

Understanding IEPs and Connections to the Standards: A Check In...

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Learning Objectives:

- Recall the regulatory justification for this work
- Review the connection between strengths-needs-present levels-goals
- Connect with the “present levels” of other special educators around the state

Why Do We Even Care About This?

(Because the D.O.E. does...)

- 6. Write a **measurable** goal related to the identified area of need. Academic IEP goals should be aligned with the Maine Learning Standards, and developed based on the student's needs, disability and PLAAFP. To develop these goals, the IEP Team should:
 - a. Identify the standards ALL students at a specific grade should “know and be able to do;”
 - b. Assess where student is functioning with regard to those standards;
 - c. Determine disability related needs that prevent the student from being proficient on those standards; and,
 - d. Develop an annual goal to address these needs.

[IEP Procedure Handbook with highlights. Maine DOE.p34.](#)

According to the Policy on standards based IEP goals, the DOE is looking for the presence of standards-based goals on IEPs as of this school year in compliance audits.

Why Do We Even Care About This?

§4722-A. Proficiency-based diploma standards and transcripts

3. **Exceptions.** Notwithstanding subsection 1, a student may be awarded a diploma indicating graduation from a secondary school in the following circumstances.

A. A student who is a child with a disability, as defined in section 7001, subsection 1-B, may meet the requirements of subsection 1 and become eligible for a diploma by demonstrating proficiency in state standards established in the system of learning results through performance tasks and accommodations that maintain the integrity of the standards as specified in the student's individualized education program by the student's individualized education program team pursuant to the requirements of chapter 301. [2015, c. 489, §2 (AMD).]

Recall this process?



Process Exemplar:

(Writing)

Data Sources Linking Writing Performance with Standards

Writing Standards Learning Progressions

Elk Grove Writing Rubrics:

- K-6 Opinion/Argument Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #1):
- K-6 Informational/Explanatory Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #2):
- K-6 Narrative Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #3):
- 7-12 Argument Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #1)
- 7-12 Informational/Explanatory Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #2)
- 7-12 Narrative Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #3)

Lucy Calkins Writing Rubrics (e.g. Grade 2- Narrative Writing)

Strengths:

Writing:

- G has an understanding of contractions.
- G is able to provide a sense of voice to his writing.
- G is able to capitalize the first word in a sentence.
- G is able to correct a spelling mistake in single-syllable word.
- G is able to edit for ending punctuation.
- G is able to correctly identify and spell basic high-frequency words within his writing.
- G is able to spell simple CVC words as well as CVCE words.

Needs:

G needs specially designed instruction in writing. Specifically, instruction must address the following skill deficits:

- Capitalize proper nouns and titles.
- Use commas to separate items in a series as well as introduce introductory clauses.
- Spelling patterns and “r controlled vowels”
- Edit his writing for spelling and punctuation.
- Elaboration of thoughts/ideas and development of topic.
- Use of phonetic knowledge to stretch out words to hear and encode the individual phonemes
- Attend to conventions of English including punctuation, capitalization, and spacing

Present Levels:

Writing: G is currently a second grade student, functioning at a first grade writing level. The process of writing is difficult for G as he has trouble recognizing grade level spelling patterns and rules. Although this is difficult for him and he doesn't enjoy it, he sees himself as a writer. He is however able to recognize basic single syllable spelling patterns. According to the Elk Grove Writing Standards as well as the ELA Vertical Progression Standards, G's writing is not inclusive of elaboration of detail or complex sentences. Rather, his writing is basic, with simple sentences and limited use of transitional words, which help with organization and flow within writing. G is able to appropriately sequence events within his story, and with support is able to provide closure to his writing. G really benefits from orally presenting his thoughts and having them scribed, so as not to lose information when trying to transfer thoughts from his head onto paper. He has been working on narrative writing and associated skills with this genre, with the help of graphic organizers, visual supports, and checklists. G demonstrates great strength in his ability to show a sense of voice within his writing. In addition to working with a particular genre during writing, his class is also working on journal writing. G has difficulty with journal writing and will often want to write creative stories within his journal. It appears that he doesn't understand the concept of journal writing and requires additional instruction and clarification on what the writing should look like.

Annual Goals:

By March 30, 2017, given specially designed instruction and multiple opportunities to practice, G will be able to produce writing with appropriate development and organization to task, purpose and audience, in 3/4 trials, as measured by the Elk Grove Writing Rubrics, teacher observation records, and progress monitoring data. (CCSS: ELA 3.W.4)

By March 30, 2017, given specially designed instruction and multiple opportunities to practice, G will be able to produce writing that contains appropriate spelling of grade level high frequency words as well as appropriate encoding of unfamiliar words that display grade level phonemic awareness skills, with 85% accuracy, as measured by informal assessments, teacher observation records, and progress monitoring such as the NWEA. (CCSS ELA 3. W. 5)

By March 30, 2017, given specially designed instruction and multiple opportunities to practice, G will be able to develop and strengthen his writing through the process of revision and editing in order to include appropriate punctuation and mechanics, in 3/4 trials, as measured by informal assessments, Elk Grove Writing Rubrics, teacher observation records, and progress monitoring such as the NWEA. (CCSS: ELA 3.W.6)

Where do other special ed teachers stand?

- I am getting better at doing this but knowing a student well enough to pick the right goal/standards to be the essence of the work they need to do to best advance their skills still takes a lot of work.
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- Well, there are a lot of [standards] and I'm fairly sure I've picked one that is part of the top few that would work for the student... but do I consistently nail the top one? I doubt it... but then, that is my opportunity for growth.
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- I don't mind using standards with my goals. I find they target the instruction.

Where do other special ed teachers stand?

- Now, I'm understanding that one should "unpack" the standards and find a way to provide SDI to meet grade level standards whenever possible. It took me awhile to understand that it doesn't mean that you can't work on a desired skill, that isn't necessary covered by the student's grade level common core standards. For instance, a third grade student can work on writing alphabet letters, while at the same time learning how to organize his writing.
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- Work with grade level teachers to identify essential standards for each grade level and content area has been extremely helpful when writing IEPs because there is a clear focus for instruction and clear expectations for what needs to be learned within each grade.

Where do other special ed teachers stand?

- I feel comfortable using the standards in goals but I am not sure it is meaningful for the kids yet. [Now] it is really my goal I am trying to get them to in some way... It is meaningful to me.
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- I find that with using resources such as NWEA data, Leveled Literacy Rubrics, and assessment data connecting student needs and standards is attainable.

Questions

Will the State allow a student to graduate if they are still working with standards that are below their 12th grade level?

How can life skills students who will not reach their grade level standards be able to get a diploma/certificate of completion?

At what point does a student's IEP become more about functional performance than academic performance (if ever)?

In many instances there are a ton of individual strengths and needs based upon the learning curriculum. Must I list each and every one?

Considerations Going Forward....

- Need to further refine capacity to select the most essential standards for goal writing
- Need to create professional development and support mechanisms to teach new special educators the background, the process, and the techniques necessary to create standards-based IEPs (state v. district level)
- Need to further refine in district processes as more districts identify graduation standards
- Need to advocate for increased state level supports regarding the time it takes to do this work, and do it well