

What are the Wisconsin Essential Elements (EEs)?

The Wisconsin Essential Elements are descriptions of what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level from Kindergarten through 12th grade. They are essential skills that are linked to the Wisconsin Academic Standards grade-level specific expectations.

What are the Wisconsin Academic Standards?

The Wisconsin Academic Standards list the things that students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level from Kindergarten through 12th grade. The Wisconsin Academic Standards are for all content areas including English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

Why are there different standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

All students deserve and have a right to a quality education. This right includes the opportunity as much as possible for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to be involved in and meet the same challenging expectations as other students.

Sometimes, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are not able to access the standards in a meaningful way or to the same degree as other students. Wisconsin educators worked with educators from 12 other states to create alternate academic achievement standards that align with the Wisconsin Academic Standards. These alternate academic achievement standards are called the *Wisconsin Essential Elements (EE) in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics and Science*.

How are the Wisconsin Essential Elements (EE) used?

Teachers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities use the EE to plan what is taught and how it is taught so that their students can learn as much as possible. The EE may also be used to help teachers develop ways to measure student progress.

What do the Wisconsin Essential Elements (EE) look like?

The EE provide teachers, parents and students information about how students learn and grow in the academic areas of English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics and Science. They answer the question “What should my child be learning?” Here are a few examples:

EE English Language Arts – Reading Literature -Grade 3:

Determine the beginning, middle and end of a story.

A teaching example of this would be: Use pictures to identify an event that occurred in the beginning, middle or end of the story.

EE Science Elementary:

Demonstrate that the gravitational force exerted by Earth on objects is directed down.

A teaching example of this would be: Drop a hard-boiled egg to show gravity at work.

EE English Language Arts – Writing-Grade 7:

Produce writing that is appropriate for the task, purpose or audience.

A teaching example of this would be: Write the schedule for the day. (Students may use any access tools or devices that are necessary and routinely used by the student during instruction).

EE Mathematics-Geometry- High School:

Make a prediction based on knowledge of volume to identify volume of common containers (cups, pints, gallons, etc.).

A teaching example of this would be: Which will hold more than three cups, a gallon or a pint? Which is a gallon? (Choose between a teaspoon, cup, and gallon.)

Essential Elements (EEs) and the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

IEP teams need to consider the EEs when developing the student's IEP. The EEs help the teacher identify the student's needs and plan grade level instruction and assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Information regarding the student's performance is included on the IEP under *Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance*.

What are the implications of participating in the alternate assessment aligned with the Wisconsin Essential Elements?

Participation in the alternate assessment aligned with the Wisconsin Essential Elements does not prevent a student from receiving a regular high school diploma. Under federal law, students participating in the alternate assessment cannot be stopped from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma. For further information on graduation requirements, please refer to your local school district policies.

Where can you go to find out more information?

More information and copies of the EEs are available online at: http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_assmt-ee on the DPI website.

For more information contact:

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
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Wisconsin Essential Elements



This brochure is intended to help parents and community members understand the purpose of the Essential Elements and how the standards relate to instruction and assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

All students deserve and have a right to a quality educational experience to ensure that they are college and career ready.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
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