

Guidance for Determining Participation in General Education Standards and Curriculum to Support Model Form: Individualized Education Program: Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (I-4)

Purpose: This document is intended to address the question: “Will the student be involved full-time in the general education curriculum or, for preschoolers, in age-appropriate activities?” located on the **Model Form: Individualized Education Program: Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (I-4)**

Except under rare circumstances, students with disabilities will access the general education curriculum for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. However, some students with significant cognitive disabilities cannot meet the general education standards, even with accommodations and modifications. These students are instructed using alternate academic achievement standards for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The alternate academic achievement standards are descriptions of what students with significant cognitive disabilities are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12. IEP teams should practice caution when making determinations about which set of standards a student will access, particularly in the lower grades. IEP teams should make the *decision to use alternate academic achievement standards only after careful consideration of the potential long-term impacts of limiting a student’s opportunity to learn the same skills, knowledge and concepts expected of their peers.*

Step One: Determine if student has a significant cognitive disability

Step Two: Consider level of instructional support

Step Three: Using information gathered from Steps One and Two, determine if student will participate in alternate academic achievement standards and curriculum for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Step One: Determine if student has a significant cognitive disability.

The federal government has stated that students with significant cognitive disabilities are students:

- (1) who are within one or more of the existing categories of disability under the IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act] (e.g., cognitive disability, autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, etc.)and;
- (2) whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with the very best instruction.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Alternate Achievement Standards for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities Non-Regulatory Guidance*, August 2005, p. 23.
www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/altguidance.doc

If, after considering the criteria above, the IEP team determines the student does *not* have a significant cognitive disability then the student participates in the general education standards and curriculum for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

If, after considering the criteria above, the IEP team determines the student has a significant cognitive disability, then the IEP team continues to Step Two.

Step Two: Consider level of instructional support.

Does the student require extensive, repeated individualized instruction and support that is *not* a temporary or transient nature and use substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternate ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across multiple settings?

Decisions for determining participation in alternate academic achievement standards and curriculum for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies must not be based solely on the following:

1. A disability category or label
2. Poor attendance or extended absences
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
5. Academic and other services student receives
6. Educational environment or instructional setting
7. Percent of time receiving special education
8. English Language Learner (ELL) status
9. Low reading level/achievement level
10. Anticipated student's disruptive behavior
11. Impact of student scores on accountability system
12. Administrator decision
13. Anticipated emotional duress
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process

If the IEP team determines the student does *not* need extensive, individualized instruction, then the student participates in the general education standards and curriculum for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

If the IEP team determines the student needs extensive, individualized instruction, then continue to Step Three.

Extensive instructional support is provided to the student regardless of setting or environment.

Step Three: If the answers to step one and step two are “Yes”, then the student will participate in alternate academic achievement standards and curriculum for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies at their grade level.

Step Four: Complete IEP Form I-4: Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (Question: Will the student be involved in the general education curriculum/standards?)

If the IEP team indicates that a student will be participating in the alternate academic achievement standards/curriculum for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies at their grade level (Step Three), then the team would select "No" and describe the extent to which the student will not be involved in the general education curriculum. IEP teams must also address participation in other curricular areas (e.g. specials, electives, etc.). Despite significant changes or modifications to instructional materials for the other curricular areas such as specials and electives, they are still considered to be part of the general education standards and curriculum.

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