only weakness is spelling so she does not qualify.	Poor spelling is one of the major characteristics of a learning disability (dyslexia). How will you help the student improve her spelling?	
The student's only weakness is speed, so that's not really a disability.	Slow automaticity and speed are often the main manifestation of a learning disability, particularly older student. In addition, IDEA 2004 has added reading fluency as an area for qualification under the category of learning disabilities.	Look at scores of Processing Speed, Rapid Picture Naming, Cognitive and Academic Fluency.
We use RTI in our school so we don't do comprehensive evaluations any more.	The law says that RTI can be used as a part of the evaluation process, not the complete process. We feel that a comprehensive evaluation would help us gain a better understanding of this student's strengths and weaknesses.	See IDEA 2004 federal regulations and analysis of comments.

The Advocate Academy is a project of The Advocacy Institute

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