

## Guidelines for Grading Students with Disabilities

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## Introduction

The issues around whether or when to change the way a student is graded on assignments or how his or her report card grade is calculated has been a recurring topic in the professional literature. Often the responses differ depending on the nature and severity of a student's disability. The guiding principles that form the foundation of these ***Guidelines for Grading Students with Disabilities*** are based on the latest research on grading practices; standards based education, and theories of grading. It includes the highlights from legal experts in various official offices that provide guidance to the field of special education personnel.

A "tier model" approach is utilized to delineate what applies to all students, options for students with disabilities in the general education curriculum (with or without accommodations and modifications), addressing needs of students participating in an alternate curriculum, and strategies for addressing students with severe disabilities who are "fully included" in the general education setting but working toward alternate standards and other goals. The document also addresses issues associated with the graduation of students with disabilities.

Although addressing and perhaps changing grading systems is a challenging leadership task, the benefits of effective grading practices are not limited to a reduced failure rate—although that benefit alone is sufficient to justify change. When student failures decrease, student behavior improves, faculty morale is better, resources allocated to remedial courses and course repetitions are reduced, and resources invested in electives and advanced courses increases (Reeves, 2008).

## Guiding Principles

Three commonly used grading practices or policies are ineffective: the use of zeros for missing work, averaging all scores throughout the semester, and using a single project, test, lab, paper or other assignment as the basis of a grade. The most effective grading practices provide accurate, specific, and timely feedback designed to improve student performance. In the best classrooms, grades are only one of many types of feedback provided to students. The following key points are the "Guiding Principles" of the recommendations put forth in these guidelines. Grading practices for students with disabilities, particularly report cards, need to be:

- individualized
- understandable
- reflective of instruction delivered
- aligned to accountability models
- informative to parents about what and how their child is doing
- meaningful
- based on curriculum standards
- based on assessment data
- a tool for teachers/administrators
- able to document educational benefit from program participation

## Applicable Federal and State Perspectives

The federal United States Department of Education (USDE) provides a variety of legal perspectives about grading students with disabilities under the following offices: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and the Family Policy Compliance Office. The California Department of Education (CDE) and the Office of Administrative Hearing (OAH) also provide guidance on grading practices for students with disabilities.

### The Office of Special and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)

OSERS administers the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). IDEA does not have specific provisions on student report cards or transcripts. However, it requires that the individualized education program (IEP) for a student with a disability include a description of (1) how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals set forth in his or her IEP will be measured and (2) when periodic reports on the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be provided. These progress reports may be separate from or included as part of the regular report cards.

## **The Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has no enforcement authority under IDEA. However, OCR has enforcement responsibilities under two of the applicable federal laws: Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (Title II) and Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504). Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities, including public elementary and secondary school systems, regardless of federal financial assistance. Section 504, like IDEA, requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified individuals with disabilities in their jurisdiction. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. This means that with respect to grades, class ranking, honor roll, graduation, and diplomas, students with disabilities must be treated the same as all other students.

Section 504 and Title II do not have specific provisions addressing report cards or transcripts. While the laws prohibit public entities from treating persons differently on the basis of disability, they may provide a different aid, benefit or service to persons with disabilities where necessary to provide supports that are as effective as that provided to others. Among the aid, benefits, and services provided to students and parents are report cards and transcripts.

OCR has stated that the report card may reflect grades based on the student's grade level with respect to students who are not participating in grade level classes but are taught different course content using a modified or alternate education curriculum for a portion of the day. OCR further stated that it would be up to the state education agency and the LEA to establish standards to reflect progress or the level of achievement for different course content. In both cases, grades earned in special education classes or in general education classes with the support of special education services must be included in district wide grade point average standings that lead to a ranking of students by grade point average for honor roll and college scholarship purposes, but that the grades may be weighted based on objective rating criteria. The grades on a report card for a student with a disability for classes with different course content would be based on state and/or local standards. Given this, a LEA may distinguish between special education programs and services and general curriculum classes on the report card of a student who has an IEP.

A transcript may indicate that a student took classes with a modified or alternate education curriculum. However, OCR has determined it would be a violation for a student's transcript to indicate that the student received accommodations in a general education classroom. In addition, transcripts may not indicate that a student has been enrolled in a special education program. In one investigation, OCR found classes on a transcript designated as Independent Learning Center did not violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 regulations, as they concepts and content than the regular classes.

## **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy interests of parents and students with regard to educational records. In general, a policy or practice of disclosing personally identifiable information from educational records without consent is prohibited except under specific exceptions. Disability status, report cards, and transcripts are subject to the protections of FERPA and IDEA.

## **The California Department of Education**

The California Department of Education (CDE) guidance on grading students with disabilities is incorporated into this document in relevant sections. <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

## **The Office of Administrative Hearings**

Individual case decisions made through the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) and/or the court system that do not generalize are not incorporated into these guidelines. Those seeking more specific California case histories may want to research the OAH website: <http://www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/SpecialEducation/searchDO.aspx>

## The Educational Benefit Argument

The legal basis for educational benefit was decided June 28, 1982 in the *Board of Education v. Rowley* decision of the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court tried to strike a balance in defining the meaning of free appropriate public education (FAPE). The following concepts are pulled from Justice Rehnquist statements:

- *If personalized instruction is being provided with sufficient supportive services to permit the child to benefit from the instruction, and other items on the definitional checklist are satisfied, the child is receiving a 'free appropriate public education' as defined by the Act.*
- *The Act consists of access to specialized instruction and related services which are individually designed to provide educational benefit to the child with a disability.*
- *Congress did not impose upon the states any greater substantive educational standard than general education. Indeed, Congress expressly recognized the process of providing special education and related services is not guaranteed to produce any particular outcome.*
- *However, it would do little good for Congress to spend millions of dollars in providing access to public education only to have the child with a disability receive no benefit from that education.*
- *If the child is being educated in the regular classrooms of the public education system, such instruction should be reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve passing marks and advance from grade to grade.*

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act Of 2004 (IDEIA 2004) continued the dialog of these issues by stating the following:

- *Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.*[§ 1400(c)(1)]
- *However, the implementation of this title has been impeded by low expectations, and an insufficient focus on applying replicable research on proven methods of teaching and learning for children with disabilities.* [§1400(c)(4)]
- *As used in this part, the term special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. [34 CFR 300.39(a)(1)]*
- *Specialty-designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction –*
  - (i) *To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and*
  - (ii) *To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children."* [34 CFR 300.39(a)(3)]

Both general and special education teachers may need training in how to differentiate the curriculum, use a variety of instructional strategies, and/or grading practices for students with disabilities.

## Standards, Assessment and Accountability

Although beyond the scope of these guidelines, it is important to recognize that today's education system is driven by standards, assessment, and accountability measures such as promotion and retention criteria. These principles and practices apply to all students, including students with disabilities.

### Standards

Content standards were designed to encourage the highest achievement of every student, by defining the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level. The content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education (SBE) are as follows:

[Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Adopted August 2010](#) (PDF; 2MB)  
(Modified March 2013 Publication Version)

[California Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Adopted August 2010 and Modified January 2013](#) (DOC; 6MB) (April 2014 Version)

[English Language Development 2012](#)

[Career Technical Education](#) (Updated January 2013 Prepublication Version)

[Health Education Content Standards March 2008](#) (PDF; 1MB)

[History-Social Science, Adopted October 1998](#) (PDF)

[Model School Library Standards, Adopted September 2010](#) (PDF; 1MB)

[Physical Education Model Content Standards, Adopted Jan-2005](#) (PDF; 2MB)

[Science Adopted, September 2013](#)

[Visual and Performing Arts, Adopted January 2001](#) (PDF; 2MB)

[World Language, Adopted January 2009](#) (PDF; 4MB)

Each local Board of Education has adopted standards matching or aligned with the state standards. The SBE has also adopted instructional materials designed to cover the core and ELD curriculum standards. The local boards have authority to decide the instructional materials to be utilized in each content area and/or program and generally adopt the SBE approved materials along with supplementary or alternate instructional materials. In addition, the local Board of Education must establish policies and procedures related to the promotion and retention of students.

## **Statewide Assessment**

The California Department of Education (CDE) has a clear vision and commitment to establishing innovative assessments. These assessments include a variety of approaches and item types that model and promote high-quality teaching and student learning and set a course to ensure that all California students are well prepared to enter college and careers in today's competitive global economy.

### **California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)**

[California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress \(CAASPP\) System](#) California's new statewide student assessment system established January 1, 2014.

[Smarter Balanced Assessment System](#) Latest information about new generation of English language arts/literacy and mathematics assessments.

### **California English Language Development Test (CELDT)**

[California English Language Development Test \(CELDT\)](#) A required state test for English language proficiency that is given to students whose primary language is other than English.

### **California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)**

[California High School Exit Examination \(CAHSEE\)](#) Beginning with the Class of 2006, all public school students were required to pass the CAHSEE to earn a high school diploma. Senate Bill 172, signed into law effective January 1, 2016, suspended the CAHSEE diploma requirement and the administration of the CAHSEE through the 2017-18 school year.

### **California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE)**

[California High School Proficiency Examination \(CHSPE\)](#) A test for eligible students to earn a high school proficiency certificate.

## **Grade Two Diagnostic Assessments**

Information about [diagnostic assessments for students in grade two](#) in English language arts/literacy and mathematics that meet the requirements of California *Education Code* Section 60644.

## **High School Equivalency Tests (HSET)**

[High School Equivalency Tests \(HSET\)](#) High school equivalency tests for students 18 years old and older, and 17 years old in some instances, for the purpose of receiving a California High School Equivalency Certificate.

### **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

[National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#) Tests administered to students in grades four, eight, and twelve in subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

### **Physical Fitness Testing (PFT)**

[Physical Fitness Testing \(PFT\)](#) A physical fitness test (FITNESSGRAM®) administered to students in grades five, seven, and nine.

The statewide assessment system is designed to capture the data needed for individual, school and district based annual reports on meeting the standards and assessment targets. The system provides for the provision of variations, accommodations, and modifications to meet the needs of students in general education, on a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, and/or on an IEP. Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines can be accessed at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Usability-Accessibility-Accommodations-Guidelines.pdf>

Another local measure to evaluate progress toward meeting the standards, assessment, and accountability requirements is the establishment of multiple measures. In general, each LEA establishes multiple measures for each grade level to evaluate how students are doing throughout the year in meeting the grade level standards, particularly those that are included in the statewide assessment system. These measures are used to help guide instructional strategies, identify areas of weakness where intervention is needed, and enhance teacher learning through the collaborative work of Professional Learning Communities. Progress in meeting the standards can also influence a teacher's recommendation for retention or promotion to the next grade level.

### **Promotion and Retention Requirements**

LEA policies and procedures regarding promotion, retention, and graduation are additional pieces of the standards, assessment, and accountability system that have relevance to grading practices for students with disabilities. The issues of promotion and retention became targeted accountability measures with the passage of AB 1626, AB 1639, and AB 1370 in January 1999. This legislation was a radical departure from customary promotion of students from one grade to the next, commonly referred to as social promotion.

State law requires every school district to have a written Pupil Promotion and Retention (PPR) policy approved by the district's governing board, consistent with Education Code (EC) § 48070.5(b). The policy shall provide for the identification of pupils who should be retained and who are at risk of being retained in their current grade level on the basis of either of the following: (1) The results of the assessments administered and the minimum levels of proficiency recommended by the State Board of Education. (2) The pupil's grades and other indicators of academic achievement designated by the district.

The legislation required LEAs to develop criteria for retaining students and to implement intensive interventions for those students that meet district-developed criteria for retention. Local school districts are required to develop a program for specific grade levels that identifies these students as early as possible in the school year and provides opportunities for them to improve their academic skills.

Although there are targeted grade levels, students may be retained in any grade if they are not meeting the established criteria for promotion. EC § 48070.5 states that school districts' PPR policies must include criteria for promotion and retention at the following specified grade levels based on grades and other indicators of academic achievement designated by the district:

- a. between second and third grade;
- b. between third and fourth grade;



- c. between fourth and fifth grade;
- d. between the end of elementary grades and the beginning of middle school; and
- e. between the end of the middle school grades and the beginning of high school.

The identification of students who should be retained or who are at risk of being retained should be based primarily on proficiency in reading between the second and third grades and between the third and fourth grades. For the remaining grade levels, identification should be based on proficiency in reading, English-language arts, and mathematics (EC § 48070.5[c]). Districts may also set promotion criteria at other grade levels. The state does not require school districts to have student promotion and retention criteria beyond the last year of middle school to the first year of high school. However, districts may set criteria for promotion for successive grades in high school.

Each PPR policy shall require parental notification when a pupil is identified as being at risk of retention as early in the school year as practicable and shall provide a pupil's parent or guardian the opportunity to consult with the teacher or teachers responsible for the decision to promote or retain the pupil. The policy shall also provide that pupils who are at-risk of being retained in their current grade be identified as early in the school year, and as early in their school careers, as practicable.

The classroom teacher is responsible for the decision to retain or promote a student based on the criteria outlined in the local school district policy. When a student has one or more teachers, the district shall designate which ones will be responsible for the decision. If the student meets or exceeds the criteria, the student will be promoted to the next grade. If the student does not meet the criteria, the teacher can select to promote the student based on in-class and other district-wide measurements. If the teacher decides to promote the student, he/she would present a written statement that includes the reason that retention is not warranted and recommendations for interventions to attain an acceptable level of performance. If the final recommendation to promote is based on successful completion of a district intervention program, the student shall be reassessed at the end of the program and the decision to promote or retain would be made at that time. The decision of the teacher shall be discussed with both the parent and principal prior to the decision being finalized. For parents that do not agree with the decision to retain their student, the local school district shall have an established appeal process. The burden of proof is on the part of the party appealing the teacher's decision.

### **Promotion and Retention of Students with Disabilities**

While AB 1626 makes no reference to the issue of students with special needs as they relate to retention and promotion, local governing board adopted standards for promotion apply to all students, including those with disabilities. The IEP document continues to be the critical process in determining the expected level of performance and achievement. Therefore, retention and promotion issues should be topics of discussion at the student's IEP meeting. Students with disabilities can be retained; however, careful consideration in the development and implementation of the student's IEP should prevent student failure in most cases. Promotion or retention should be based on the level of mastery expected and achieved on the IEP goals and objectives. IEP teams should consider whether the student's disability adversely impacts the student's potential for learning or rate of learning. If so, the IEP teams should consider whether accommodations or curricular modifications can minimize this impact. For students with special needs who receive the core curriculum, the same academic standards and frameworks shall be accessed. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to determine if the student will need accommodations, supports, or services to achieve these standards.

If, even with accommodations or curricular modifications, the student will be unable to meet the board-adopted promotion standards due to the nature or severity of the disability, the IEP team should document individualized promotion standards for the student that are within the context of district standards. The documentation of an individualized promotion standard should be completed before the first day of the school year, if possible. The student, parents, and general and special education teachers should be informed of potential consequences of individualized promotion standards (i.e. will the individualized promotion standard satisfy district requirements for graduation with a diploma or entrance requirements of a postsecondary institution).

Individualized promotion standards are not determined by the location where services are provided to students with disabilities. For example, a student with significant disabilities who spends all or most of the instructional day in general education classrooms learning social or communication skills may have individualized promotion standards. Yet, a student with emotional or behavioral disabilities who spends most or part of the instructional day in a more restrictive environment may be held to the regular promotion standards.

If a student with a disability fails to meet board-adopted or individualized promotion standards, the IEP team should reconvene immediately to consider the following:

- Is the current IEP for the student's academic, linguistic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs appropriate?
- Is the manner of assessment appropriate, including accommodations and modifications identified in the IEP?
- Were all the services required by the student to make progress in the general education curriculum appropriately identified in the student's IEP?
- Were the linguistic needs of English Learners appropriately identified?
- Did the student receive all the services identified in the IEP?
- Was the assessment conducted consistent with the IEP?
- Was the student's promotion standard appropriate and clarified in the IEP?
- What other interventions are needed and/or can be employed?

If the IEP was written to consider the student's individualized needs, but the student still failed to meet the promotion standards, then the student should participate in intensive supplemental instruction. The IEP team should document all the supports and related services the student will need to benefit from supplemental instruction. If after intensive supplemental instruction, the student still does not meet the board-adopted or individualized promotion standards, and is enrolled in one of the targeted grade levels, then the student may not be promoted to the next grade level.

In such cases, an IEP meeting should be held to develop an appropriate plan for helping the student advance. The IEP team should determine if sufficient supports were not provided, develop an alternate plan, provide intensive supplemental instruction, and consider not retaining the student if the district did not provide the supports and services necessary for the student to benefit from the educational program.

Students with disabilities may participate in intensive supplemental instruction and special education Extended School Year (ESY) simultaneously only if the need for supplemental instruction is documented in the student's IEP. In order to receive both services, ESY and supplemental instruction, the IEP must reflect that the student needs to participate in an intensive supplemental instruction program as part of the ESY services necessary for the provision of FAPE. In other words, the student is receiving supplemental instruction in order to meet the standards-based goals of the IEP, and special education and related services will be provided in order for the student to benefit from that instruction.

## **In Summary**

This push for standards based education, ongoing assessments, progress monitoring, provision of interventions, and application of promotion and retention policies and procedures has led many districts to create standards based report cards and grading systems. It is not the task of SELPA to overwrite what is happening at the LEA level. The role of SELPA is to provide legal guidance and recommendations to the LEAs about how to address grading students with disabilities. A committee was convened in 2011, research was conducted and "best practices" in the field were identified. The following sections will address the issues associated with students with mild to moderate disabilities who are participating in the general education curriculum, students with moderate to severe disabilities who are included in general education for purposes other than academic achievement, and model practices for students with moderate to severe disabilities.



## **Access to the General Education Curriculum**

Grading practices for students with disabilities typically follow the policies, procedures, and guidance provided by the local education agency. Many conversations need to occur at the district, site, grade and/or content level teams to determine “grading elements” or what types of assignments or expectations will count toward a report card and what criteria will be used to determine a grade on individual assignments. Typical elements include presentations, reports, quizzes, tests, projects, and demonstrations. Choices of elements can influence grades because certain types of assignments (e.g., timed essay tests) can “interact” more or less with a learner’s characteristics and thus make the task more challenging. Adaptations, accommodations, and modifications (as defined below) are intended to minimize the interaction between task demands and a learner’s disability.

Learners and parents should be informed of what will, and will not, count toward a grade at the beginning of a class to avoid later confusion or disappointment. The trend in general education classrooms is to count only academic work for grades and to report performance on work-related behaviors such as attendance, effort, timeliness, organization, and cooperative work separately. Critics of the practice of counting non-academic performance into the grade calculation of a report card grade point out that this may be misleading and not truly indicative of progress in the general curriculum.

The IDEIA and California Education Code require that each identified child with a disability be provided access to the general education curriculum. An ideal model includes a non-punitive teaching approach that doesn’t inhibit access to an optimum learning environment, but works with the student to gain the most out of the content material and to maximize all students’ cognition or thinking skills (universal design). Supports should not be determined by a disability label; instead supports should be used when the instructional or social activity warrants the need for assistance. A comprehensive service delivery model will include the options of making adaptations, accommodations, and/or modifications to the general education curriculum.

Learners need specific feedback if they are to improve on future assignments. Grades or percentages do not constitute feedback. Grading rubrics can be very effective in that the grading criteria are provided for the student ahead of time and multiple scores can be given for different components of an assignment. Rubrics also allow for individualization, such as adding in IEP goals/objectives (e.g., using a multi-step writing strategy to complete a research paper). For students working on curriculum at a lower grade level or learning standard, it may be helpful to indicate the level of the work along with the grade to help the learner and his/her parents interpret the grade accurately.

### **Adaptations to the Core Curriculum**

An adaptation is an intervention that retains the learning outcomes of the prescribed curriculum or performance standards and is implemented so that students can more effectively or productively participate in the classroom program. Adaptations can include alternate formats, fewer questions, instructional strategies and assessment strategies. The intent of adaptations is to cultivate rich teaching practices that foster inclusion of students with a range of learning styles and needs. Many adaptations are simply “different strategies” that are beneficial to all students. Students on adapted programs are assessed using the standards for the course/program and can receive full credit for their work because the learning goals remain the same as for other students. For more specific information, see Riverside County SELPA document entitled “*Adaptations to Promote Access to Curriculum and Assessment*” available at <http://www.rcselpa.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=21294173>

There is no recipe for adapting general education curriculum to meet each student’s needs. Each teacher, each student, each classroom is unique and adaptations are specific to each situation. By providing multi-level instruction teachers will find that adapting a lesson may not always be necessary. Differentiating instruction and providing multiple ways to assess allows more flexibility for students to meet the standards and requirements of the class. In addition, supports for one student may not necessarily be the same in all situations/content areas.

## Accommodations

For some students with disabilities, the curriculum can be made more accessible through accommodations. An accommodation is a change in the course, standard, test preparation, location, timing, scheduling, expectation, student response, or other attribute that provides access for a student with a disability to participate in a course, standard or test, without fundamentally altering or lowering the standard or expectation of the course, standard or test. Accommodations provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in the general education curriculum and/or demonstrate mastery of the standard on an assessment.

## Modifications

In contrast to the above, a modification is a change in the course, standard, test preparation, location, timing, scheduling, expectation, student response, or other attribute that provides access for a student with a disability to participate in a course, standard or test, that fundamentally alters or lowers the standard or expectation of the course, standard or test. For example, in statewide testing, reading the content items in the math section is an accommodation while reading the content items in the language arts section is a modification as it changes what is being assessed (e.g., listening comprehension).

A modified program has learning outcomes which are substantially different from the prescribed curriculum, and is specifically selected or designed to meet the student's special needs. For example:

- A Grade 9 student in a modified math program might be focused on functional computational skills in the context of handling money and personal budgeting.
- A Grade 5 student in a modified language arts class may be working on recognition of common signs and use of the phone.

While a student's program may include some courses that are adapted or provide accommodation, if a student clearly cannot handle any of the academics with adaptations, modifications must be considered. Any decisions to create a modified program for a student need to be done in consultation with IEP team members to address how and why serving the student in a modified program is appropriate. For example, when the gap in achievement becomes so great that the student cannot perform at that level, the IEP team may recommend that the student participate in "basic" or "functional" versus "core" curriculum classes. Such classes are based on standards but may not have the same breadth or depth as general education courses. *In general, a modified program indicates that a student will not complete the requirements for a High School Diploma, will earn a Certificate of Completion or Attendance at Graduation and is eligible to continue in the special education program until age 22. It is crucial that parents are clearly notified and realize the implications of a modified program.*

## Grading Practices for Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities

Two of the key mandates of the IDEA are that IEP teams are required to make an offer for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for each child with an identified disability. Such decisions have to be individualized based on the unique needs of the child. What makes this a challenge is that there are thirteen different identified disability areas, there are spectrums of disability within the majority of these, and some children are identified with more than one disability. This section addresses the options and key considerations for grading students with mild to moderate disabilities.

### Grading Accommodations and Modifications

A student's grade should not reflect that accommodations have been made. However, a student's grade may reflect that modifications have been made for that student to access the general education curriculum. If modifications have been made to the curriculum of any course, it is important that the student's grade reflect the student's achievement in the modified curriculum, as long as modified grades are available to all students. Similarly, a student with disabilities may be given a pass/fail grade as long as participation in this grading system is voluntary and is available to all students. In

each case, any modifications to programming, instruction, and grading must be documented in the student's IEP and be directly related to the student's disability. School districts cannot modify grades on the basis of the student's special education status. To automatically give modified grades to all special education students would be discriminatory and potentially violate Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For example, to state that a student cannot get a grade above a "C" because he/she is in special education is illegal.

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are provided to parents to indicate their child's progress or level of achievement in specific classes, course content, or curriculum. Given this purpose, it is permissible under Section 504 and Title II nondiscriminatory regulations for a report card to indicate that a student is receiving special education or related services. A report card for a student with a disability may refer to an IEP or a Section 504 plan in order to report on the student's progress on the specific goals in the IEP or Section 504 plan. However, the mere designation of an IEP or plan, without any meaningful explanation of a student's progress, such as a grade or other evaluative standard established by the LEA, would be inconsistent with IDEA, Section 504 and Title II requirements. The LEA must provide students with disabilities report cards that are as informative and effective as the report cards provided for students without disabilities. So, there are basically two options available: a report card aligned to grade level standards or one aligned with alternate curriculum standards.

Grading procedures should be developed that apply to all students, including students with a wide range of disabilities. Grades earned by students with disabilities cannot categorically be disregarded or excluded, even if earned with the support of special education services. Alternate grading systems may be appropriate, if they are available to all students, not just those with disabilities. For example, if a school district wishes to establish standards for eligibility for class ranking or honors, it may do so, as long as it does not arbitrarily discount or exclude grades earned by students with disabilities. One method for doing this is to develop and implement an uncomplicated system of weighted grades. Another possibility is to establish a list of "A-G level courses" which must be completed in order to be eligible for honors, class ranking or participation in certain activities. A school district may not implement a weighted grading system that arbitrarily assigns lower grade weights to all special education courses. Each subject or course must be analyzed separately and assigned a degree of difficulty factor based on its individual contents.

## **Report Cards Aligned with Grade Level Standards**

A report card for a student with a disability can distinguish between special education programs and services and general education curriculum classes as is done with other types of programs and classes (e.g., advanced placement, honor, or remedial classes). A collaborative grading effort between two or more educators is entirely appropriate in circumstances where a student with a disability is in a general education classroom, however it should be discussed in the IEP. The IEP team for a student with a disability who receives special education accommodations in a general education classroom should document any grading accommodations or modifications that may apply, particularly with respect to subjects completed in a general education setting. A symbol or code may be used on a student's report card to indicate that the student has had a modified curriculum in the general education classroom since accommodations do not generally affect course content or curriculum. However, this type of coding should not be used solely for students with disabilities.

Educational standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students, from kindergarten through high school. Since 2010, 45 states have adopted the same standards for English and math. These standards are called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Having the same standards helps all students get a good education, even if they change schools or move to a different state. Teachers, parents, and education experts designed the standards to prepare students for success in college and the workplace. For details regarding the CCSS for all students visit the main [CCSS Web page](#). This site offers resources and guidelines on what the CCSS and the new tests will mean for California students in the special education community.

An IEP team may determine how students may best access the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and when a student should be placed in an alternate curriculum for a specific content area. When a student struggles to meet even the essential grade level standards, at this point the IEP team may decide that the student is no longer performing at grade level standards and should receive a designation on their reporting document that reflects that the student should now receive a modified curriculum and modified grades.

Section 504 and Title II generally require that students with and without disabilities in the same regular education classes in the general education curriculum be graded using the same standards. A student that is unable to meet even partial components of the grade level standards should be provided with curriculum allowing them to progress through below grade level standards beginning at the appropriate grade equivalency. To the extent that a student with a disability is not participating in regular education classes, but is receiving modified course content or is being taught under a modified or alternate curriculum, it would be up to the SELPA and/or LEA to determine the standards to be used to measure the student's progress or level of achievement.

### **IEP Progress Reports**

Learners should be graded on their work performance and progress toward individualized goals for each progress reporting period. The SELPA adopted Special Education Information System (SEIS) is a web-based IEP system that provides a mechanism for teachers and other case managers to create reports on progress toward achieving IEP goals. Staff members can refer to the SEIS website and/or manual for how to complete this process.

Education Code 56345(3) requires that IEP progress reports be provided concurrent with the issuance of report cards [CFR §300.320(a)(3)]. Such requirements are driven by local education agency report card policies. Therefore it is recommended that special education personnel check with their district on these timelines.

### **Transcripts**

The purpose of the transcript is to present an accurate picture of a student's coursework [academic credentials and achievement]. Special notations, including asterisks or other symbols may not appear on a transcript for a student with a disability who received accommodations in general education curriculum classes. Classes may not be identified as special education classes on high school transcripts to indicate the student has had a modified curriculum in a general class. It is much better to use terms such as "basic, level 1, practical, etc." Other permissible transcript "labeling" or designations used may be used if these terms are also used in other courses besides special education. It would be a violation of Section 504 and Title II for a student's transcript to indicate that a student has received special education or a related service, or that the student has a disability.

Modifications or exceptions to the grading scale may be identified on the academic transcript as long as grades and courses of all students, and not just students with disabilities, are similarly treated. For example, a transcript for a student with a disability may indicate receipt of a certificate of attendance or a similar document, rather than a regular diploma under certain circumstances. The school district should take steps to notify each student of what his or her academic transcript contains in the way of such modification notations, if any, before releasing it to another party.

### **Best Grading Practices for Learners with Mild to Moderate Disabilities**

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has identified the following grading practices as generally helpful for learners with disabilities.

- Base report card grades on how well the learner performed on the work assigned, even when that work was at a lower grade level.
- Do not penalize a student with a lower grade because he or she was not assigned grade-level work.
- Make sure all stakeholders understand what level of work was completed to earn a report card grade.

- Avoid using the threat of a low grade as leverage for improving behavior. Grades should never be used in a coercive manner and learners with a history of low or failing grades typically do not respond to such threats.
- Reduce use of zeros for late or missing work as they have a disproportionate effect on overall grades and can undermine a student's motivation. Provide opportunities for full or partial credit for late work.
- Be aware of legal guidance on what can be indicated on a report card versus a transcript.
- Avoid giving a passing or higher grade based on the belief that learners with disabilities "deserve a break" because the general curriculum is so difficult. This strategy fails both the learner and the school team in that neither is accountable for their roles in the learner's outcomes for the marking period.
- React quickly to low grades and involve the learner and parents in finding a solution. A recommended process involves:
  - Pinpointing assignments producing low grades;
  - Determining when and why the learner is struggling with the assignments;
  - Determining if additional accommodations or supports are appropriate; and
  - Determining if the learner would benefit from change to lower-level work or alternative elements that may improve performance without lowering expectations.

## **Grading Options for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities Included in General Education Classrooms**

Sometimes the IEP team determines that a student with moderate to severe disabilities is appropriate to be included in one or more general education classrooms. The responsibility for placing, monitoring, and reporting on a student's progress is typically shared by all members of the IEP team who work directly with the student.

### **Progress Monitoring**

Progress monitoring needs to be conducted on all IEP goals and objectives. It is the case manager's responsibility to ensure that data collection is ongoing and that progress is reported to the parents in a timely manner. The case carrier may need to ask the general education teacher, related service provider, and/or paraprofessional working with the student to assist in collecting information. Data may be collected via teacher-made tests; district approved assessment tools, observations, and/or individualized data collection sheets.

### **Grading Practices**

Whether or not an "inclusion student" receives grades is an IEP team decision. If the student will be graded then the team must determine the most appropriate method of grading the student – both on individual assignments and as an overall grade for the course. The team must also decide and document on the IEP if the student will be graded on regular or modified curriculum. Modified curriculum may include partial, out-of-level, substitute, and/or functional skills curriculum

**Individual Class Assignments.** Once the IEP team determines what and/or how much content the inclusion student is expected to learn, the team can then make decisions about the method of grading class work. A letter grade could be given for modified assignments to reflect actual achievement. Class work can be graded pass-fail. Another option is to give one grade for effort and another for content. Teachers can agree to changes in weighing the various types of assignments (e.g., tests versus homework). Team members can agree that the student is being included for other than academic purposes and the general education teacher only need put a check mark or star on the page to show that the student attempted the work or a stamp indicating work was completed with help. Student work can be maintained in a portfolio to be appraised by the team members to establish a grade.

**Course Grades.** Students educated in an inclusive setting may have a modified grading system if noted on their IEP. Such decisions must be made on an individualized case-by-case basis.

Parents should be advised of the consequences of the grading decisions made by the team (e.g., reduction in number of credits). Some examples include:

- Regular Grades. Unless noted on the student's IEP, the student is presumed to be assessed and graded as per the school or district policies. Accommodations that do not substantially alter the standards or expectations of the course can be applied but the student is graded by the same criteria as all other students. This may be appropriate in electives like art or choir.
- Modified Curriculum. When course content is substantially modified, the student may be graded on his or her achievement in the modified curriculum and this would be reflected in the report card. In high school the student may not receive credit for the courses toward graduation requirements.
- No Grade. An inclusion student may be enrolled in a general education class for reasons other than mastery of course content (e.g., social skills, communication) and receive no grade if so indicated in the IEP.
- Credit / No Credit or Pass/Fail. An included student who is not expected to master the entire course requirements may be graded credit/no credit or pass/fail. In such cases the general education teacher would need to establish the minimum requirements that would reflect a passing grade for all students. If the student meets the minimum number of standards, he or she would pass or get credit for the course.
- Alternate Report Card. If an alternate report card is developed by the local education agency it might be appropriate for use with students who are included in general education but working far below academic grade level.
- Written Progress Report. The standard report card may be replaced by a Progress Toward IEP Goals Report.

## **Addressing Needs of Students in an Alternate Curriculum**

Using a general education CCSS based grade level report card for students with disabilities participating in an alternate curriculum aligned with the California Alternate Assessment is basically meaningless and goes against the principal of providing report cards to parents to indicate their child's progress or level of achievement in specific classes, course content, or curriculum. Because no particular format or method to provide information is required by Section 504 or Title II, a report card may simply refer to another document that more fully describes the student's progress. However, under IDEIA, each LEA should provide students with disabilities report cards that are as informative and effective as the report cards provided for students without disabilities.

### **California Alternate Assessment (CAA)**

The summative California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics are to be administered to students in grades three through eight and grade eleven whose individualized education program teams designate the use of an alternate assessment on statewide assessments and who have a cognitive disability that prevents him or her from taking the online California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. This population of students has, in previous years, been assigned to take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) for ELA and mathematics. Students in grades five and eight who are assigned to take the CAAs will also take the CAPA for Science.

### **Course Descriptions**

The CCSS have been adopted in California for all students. Typically students with severe cognitive disabilities participate in functional life skills courses to supplement and enhance the core curriculum. At elementary school, such classes may be generically described (e.g., life skills). At secondary level, it is important to distinguish the classes by content across the periods (e.g., Life Skills English, Life Skills Math, etc.). For students enrolled in high school courses and 18-22 year old adult preparation programs, the curriculum content is framed around the following areas of instruction and coaching to learn independent skills in the following domains:



- Community: transportation, general shopping, restaurant use, attending community events, using community services, accessing community agencies
- Vocational: independent work skills, follow and retain instructions, punctuality and attendance, interpersonal skills, work attitude, job application and interviewing
- Recreation / Leisure: individual and group community activities, individual and activities at home, individual and group school activities
- Domestic: eating and food preparation, relationships with others, time management and scheduling, household / outdoor maintenance, money management, personal hygiene (dressing, grooming), nutrition, simple first aid and health
- Functional Academics: reading, writing, mathematics, science, social science, communication

Interagency partnerships are very critical and are incorporated as an integral part of secondary transition planning. Many IEP teams incorporate the support services available through the Transition Partnership Program, Workability I Vocational Training Program, Regional Center, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, local educational institutions, and various public agencies and/or service organizations to help students make the successful transition into adult life.

## **Progress Monitoring**

Education Code 56345 requires that the IEP team include a description of the manner in which the progress of the pupil toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress the pupil is making toward meeting the annual goals, such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards, will be provided. Since timelines for report cards are a local education agency decision, it is recommended that the reader check local requirements.

SEIS (Special Education Information System) is the current web-based IEP system utilized in Riverside County SELPA for the development of IEPs and includes progress monitoring components. The teacher or other case carrier can log on to [www.seis.org](http://www.seis.org) to access their student IEPs and progress reports.

The Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) developed the *Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI)* as a means for collecting benchmark assessment data for IEP progress monitoring (see [www.rcoe.us](http://www.rcoe.us)). Along with other assessment tools (e.g., teacher data and parent input), the *SANDI* is part of a process used by the IEP team to gather comprehensive information about the student's present levels of performance, progress on prior goals, and areas of student need that drive the development of new IEP goals. The *SANDI* has also been developed as a tool to address educational benefit in its ability to measure progress over time.

The Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) is an annual assessment of all present levels of performance areas addressed on an Individualized Education Plan. Subtests include Reading, Writing, Communication, Math, Science, Fine and Gross Motor, Vocational/Transition, and Adaptive Daily Living Skills. The SANDI quickly determines student need areas, clearly aligns needs to Common Core State Standards, ensuring access to standards based instruction delivered using research based best practice. The SANDI includes support documents designed for specific test items in order to maintain consistent testing across teachers, schools, and districts.

*Steps to Success* is a comprehensive classroom system for students with significant cognitive disabilities including students with intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, and autism. *Steps to Success* is newly aligned to the Common Core State Standards and includes the summative SANDI assessment. Steps to Success, developed by Riverside County Office of Education, aligns assessment, access to Common Core State Standards, and rigorous research-based instruction in order to specifically target individual student strengths and needs and implement standards-based classrooms for ALL students. <http://www.rcoe.us/student-program-services/special-education/capa-blueprints/>

*The Formative Assessment of Standards Tasks (FAST)* is a Common Core State Standards aligned performance-based formative assessment designed to give educators in collaborative settings current student data to analyze with the intention of raising student achievement.

The Basics Curriculum Framework for students with severe disabilities was developed in collaboration with the San Bernardino City Unified School District. Students with moderate to severe disabilities will use a variety of materials to work toward Common Core standards in literacy, math, science, social studies and language development. The Basics curriculum focuses on five domains; Functional Academics, Domestic, Community, Vocational and Recreation Leisure.

## **Graduation of Students with Disabilities**

In order to graduate from a California public high school, students must complete specified state and local graduation requirements. Local school districts have the authority and responsibility for establishing high school graduation requirements. These requirements vary among school districts. However, California Education Code Section 51225.3 specifies that students must pass a minimum set of required courses and an exit examination. These requirements should be viewed as minimums and support for the regulations specified by the local school boards.

A student with a disability can graduate from high school with a diploma or obtain a certificate and has the right to participate in graduation ceremonies. This section begins with five big ideas:

1. High school graduation means exiting public education with a high school diploma.
2. Beginning with the Class of 2006, all public school students were required to pass the CAHSEE to earn a high school diploma. Senate Bill 172, signed into law effective January 1, 2016, suspended the CAHSEE diploma requirement and the administration of the CAHSEE through the 2017-18 school year. Those who pass the [California High School Proficiency Examination \(CHSPE\)](#) receive a **Certificate of Proficiency** from the State Board of Education, which is equal by law to a California high school diploma.  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tq/sp/>
3. Students with an IEP who have not earned their high school diploma are eligible for public school service until age 22.
4. State and Federal law requires that special education students be provided a connection to continuing training/education and employment through the Individualized Transition Plan.
5. Each student with a disability is to receive a "Summary of Performance" written by their case manager upon earning the high school diploma or aging out of public education at age 22.

### **Graduation with a Diploma**

The graduation of a special education student constitutes a "significant change in placement". The student's most recent IEP should anticipate the student's graduation by describing the criteria that must be met by the student in order to do so. If these criteria are achieved, there is no explicit requirement that a formal determination must be made by an evaluation team. However, the parents or student aged 18 or older should receive Prior Written Notice of graduation and a copy of their Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards. In addition, the case carrier needs to provide a student with a disability with a summary of performance.

A student with an IEP must meet the same graduation requirements as general education students, including successful completion of the number of credits and course requirements established by the local Board of Education. Another option is to pass the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) and receive a **Certificate of Proficiency** from the State Board of Education, which is equal by law to a California high school diploma.

### **Graduation with a Certificate of Attendance/Completion**

The local education agency has the responsibility of providing a qualified student with a disability a free appropriate public education (FAPE) until the student is graduated with a diploma or achieves the

maximum age for eligibility for public education. Any student with disabilities who does not meet all graduation requirements must be allowed to participate in the same graduation activities as their peers. Such students may receive a Certificate of Attendance or Certificate of Completion in lieu of a diploma. Districts are still responsible for providing FAPE until the student earns a high school diploma or turns age 22, whichever comes first.

There are some students with severe disabilities who are unable to meet all graduation requirements even with accommodations/ modifications, supports and services. In such cases an alternate curriculum aligned to the functional life skills curriculum is typically provided. It is important that the transition plan for these students be well planned so that the student can become as independent and self-sufficient as possible.

In 2008 the CDE advised local education agencies that students with disabilities must be allowed to participate in any graduation ceremonies and scheduled activities related to graduation *even if they have not completed the required coursework for a regular diploma*. CDE advised that by meeting any one of the following requirements in Education Code Section 56390 the student may participate in graduation activities and should receive a Certificate of Achievement:

- (a) The individual has satisfactorily completed a prescribed alternative course of study approved by the governing board of the school district in which the individual attended school or the school district with jurisdiction over the individual and identified in his or her IEP, **or**
- (b) The individual has satisfactorily met his or her IEP goals and objectives during high school as determined by the IEP team, **or**
- (c) The individual has satisfactorily attended high school, participated in the instruction as prescribed in his or her IEP, and has met the objectives of the statement of transition services.

**Participation in Graduation Activities**

Case managers should review progress on IEP goals and objectives including objectives of the statement of transition services to determine which students meet any of the above criteria. Any student who meets one of the above in (a), (b), or (c) is eligible to participate in all graduation activities, including walking at graduation. The High School will award these students a Certificate of Achievement or Completion.

Students with disabilities who meet the criteria for a certificate of attendance/completion or a high school diploma are eligible to participate in any graduation ceremony and any school activity related to graduation in which a pupil of similar age without disabilities would be eligible to participate. Graduation ceremonies do not equate to the receipt of a certificate of completion or a regular high school diploma. For students with disabilities who do not receive a diploma, the LEA is still responsible to provide FAPE until age twenty two, even if the student has participated in a graduation ceremony.

The IEP team determines appropriate annual goals and the appropriate educational setting that will (a) prepare the student to meet all graduation requirements by age twenty two or (b) provide the student with functional life skills and vocational preparation until age twenty two. The following chart has been prepared to show specific examples:

Sample Student	Graduation Participation
Student has met all diploma requirements	Participate in graduation
Student has met goals and objectives.	Participate in graduation. IEP needs to indicate support, services and program to complete requirements or age out at 22.
Student has satisfactorily attended high school, participated in the instruction as prescribed in his/her IEP, and met the	Participate in graduation. IEP needs to indicate support, services and program to complete requirements or age out at 22.

objectives of the statement of transition services.	
Student needs a minimum of one full semester to make up credits.	Participate in graduation for current year unless parent agrees to graduation in the following year. IEP team needs to amend IEP to reflect new projected completion date
Student has an IEP team recommendation to remain at comprehensive high school for one additional year.	Participate in graduation as agreed by the IEP team. IEP team needs to amend IEP to reflect new projected completion date
Student has not met goals and objectives, but did participate in instruction per the IEP and met the transition service objectives. However he does not have satisfactory attendance, which is the third part of (c).	Cannot participate in graduation for the current year. Did not meet requirements of a, b, or c above.
Student with Severe Disabilities	Meets (a) above. Can participate.

### **Agency Responsible for Provision of Diploma or Certificate**

Students with disabilities should receive their diploma or certificate from the local education agency responsible for the provision of FAPE when graduation or aging out occurs. For example,

- The district of residence would provide the document for students attending district programs.
- The district of residence would work collaboratively with the regional program operator service provider (e.g., county operated program) to monitor progress. The student may participate in the graduation ceremony and related activities at the campus at which the regional program is located. The district of service would provide the certificate of completion or diploma.
- The district of residence would work collaboratively with the contracted nonpublic school service provider, conduct credit check analysis, and issue a diploma or certificate. However, the student may participate in the graduation ceremony and related activities at the nonpublic rather than public school.

### **Programs for Students with Disabilities Aged 18-22**

Students with disabilities who continue their public education beyond age 18 or a high school graduation ceremony typically fall into one of two categories: students with mild to moderate disabilities and students with moderate to severe lifetime disabilities. As such, they may need different types of program offerings.

#### **Post High School Programs for Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities**

Students may continue to take classes to complete the LEA graduation requirements by returning to high school, enrolling in adult education courses, or participating in another alternative education program offered. Such programs and activities are designed for students with high adaptive skills, likely enrollment in college and/or participation in gainful employment, and the potential of functioning independently in the community. Program content may include core academic courses required for a diploma and courses focused on competitive employment and independent living through a curriculum designed to help students develop interpersonal skills, access community resources, and receive work related training and other skills needed to participate in the community.

#### **Post High School Programs for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities**

Students with moderate to severe disabilities typically need some level of lifetime supportive services. Public school educational programs for such students between the ages of 18 and 22 typically focus

on functional academics, recreation and leisure, domestic and self-help, social and behavior, communication, and mobility skills. The program may be housed at a public high school, community college, regional learning center, and/or business park. Typically the needs of students are not uniform so much is individualized to help students achieve their particular goals and objectives. The daily routine may include opportunities for community based instruction as well as in-class supportive instruction. Transition planning is very important for supportive services to be provided by other agencies such as the Regional Center.

## Assessment Resources

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines (August 2015) <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Usability-Accessibility-Accommodations-Guidelines.pdf>

California Alternate Assessment 2015–16; [CAA Test Administration Manual \(PDF\)](#) (Posted 3/25/16.)

[CAA Test Examiner Tutorial](#) (Posted 3/18/16.)

CAASPP Pretest Workshop Webcast: Administration of the California Alternate Assessments (January 2016) [Archived Webcast \(Video\)](#) Test administration workshop presentation

## Resources

Council for Exceptional Children. <http://www.cec.sped.org>

New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities. *Tools for Teachers, Curriculum Modifications and Adaptations*. [www.njccd.org/InclusiveEducation/tools-teacherspart2.pdf](http://www.njccd.org/InclusiveEducation/tools-teacherspart2.pdf)

CCSS Aligned Steps to Success: Blueprints for the Achievement of All Students. Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) and Formative Assessment of Standards Tasks (FAST) developed by Riverside County Office of Education. <http://www.rcoe.us/student-program-services/special-education/capa-blueprints/>

Basics Curriculum

[http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/product/productDet.jsp?productItemID=1%2C689%2C949%2C371%2C930%2C437&ASSORTMENT%3C%3East\\_id=1408474395181113&bmUID=1459443911678](http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/product/productDet.jsp?productItemID=1%2C689%2C949%2C371%2C930%2C437&ASSORTMENT%3C%3East_id=1408474395181113&bmUID=1459443911678)

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*Riverside County SELPA policy; “Adaptations” to Promote Access to Curriculum and Assessment* available at <http://www.rcselpa.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=21294173>

Special Edge – What New Standards Mean for Students with Disabilities (Winter/Spring 2014) (PDF; Posted 13-May-2014)

School Administrators and Common Core: Supporting Students with Disabilities School Administrators and Common Core: Supporting Students with Disabilities English version (PDF; Posted 13-May-2014)

Supporting Students with Disabilities: The Common Core—What Educators Need to Know Supporting Students with Disabilities: The Common Core—What Educators Need to Know English version  (PDF; Posted 13-May-2014)

Special Educators Look to Tie Individual Education Programs (IEPs) to CCSS This article considers aligning students' individualized education programs (IEPs) to the CCSS.

Thurlow, M., Liu, M. Ward, J. & Christensen, L. Assessment Principles and Guidelines for ELLs with Disabilities (PDF) This document looks at improving the validity of assessment results for English language learners with disabilities.

United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (July 2006). Letter regarding report cards and transcripts of children with disabilities-<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/degdrptclarif.asp>

United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (September 1996). Letter to Robert Runkel regarding criteria for grading schemes of students with disabilities. 25 IDELR 387, 25 LRP 4268.

United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (October 2008). Letter to the Field and Questions and Answers on Report Cards and Transcripts for Students with Disabilities Attending Public Elementary and Secondary Schools.

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