

Appendix

Learning Disability & ADHD Support Services

Addendum to Grade Level Timelines

Referral Process for the LDSS Caseload at SI

Students who **have been diagnosed** as having a LD and or ADHD in their previous school may report directly to LDSS. Through an interview, the student's educational background will be discussed and his or her needs assessed. Necessary interventions and accommodations are determined at that time.

Students who **have not been previously diagnosed** may contact LDSS for an LD/ADHD screening. If further testing is recommended, the student is referred to a diagnostician for a complete educational assessment. Those results are then shared with the student and family, necessary interventions and accommodations are included in the evaluation and considered by SI. LDSS will determine what academic accommodations are appropriate for SI and provide a brief summary, detailing the specific accommodations that students are eligible to access.

Goals

Students with LD/ADHD at SI are encouraged to:

1. Engage in the process of understanding **personal strengths and weaknesses**;
2. Learn to **self advocate** for learning needs both in and out of the classroom;
3. Participate in the **college selection and application process**;

Note: The college counseling program for students with LD/ADHD follows the same program and timeline as outlined in this guide. All students with LD/ADHD and their parents are encouraged to use this handbook for all questions pertaining to the college application/admissions process.

4. **Apply for and access appropriate accommodations** on standardized (high stakes) tests (SAT/ACT). See Timeline Below.

Note: The process for applying for and being approved for accommodations is a detailed process and can be understood by accessing the College Board Services for Students with Disabilities and ACT Special Testing website. The necessary accommodations a student may qualify for will vary from student-to-student, as each disabling condition and functional limitation is unique to the individual.

LDSS supports students with the same level of academic, personal and college counseling as described by grade level in this guide. Consideration is given to the unique needs of each student in order to foster student achievement across the curriculum. **The LDSS Counselor will:**

- **Guide** students in understanding their disability and devising effective coping strategies;
- **Connect** students with faculty and peer tutors (as needed) for specific problem area classes;
- **Instruct** students in study skills techniques and effective use of school resources;
- **Coordinate** accommodation services (note taking, alternative media for texts, & extended time for tests (in cooperation with faculty));
- **Provide** academic advisement for each school year;

The Learning Specialist is available to help remediate students' deficit areas, as appropriate by:

- Encouraging one-on-one instructional time with appropriate faculty and/or support staff;
- Providing training in the use of appropriate assistive technology ;

Note: SI does not offer any remedial courses, tutoring is recommended to supplement instruction if remediation is needed.

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Standardized Testing Grade Level Timeline for students with documented LD/ADHD

Although students who qualify for services through the LDSS office and receive accommodations on school based testing at SI, accommodations may not be granted for standardized testing. A request must first be made to the ACT and/or College Board (SAT) providing relevant documentation.

Once accommodations are approved for the student, both SI and the student will receive a tracking number known as the Services for Students with Disabilities Number (SSD #). The SSD # must be used when students register for all College Board tests. Note: Colleges are not made aware of students who test with accommodations of any kind.

Appeal Process

Should a student receive a denial for requested accommodations from the College Board, an appeal may be made. The LDSS office will assist with the appeal process which often requires the following information:

1. Additional documentation of the disability
2. Evidence of the students need for the accommodation via narrative summaries from teaching faculty.

Freshman Year

No formal standardized testing takes place. We regard this as a year for students to 'settle in' to high school.

Sophomore Year

The process for requesting accommodations generally begins second semester.

ACT: The PLAN test (practice ACT) which is offered in January for every sophomore can be completed with all necessary accommodations without the prior approval of the ACT.

SAT: The PSAT test (practice SAT) is offered in October for every sophomore. Students will apply for accommodations through the College Board during sophomore year.

Junior Year

Registration for SAT/ACT begins as noted in the Standardized Testing section of this handbook. LDSS strongly recommends that students take the SAT in May and June, after completing a rigorous year of study. The most significant preparation for the SAT, SAT subject tests, and/or AP comes from a commitment to academic course work. It is also recommended that if preparing for an AP exam s/he should consider testing for that same subject in the SAT subject test.

LDSS has found that a number of our students test at a high rate on the ACT exam. The ACT generally assesses classroom based information whereas the SAT is an instrument that assesses analytical skills. It is important to know that colleges do not require both the SAT and the ACT for admissions purposes. Therefore, LDSS recommends that students are careful not to over-testing, but rather, test to one's strengths.

Senior Year

This is the time for additional testing opportunities, if necessary. **Please Note:** Students should not take any test more than three times.

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Addendum to College Admission Process Information

College Admissions Process

LDSS follows the same timeline as the rest of the school in regards to the nuts and bolts of the college admissions process. Nevertheless we recognize that this process undoubtedly requires strong organizational skills. LDSS has found that through a hand on approach through parents, counselor and student involvement, we are able to successfully complete the process in a timely manner.

Disclosure of LD/ADHD to Colleges

Many students wonder if it is appropriate to 'disclose' their LD/ADHD within their college application. The college admissions essay is often an opportunity for students to disclose the details of their specific disability. As is true for all students, the essay is an opportunity for students to personalize their application. Therefore, regardless of whether or not a student's academic record is an accurate reflection of academic potential, the essay is often an appropriate place for students to disclose the "story" behind their transcript.

Frequently Asked Questions for LD/ADHD Students Applying to College:

Answers provided by Dr. Shaywitz is a Professor of Pediatrics at the Yale University School of Medicine and author of *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at any Level* (2003).

Q. How and when do I disclose my LD?

It really depends on the application and the college. Most often, you would write about your life experience when crafting a personal statement. Essays are good because they complete the application. A personal statement (the most suitable place to disclose a disability) cannot be framed as an excuse for academic struggles. I understand the hesitation to disclose, however real those feelings are, academic support services for students with disabilities are essentially a civil rights statute. Any eligible student at the college level will have access to services for students with disabilities. Spend time looking at the rationale for the question you are being asked. Whether you disclose on paper or in person, you should be mindful that the admissions representative is essentially a stranger to you. You may also discuss it in an interview with an admissions counselor or the program director of academic support at the college. You must be engaging, insightful and provide clarity. You should anticipate the questions that the admissions representative will want to know from the data you have provided them in the application. For example, they may wonder why the grades on your transcript are inconsistent or why you selected the classes you did. This is why disclosing your LD in the college admissions process is a good idea.

Q. Can I disclose my learning disability after I am accepted?

You can disclose at any time. Often the opportunity will present itself. Some students choose colleges based on the support services that they offer students with LD. Frequently; personal statements are used for scholarships. If you disclose in the admissions process, the admissions officers may have the college learning specialist meet with the student, and read the student's application (this is a good thing) to weigh in on whether or not that school and their particular support services are a good fit for the applicant. This is also a great time to learn about the support services the college provides, the atmosphere of the office and the personalities of the specialists.

Q. What should I be mindful of as a student with LD applying to college?

There is a fine line between using LD as an excuse and framing your experience as a life circumstance that can be managed. It is all how you frame it. The resiliency and dedication that high performing students with LD (students like you, who graduate from SI) have is a real testament to their character and their ability to achieve and master rigorous curriculum. Honestly, students with LD who graduate from SI, a rigorous college prep school, are in an excellent position to compete and perform at the college level. I believe that this is primarily because they seek out support when it is needed and they understand the expectations of a rigorous school and how to build relationships with their instructors.

Athletic Recruiting

If you are interested in playing sports in college as a recruited athlete, speak with your current coach to help determine your skill level and the reality of playing sports at the college level. Keep your counselor informed to ensure that you have a well rounded college list with a wide range of college options.

It is important to understand that the lifestyle of a college athlete can be very different from a typical college student. Of course, this depends on the athletic division of your sport. Make sure you are aware of the expectations placed by specific colleges on recruited athletes. If you attend a college as a recruited athlete, the expectation is that you will play your sport with the team while in college.

For more information about the general recruiting process, please consult the Planning Guide for College Bound Student Athletes, which may be found on the SI website. A link for the Planning Guide is also included below: http://www.siprep.org/counseling/documents/SIStudent-AthletePlanningGuide-numbered_003.pdf