“Standards-based Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)"

September 28, 2010

Presenters:

Candace Cortiella and Rachel Quenemoen

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS:

Candace Cortiella is director of The Advocacy Institute, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the development of products, projects, and services that work to improve the lives of people with disabilities. A disability rights advocate for 20 years, Ms. Cortiella has provided training and advocacy services for families of students with disabilities and worked as a government affairs associate for a leading learning disabilities organization. She writes and speaks frequently on the intersect of the IDEA and ESEA, most recently known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Rachel Quenemoen is a Senior Research Fellow and national technical assistance team leader for the National Center on Educational Outcomes. Ms. Quenemoen has worked for 30 years as an educational sociologist focused on research to practice efforts. She has been a multidistrict cooperative administrator in both general and special education, and for the last 15 years has worked at the State and national levels on educational change processes and reform efforts related to standards-based reform and students with disabilities, building consensus and capacity among practitioners and policy makers. Her current research and technical assistance priorities include alternate assessment of students with significant disabilities and research focused on the causes of and solutions for “gap” issues.
Standards-based Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): What, Why and How

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Agenda

✓ Why the shift
✓ Where we are
✓ What is meant by standards-based IEPs
✓ Challenges in implementation
✓ Resources

Why the Shift?

IDEA 1997 :: Added requirements for
- access to the general education curriculum
- participation in district and statewide assessments

NCLB 2001 :: Added requirements for
- participation rate for AYP
- assessments at enrolled grade level
- subgroup disaggregation
Linking Special Education and State Standards

The definition of “specially designed instruction” clearly indicates that the intent is for students with disabilities to be provided with services that allow them to achieve equal to their same age peers without disabilities.

Definition of Special Education

“Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings …”

IDEA Part B

Definition of Specially Designed Instruction

• adapting, as appropriate to the child’s needs, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction:
  • To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability
  • To ensure access of the child to the general education curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

IDEA Federal Regulations
Approved by the USED!

“Accelerated growth toward, and mastery of State-approved grade-level standards are goals of special education.”

U.S. Department of Education
Source: 71 Fed. Reg. 46,653

NAEP :: 2009

Percent of students scoring at, above proficient, and advanced

Reading :: Grade 4
All :: 67  SWDs: 35
Reading :: Grade 8
All :: 75  SWDs: 38
Math :: Grade 4
All :: 82  SWDs: 38
Math :: Grade 8
All :: 73  SWDs: 36

See handout for more details

National Longitudinal Transition Study 2

Secondary students with LD – discrepancy between tested and actual grade levels:

Reading:
11% = Above, at, or no less than 1 year behind grade level
23%= 1 to 2.9 grade levels behind
45%= 3 to 4.9 grade levels behind
21%= 5 or more grade levels behind

Mean= 3.4 years behind

Source: www.NLTS2.org
See handout for discrepancy for each disability category
Just over half (56%) of students with disabilities graduate with a regular diploma. Some states have graduation rates as low as 17% (Nevada) and 23% (Mississippi).

One in four (26%) students with disabilities drops out of school. Some states have drop-out rates as high as 50% (Arizona) and 45% (Louisiana). In some states, more Black students with disabilities drop out than graduate (FL, LA, MI, NY, SC).

Source: IDEAdata.org

Standards-based IEP

“ A process and document that is framed by the state standards and that contains annual goals aligned with, and chosen to facilitate the student’s achievement of, state grade level academic standards.”

Source: Standards-Based IEPs: Implementation in Selected States, Project Forum at NASDSE, May 2006

Check with your State!

Several states have begun to use a “standards-based” approach to IEP development.

Be sure to check with your state or local school district about any available guidance on this topic.
Alternate terminology used to describe this process might be:

- “standards-driven”
- “standards-referenced”
- “linked to the standards”
- “developed in consideration of the standards and curriculum”

Critical Elements

- Curriculum-based assessment information
- Current performance described in relation to standards (including state assessment results) and expectations of peers w/o disabilities
- Goals that address academic content and access skills necessary to master standards for enrolled grade (*prioritized*)
Standards-based IEPs

Expectations

- Instruction based on content standards RATHER than on a student’s deficits
- Instruction focused on closing the achievement gaps
- Instruction must reflect age and grade-appropriate academic, behavioral and social expectations
- Specially designed instruction must be specific, directed, individualized and intensive and result in higher achievement for students with disabilities.

Standards-based IEPs

IEP Development

- Knowledge of content standards for student’s age and grade
- Child-specific information, including impact of disability and gaps between actual performance and grade-level expectations

IEP Team Knowledge Deficit

- Only seven states required that the IEPs of students with disabilities address state content standards.
- Only 57 percent of special education teachers said they were “very” familiar with their state’s academic content for the subjects they teach.

Source: Quality Counts 2004: Count Me In, Education Week
State Standards are Not Created Equal!

Standards-based IEPs

IEP Development

IEP Goals

• Pegged to mastery level of content standards as the minimum expectation
• Identify underlying access skills needed to reach specific components of the content standards
• Prioritized based on which will have greatest impact on student progress

Common misunderstandings

× Goals do not parrot the grade-level objectives
× Working on grade-level standards does not mean that the student has to be working on the same material as other students in his/her grade.
× Specially designed instruction does not mean working at a lower level
× Specially designed instruction does NOT weaken the curriculum or CHANGE the standard
× Specially designed instruction is NOT the same as accommodations.
Questions

How many schools currently ensure every child has the services, supports, and specialized instruction necessary to succeed in the grade-level curriculum?

Standards-Based Reform Context

--- Everything else is negotiable ---

schedules, place, time, structure, curriculum, instructional methods, methods of assessment, ...
**WHY don't IEPs typically reflect a strong GRADE LEVEL commitment?**


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**Challenges**

McLaughlin, 2000

- Many teachers don’t understand the meaning of “curriculum” (lessons plans? units? textbooks? Scope and sequence not considered in IEP planning!)
- New subject matter standards and curricular frameworks very challenging (numbers of skills and concepts, as well as complexity)
- Competing priorities: content vs. remediation? Content vs. content? How does a decision now affect opportunities in the future?

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**Complicating factors**

McLaughlin, 2000

- Professional orientations – functional skills vs. abstract academics
  - Perhaps a false dichotomy?
- Readiness/remediation – developmental perspective
  - “ready means never”
- Finding time for “strategies” while progressing in general curriculum
- How accommodate the “content” while building the skills?
SO WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?
McLaughlin, 2000

- MORE collaboration of general and special education
- Joint understanding of WHAT the general curriculum IS
  - Not all facts are equal in implementation
- Must continue to move forward in content PRIOR to every skill being in place
  - Emphasis on instructional accommodations and differentiated instruction WHILE receiving intensive instruction on targeted skills

What does access to the general curriculum – [at grade level] – look like?
McLaughlin (2000)

A collaborative planning process, parents, students, teachers?

1. Define critical knowledge and performance expectations in general curriculum
2. Identify aids, supports, services necessary
3. Reflect longitudinal view of learning
4. Integrate and align content and instruction

Success
One Student at a Time

- System opportunities and challenges
- Student strengths and needs
- CANNOT be done by the IEP team in isolation from the fully inclusive, standards-based system

(See handout)
Resources

“A Seven-Step Process to Creating Standards-based IEPs”
(included in handout)
Project Forum :: June 2007

“Standards-Based Instruction: Is It Possible for Students with Disabilities?” (Jul 18, 2007)
Schools Moving Up :: Webinar archive
http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/cs/smu/view/e/1968

Advocacy Brief

Understanding the Standards-based Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Available at www.LD.org

Alternate Assessments Based on Modified Academic Achievement Standards

- NCLB regulation released April 2007
- State option
- Only modify achievement standards – not content standards
- AYP limited to proficient and advanced scores equal to 2% of the total assessed (district/state levels)
- IEP Team Guidelines
- IEPs must have grade-level, standards-based goals
- Webinar Archive available on Advocacy Institute & NCEO Web sites!

Available at: www.NCEO.info
READING – GRADE 4

ALL STUDENTS

Percentages at or above each achievement level for reading, grade 4, by year for jurisdiction and All students [TOTAL]: 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009
National, All students

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*

*Students with IEPs and 504 Plans

Percentages at or above each achievement level for reading, grade 4, by year for jurisdiction and Disability status of student, including 504 [IEP]: 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009
National, SD
ALL STUDENTS

Percentages at or above each achievement level for reading, grade 8, by year for jurisdiction and All students (TOTAL): 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009 National, All students

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*
*Students with IEPs and 504 Plans

Percentages at or above each achievement level for reading, grade 8, by year for jurisdiction and Disability status of student, including 504 (IEP): 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009 National, SD
MATH – GRADE 4

ALL STUDENTS

Percentages at or above each achievement level for mathematics, grade 4, by year for jurisdiction and All students [TOTAL]: 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009 National, All students

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*
*Students with IEPs and 504 Plans

Percentages at or above each achievement level for mathematics, grade 8, by year for jurisdiction and Student classified as having a disability [IEP]: 2005, 2007, and 2009 National, SD

Legend:
- Below basic
- At or above basic
- At or above proficient
- At advanced
MATH – GRADE 8

ALL STUDENTS

Percentages at or above each achievement level for mathematics, grade 8, by year for jurisdiction and all students [TOTAL]: 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009
National, All students

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*
*Students with IEPs and 504 Plans

Percentages at or above each achievement level for mathematics, grade 8, by year for jurisdiction and student classified as having a disability [IEP]: 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009
National, SD

Prepared by The Advocacy Institute
### Exhibit 4-6
DISCREPANCY BETWEEN TESTED AND ACTUAL GRADE LEVELS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS, BY DISABILITY CATEGORY

<table>
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<td>Mean discrepancy in years between tested and actual grade level</td>
<td>-3.4 (2.3)</td>
<td>-3.2 (3.3)</td>
<td>-6.3 (0.6)</td>
<td>-2.2 (4.8)</td>
<td>-3.6 (3.9)</td>
<td>-2.6 (6.4)</td>
<td>-2.8 (4.3)</td>
<td>-2.4 (3.6)</td>
<td>-4.2 (4.1)</td>
<td>-4.6 (4.5)</td>
<td>-5.8 (2.2)</td>
<td>-5.3 (6.1)</td>
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<td>Percentage of students whose test scores are:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Above grade level, at grade level, or less than 1 grade level behind</td>
<td>10.8 (2.3)</td>
<td>13.1 (3.3)</td>
<td>0.5 (0.6)</td>
<td>28.6 (4.8)</td>
<td>19.4 (3.9)</td>
<td>28.5 (6.4)</td>
<td>29.5 (4.3)</td>
<td>25.1 (3.6)</td>
<td>18.8 (4.1)</td>
<td>8.7 (4.5)</td>
<td>3.6 (2.2)</td>
<td>12.6 (6.1)</td>
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<td>1 to 2.9 grade levels behind</td>
<td>23.3 (3.2)</td>
<td>24.0 (4.2)</td>
<td>2.7 (1.3)</td>
<td>25.6 (4.7)</td>
<td>13.1 (3.4)</td>
<td>20.2 (5.7)</td>
<td>20.4 (3.8)</td>
<td>28.4 (3.7)</td>
<td>11.4 (3.3)</td>
<td>16.8 (6.0)</td>
<td>5.8 (2.7)</td>
<td>6.2 (4.4)</td>
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<td>3 to 4.9 grade levels behind</td>
<td>45.1 (3.7)</td>
<td>42.8 (4.8)</td>
<td>32.4 (3.9)</td>
<td>31.3 (4.9)</td>
<td>34.9 (6.8)</td>
<td>36.2 (4.1)</td>
<td>25.4 (3.8)</td>
<td>30.7 (3.7)</td>
<td>25.9 (3.3)</td>
<td>26.9 (7.1)</td>
<td>33.0 (5.5)</td>
<td>25.6 (8.0)</td>
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<td>5 or more grade levels behind</td>
<td>20.8 (3.1)</td>
<td>20.0 (3.9)</td>
<td>64.4 (3.9)</td>
<td>14.5 (3.8)</td>
<td>32.6 (4.7)</td>
<td>15.2 (5.1)</td>
<td>24.7 (4.1)</td>
<td>15.8 (4.1)</td>
<td>44.0 (3.0)</td>
<td>47.6 (5.2)</td>
<td>57.6 (5.7)</td>
<td>55.7 (9.1)</td>
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<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
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<td>9.8 (3.2)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43.9 (4.0)</td>
<td>50.4 (5.0)</td>
<td>24.8 (3.6)</td>
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<td>18.5 (3.3)</td>
<td>52.0 (5.4)</td>
<td>41.3 (5.4)</td>
<td>54.9 (8.1)</td>
<td>44.3 (10.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NLTS2 Wave 1 student’s school program survey.

Standard errors are in parentheses.
Standards-Based IEP Implementation

Source: Project Forum, Standards-Based IEP: Implementation Update, June 2010
www.ProjectForum.org

Prepared by The Advocacy Institute
Success One Student at a Time: What the IEP team does!
Rachel Quenemoen

Over the past 20 years, NCEO has provided technical assistance to many states on their inclusive assessment and accountability systems. In that process, discussions inevitably arise about what the “general curriculum” really means in IDEA, and what IEP teams can do to ensure that each student has the services, supports, and specialized instruction they need to achieve proficiency on the goals and standards defined by the state for all students. This tool about “what the IEP team does” is the product of those discussions. Since 2000, this tool has evolved with feedback from special education and general education teachers, administrators, and state-level staff, and will continue evolving over the next many years as we continue to learn more about how to ensure success for every student, one student at a time.

The origins of this tool came from a provocative article in the *Journal of Special Education Leadership* where Maggie McLaughlin asked the question in the title, “Access to the general education curriculum: Paperwork and procedure or reinventing special education?” (McLaughlin, 1999). She cited a survey of teachers of both general and special educators that found:

- Many teachers did not understand the meaning of “curriculum” – and many speculated that curriculum meant lesson plans, units, or textbooks.
- Teachers reported that scope and sequence of the curriculum was not typically considered in IEP planning.
- Teachers noted that the new (at that time) subject matter standards and curricular frameworks were very challenging in terms of numbers of skills and concepts as well as in their complexity.
- Teachers commented on competing priorities, specifying concerns about whether to move forward on content or remediate past content not as yet mastered; how to set priorities on some content over other content; and concerns about how these decisions in a given school year affect opportunities in the future.

McLaughlin identified complicating factors, including:

- Teachers reported professional orientations that were in conflict, with some concerned about functional skills instruction instead of teaching of academics.
- Developmental perspectives seemed to emerge as well, with a sense that students needed to be ready to move up a sequence, and instruction in higher content was precluded if lower skills were not in place.
- Teachers reported that finding time for learning strategy instruction and supports while the student was progressing in the general curriculum was a challenge; similarly, teachers reported difficulty in accommodating learning in more challenging content when students are still building basic skills.

The solutions that McLaughlin identified to ensure that special education practices reflect true standards-based reform instead of paperwork included the necessity of more collaboration of general and special education; need for time and resources to build joint understanding of what the general curriculum is and an understanding that not all skills and knowledge are equal in implementation; and training on instructional accommodations and differentiated instruction so
that students can move forward in the content while receiving intensive instruction on targeted prerequisite skills.

She proposed what she considered to be a best practice collaborative planning process, involving parents, students, teacher. This process included four steps:
1. Define critical knowledge and performance expectations in general curriculum;
2. Identify aids, supports, services necessary;
3. Reflect longitudinal view of learning;
4. Integrate and align content and instruction. (McLaughlin, 1999)

Application of the McLaughlin article to IEP planning:
This tool for IEP teams is meant to operationalize McLaughlin’s proposal, based on discussions over almost a decade with educators from across the country. A key consideration in this tool is the realization that although the IEP team plans for success for one student at a time, success for any student cannot be achieved in isolation from the fully, inclusive, standards-based system at the school and district level. That is, if the opportunities at the school and district level (e.g., highly skilled teachers instructing in the content areas, regardless of instructional setting) are not matched to the student’s strengths and needs, then the IEP team has limited capacity to intervene successfully.

Thus, this planning tool has two columns for action – the first column defines the role of the school and district in providing key information and resources; the second column defines the role of the IEP team in identifying the services, supports, and specialized instruction needed for this student to be successful. In this process, each IEP team must count on the full support and participation of someone representing the school/district in ways that guarantee system resources will be in place to support the student’s success.

A standards-based planning tool for IEP teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYSTEM OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES – representatives from school and district must provide this information and support</th>
<th>STUDENT STRENGTHS AND NEEDS – IEP team grapples with data-based decision-making to identify services, supports, and specialized instruction so that the student will be successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the required content in the next grade level?</td>
<td>1. What are the student’s current strengths and needs in the academic content areas? What data do we have to make that determination? What accelerated or remedial services and supports are necessary to ensure success in the content for the next grade level?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Where and when during the school year is the required content taught in Math? ELA? Science? Social Studies? Other? How is it taught?</td>
<td>2. What adaptations and accommodations can the student use to access the grade level content regardless of specific deficit basic skills in reading or mathematics or English language? What data do we have to support these choices? How will we determine if their use is effective or needs changing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What instructional and curricular options are currently available in this school to allow all students to achieve proficiency in the goals and standards set for all students?</td>
<td>3. What specific instructional strategies work well for this student? What types of curricular materials work well for this student? If the needs of this student and the options available don’t align well, what aids, services, supports, and instruction does the student need to be successful in spite of gaps? How can the current options be changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What array of services does the school provide to meet the students’ other needs?</td>
<td>4. What specific nonacademic needs does this student have? What goals and objectives will address those needs? How do these relate to the student’s academic success?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is the curricular map into the future, what are essential understandings every student needs to achieve this year?</td>
<td>5. How can we set priorities to ensure the essential understandings are mastered by this student, but still allow the TIME the school and the student needs to address all needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How does all this go together, with professional development, support, continuous improvement, community linkages . . . so that ALL children are successful?</td>
<td>6. How do we align curriculum, instruction, supports, services, and needs so that THIS child is successful at grade level?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Capture notes as you go on the following topics to ensure you identify opportunities and barriers that require system support to ensure success.

1. Specific opportunities for this student, this team
2. Specific potential barriers for this student, this team
3. What specifically will empower the members of this team to plan for and carry out effective educational programming to ensure every child learns to grade level expectations? e.g., structural support, training, materials, time

Once you have answered these questions in the table above, use your local planning forms to develop the plan.
A Seven-Step Process to Creating Standards-based IEPs

by Marla Davis Holbrook

Note: This document is a companion to the “Standards-based IEP Examples” tool found at www.projectforum.org.

This document presents a seven-step process for developing IEPs that are aligned with state academic grade-level content standards. Each step is followed by guiding questions for the IEP team to consider in making data-based decisions. This process can help school personnel to: (a) consider each student’s strengths and needs to develop goals focused on closing the gaps between the student’s levels of academic achievement and grade-level standards; and (b) use data to make decisions, including selecting the most appropriate assessment option. The goal is to support IEP teams to develop documents that, when implemented, provide access to the general curriculum and enable students to demonstrate academic achievement linked to grade-level content.

Prior to developing IEPs, all IEP team members, including parents, need to be familiar with the general education curriculum including the state’s academic content standards and state assessments used for calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP). In order to make informed decisions about each student’s strengths and needs, the IEP team should consider how the student is performing in relation to the state’s grade-level content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled.

The seven major steps that educators can take to develop a standards-based IEP are:

Step 1: Consider the grade-level content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled or would be enrolled based on age.

Ask:
- What is the intent of the content standard?
- What is the content standard saying that the student must know and be able to do?

Step 2: Examine classroom and student data to determine where the student is functioning in relation to the grade-level standards.

Ask:
- Has the student been taught content aligned with grade-level standards?
- Has the student been provided appropriate instructional scaffolding to attain grade-level expectations?
- Were the lessons and teaching materials used to teach the student aligned with state grade-level standards?
- Was the instruction evidence-based?

Step 3: Develop the present level of academic achievement and functional performance.

Describe the individual strengths and needs of the student in relation to accessing and mastering the general curriculum.

Ask:
- What do we know about the student’s response to academic instruction (e.g., progress monitoring data)?
- What programs, accommodations (i.e., classroom and testing) and/or interventions have been successful with the student?
- What have we learned from previous IEPs and student data that can inform decision making?
- Are there assessment data (i.e., state, district and/or classroom) that can provide useful information for making decisions about the student’s strengths and needs?

These steps are adapted from materials on the Alabama website regarding standards-based IEPs found at http://www.alsde.edu/html/sections/section_detail.asp?section=65&footer=sections
(e.g., patterns in the data)?
Consider the factors related to the student’s disability and how they affect how the student learns and demonstrates what he or she knows.

**Ask:**
- How does the student’s disability affect participation and progress in the general curriculum?
- What supports does the student need to learn the knowledge and attain the skills to progress in the general curriculum?
- Is the student on track to achieve grade-level proficiency within the year?

**Step 4: Develop measurable annual goals aligned with grade-level academic content standards.**

**Ask:**
- What are the student’s needs as identified in the present level of performance?
- Does the goal have a specific timeframe?
- What can the student reasonably be expected to accomplish in one school year?
- Are the conditions for meeting the goal addressed?
- How will the outcome of the goal be measured?

**Step 5: Assess and report the student’s progress throughout the year.**

**Ask:**
- How does the student demonstrate what he/she knows on classroom, district and state assessments?
- Are a variety of assessments used to measure progress?
- How will progress be reported to parents?

**Step 6: Identify specially designed instruction including accommodations and/or modifications needed to access and progress in the general education curriculum.**

**Ask:**
- What accommodations are needed to enable the student to access the knowledge in the general education curriculum?
- What accommodations have been used with the student and were they effective?
- Has the complexity of the material been changed in such a way that the content has been modified?

**Step 7: Determine the most appropriate assessment option.**

**Ask:**
- What types of assessments are offered in my state?
- What types of responses do different state assessments require?
- What are the administrative conditions of the assessment? (i.e., setting, delivery of instructions, time allotted, etc.)
- What accommodations are allowed on the assessment(s)?
- Are the accommodations approved for the assessment also used in the classroom?
- Has the student received standards-based, grade-level instruction?
- Was the instruction evidence based?
- What is the student’s instructional level?
- How different is the student’s instructional level from the level of typical peers?
- Can the student make progress toward grade-level standards in the same timeframe as typical peers? (If no, consider modified academic achievement standards)
- What can be learned from the student’s previous state assessment results?
- Can the student demonstrate what he/she knows on the assessment option under consideration?
### APPENDIX

**LIST OF STATE LINKS TO MATERIALS RELATED TO STANDARDS-BASED IEPS**

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