

*To Coordinate... To Enhance... To Serve...Through Communication***MRS Looks Forward to the Fifth MRS Summer Transition Training in August**

On Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> MRS will be conducting Transition Training at Lansing Community College - West Campus. The design team, consisting of two counselors, Jennifer Hirst and Rick Webster and two consultants, Jean Williams and Cynthia Wright, has been planning the training since February. This year participants have a lot to look forward to including:

- Welcome by our new Director, Sue Howell – **Strong Fortified Partnerships**
- Keynote by Jason Palmer, Director of Michigan's Labor Market: **Finding a New Normal** - *Following the "Great Recession," Michigan's labor market has begun to show some signs of improvement. Palmer's remarks will identify in which ways the labor market has recovered and in which ways it continues to lag behind prerecession levels. Additionally, Palmer will discuss the industries and occupations expected to see positive employment trends through 2020 and provide some insights into the types of education, training, and skills candidates will need to successfully compete for these opportunities.*
- News from our newly hired educational partner, Maria Peak, Michigan Transition Outcome Project Director and Dave Malott, MI-TOP Liaison to MRS: **Purposeful Collaboration - Together WE can change the picture!** - *Michigan Transition Projects is committed to working with vocational rehabilitation. Currently we have several collaborative projects that have mutual benefits for both organizations, such as, joint professional development, MI-TOPs "Coordinated Activities" website, BackStory app, and an adjudicated youth project."*
- Updates from Paul Mulka, MRS Program Innovation/Western Division Director: **MCTI Evolves and Expands** - *MCTI is in the process of implementing new programs and expanding service delivery.*

The afternoon will offer breakout sessions facilitating small group learning and discussion on a variety of topics including:

- MRS/MTSA Collaborative Projects
- MCTI Offers a Myriad of Opportunities for Transition Youth - Both Pre and Post-Graduation
- MRS Postsecondary Data Analysis
- Ionia Transition Central
- Innovation Projects - Adjudicated Youth Project, MSU, DNR, Autism
- Transition Policy Q&A

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- Ask the Policy Unit
- Access and Success: Transition to Higher Education for Students with Disabilities
- Using School Data and Documentation to Determine Functional Limitations

The afternoon will wrap-up with three MRS Transition Youths telling their Transition Stories including experiences in high school, work experience, postsecondary education, and employment.

The training is open for ALL MRS staff interested in learning about Transition services. To sign-up, visit E-Learn. Any questions about the training can be directed to Cynthia Wright, [wrightc1@michigan.gov](mailto:wrightc1@michigan.gov).

See you in August!!!

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### **The Department of Natural Resource Project Expands In Second Year**

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Last year Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), the Department of Natural Resources-Parks and Recreation Division (DNR-PRD), local Intermediate School Districts/Regional Education Service Agency (ISD/RESA), and local community rehabilitation organizations teamed up to create summer job opportunities for 80 students with disabilities. Students worked for 8 weeks in 14 Michigan State Parks or Recreation Areas. The program was a resounding success and resulted in a desire to continue and expand the project for a second year.



Students begin their summer work experience at the Ludington State Park. From left to right: Tiffany Schager, Muskegon MRS counselor; Dan Adams, Ludington State Park Unit Supervisor; Tyler Sheplar, student from Baldwin HS; Blaise Iles student from Ludington HS; Joe Levine, student from Mason County Central HS; Chesney Griffis, student from Mason County HS; Perry Pieske, Job Coach; and of course Teresa Root, West Shore ESD Transition Coordinator.



This year, the project has added Belle Isle Park, creating a great opportunity for youth with disabilities in Detroit. Other sites include Van Ripper, Tahquamenon Falls, Brimley, Straits, Cheboygan, Petoskey, Young, Traverse City, Interlochen, Mitchell, South Higgins, North Higgins, Hartwick Pines, Ludington, Muskegon, Hoffmaster, Grand Haven, Holland, Van Buren, Ionia, Island Lake, Pinckney, and Sleeper. It is anticipated that up to 144 students will participate this year!

In addition to the paid work experience, students receive on-site job coaching and assistance with work-related expenses such as transportation and work clothes.

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### **The MRS Specific Learning Disability Policy Gets an Update**

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A cross functional work team, including staff from the Policy and Program Innovation Units, have come together to revise the Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Policy 4300 that will be rolled out to the field soon. Information was gathered from a variety of sources to reform the new policy. Some of the resources included: MRS Transition Counselors; the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) supplemented with selected IDEA Federal Regulations of 2013; IDEA Regulations – identification of SLD; the RSA Technical Assistance Circular of 2005 on guidelines for assessing the functional capacities of an individual with SLD to determine significance of disability for Order of Selection purposes; and the newly revised Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)–V, to name a few.

The new policy will clarify:

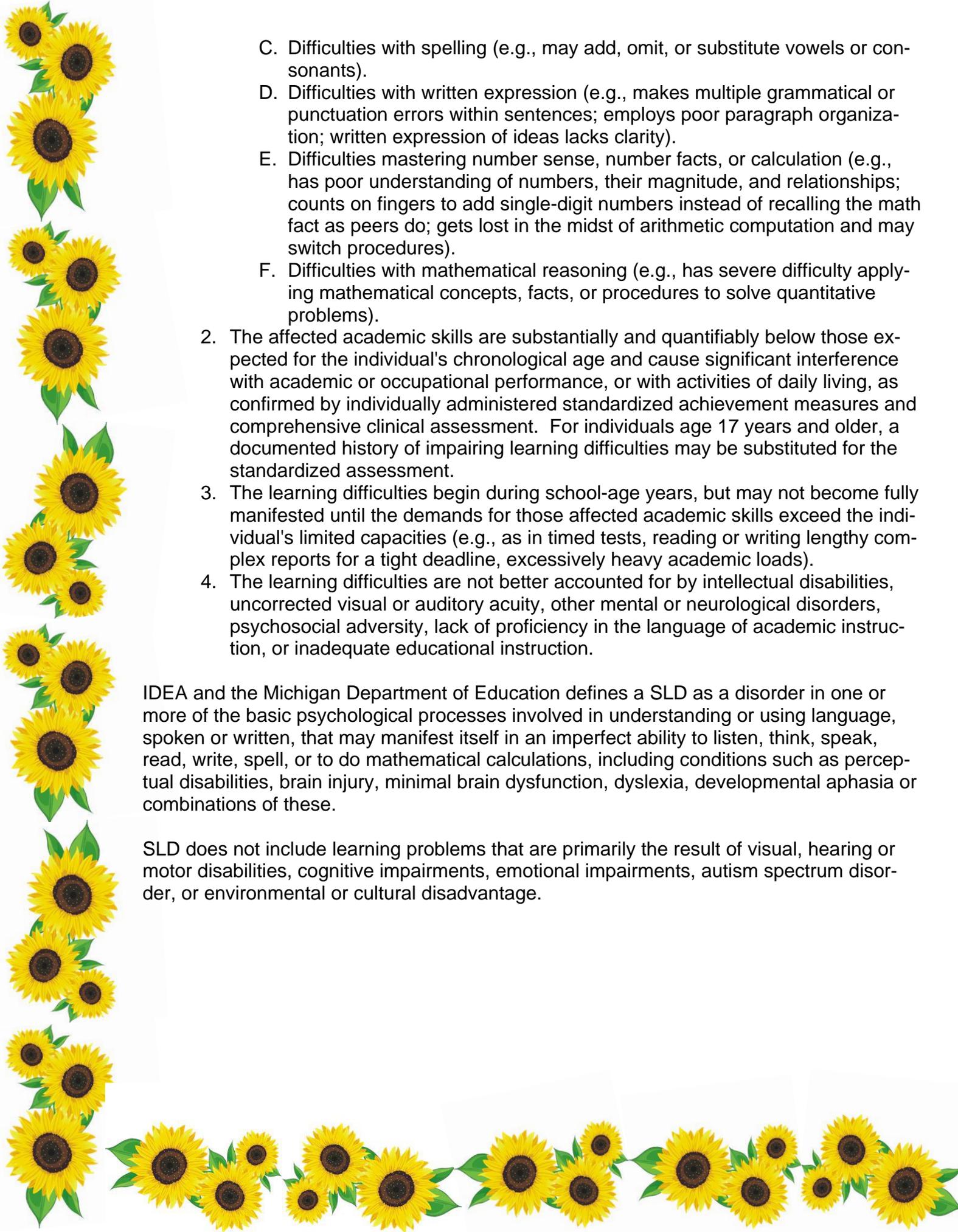
- Who can provide a diagnosis of SLD
- What school documents can be referenced to establish the existence of a SLD for Transition Youth
- How to identify functional limitations and establish eligibility in Transition Youth, Young Adults, and Adults
- SLD criteria based on the DSM-V as compared to IDEA and the Michigan Department of Education/Office of Special Education definitions

Two definitions of SLD are offered, one from the newly revised DSM-V, and one from IDEA and the Michigan Department of Education.

The DSM-V diagnostic criteria for SLD are:

1. Difficulties learning and using academic skills, as indicated by the presence of at least one of the following symptoms that have persisted for at least 6 months, despite the provision of interventions that target those difficulties:
  - A. Inaccurate or slow and effortful word reading (e.g., reads single words aloud incorrectly or slowly and hesitantly, frequently guesses words, has difficulty sounding out words).
  - B. Difficulty understanding the meaning of what is read (e.g., may read text accurately but not understand the sequence, relationships, inferences, or deeper meanings of what is read).



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- C. Difficulties with spelling (e.g., may add, omit, or substitute vowels or consonants).
  - D. Difficulties with written expression (e.g., makes multiple grammatical or punctuation errors within sentences; employs poor paragraph organization; written expression of ideas lacks clarity).
  - E. Difficulties mastering number sense, number facts, or calculation (e.g., has poor understanding of numbers, their magnitude, and relationships; counts on fingers to add single-digit numbers instead of recalling the math fact as peers do; gets lost in the midst of arithmetic computation and may switch procedures).
  - F. Difficulties with mathematical reasoning (e.g., has severe difficulty applying mathematical concepts, facts, or procedures to solve quantitative problems).
2. The affected academic skills are substantially and quantifiably below those expected for the individual's chronological age and cause significant interference with academic or occupational performance, or with activities of daily living, as confirmed by individually administered standardized achievement measures and comprehensive clinical assessment. For individuals age 17 years and older, a documented history of impairing learning difficulties may be substituted for the standardized assessment.
  3. The learning difficulties begin during school-age years, but may not become fully manifested until the demands for those affected academic skills exceed the individual's limited capacities (e.g., as in timed tests, reading or writing lengthy complex reports for a tight deadline, excessively heavy academic loads).
  4. The learning difficulties are not better accounted for by intellectual disabilities, uncorrected visual or auditory acuity, other mental or neurological disorders, psychosocial adversity, lack of proficiency in the language of academic instruction, or inadequate educational instruction.

IDEA and the Michigan Department of Education defines a SLD as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia or combinations of these.

SLD does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, cognitive impairments, emotional impairments, autism spectrum disorder, or environmental or cultural disadvantage.



**SAVE THE DATE**

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual MRS Summer  
Transition Training**

**Tuesday, August 12, 2014**

**Lansing Community College  
West Campus  
5708 Cornerstone Drive  
Lansing, 48917**

**PLEASE FORWARD OR PRINT TRANSITION BULLETIN**

E-mail your contributions or ideas and subscription requests for "Transition Bulletin" to Cynthia Wright [wrightc1@michigan.gov](mailto:wrightc1@michigan.gov) or call 517-241-3957

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