Common Core Standards: Implications for Students with Disabilities

Martha Thurlow

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Addressing Access for CCS

- Instruction
- Accommodations
- Alternate Assessments
- Graduation Exams
Commitment to Students with Disabilities Evident

Early FAQ:

“What does this work mean for students with disabilities and English language learners?”

“In the development of these standards, the inclusion of all types of learners was a priority. Chosen language was intended to be open and accessible to different learners.”
Commitment to Students with Disabilities Evident

Final Standards:

Separate document entitled “Application to Students with Disabilities”

“Students with disabilities...must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers.”

What will it take?
Commitment to Students with Disabilities Evident

ELA Standards - What is not covered:

“It is also beyond the scope of the Standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for ... students with special needs.... The Standards should also be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset and as permitting appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of students with special education needs.”
“For example, for students with disabilities, reading should allow for the use of Braille, screen-reader technology, or other assistive devices, while writing should include the use of a scribe, computer, or speech to text technology. In a similar vein, speaking and listening should be interpreted broadly to include sign language.”
Instruction

According to CCS:

- Supports and related services designed to meet unique needs of students with disabilities and to enable access to the general education curriculum
- IEP that includes annual goals aligned to grade-level academic standards
- Teachers and specialized instructional support personnel who are prepared and qualified to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, individualized instruction and support services

And...
To participate with success in the general curriculum, students with disabilities may need additional supports and services, such as:

- Instructional supports for learning (UDL - engagement by presenting information in multiple ways and allowing for diverse avenues of action and expression)
- Instructional accommodations
- Assistive technology devices and services
Questions!

? Are these the issues that we face in providing instruction on the CCS to students with disabilities?

? Will standards–based IEPs solve our challenges?

? What kind of guidance is needed about instructional accommodations and assistive technology?

? What other questions should we be asking?
Accommodations

- Need to do more than just “provide accommodations”
- If we have common core standards, we should be able to identify a common set of appropriate accommodation
- ✓ State data on accommodations policies and accommodations use suggest that this is an important next step for the Standards!
Read-Aloud Questions
(2007)
Figure 9. Reading Assessment Accommodation Rates in Elementary School: Percentage of Students with IEPs Taking the Regular Reading Assessment with Accommodations

KEY
- ≥5% (n=7 regular states and 1 unique state)
- 50%-74% (n=24 regular states and 5 unique states)
- 26%-49% (n=13 regular states and 1 unique state)
- ≤25% (n=6 regular states and 0 unique states)
- md=missing data (n=0 regular states and 3 unique states)
Questions!

? What kind of research will be needed to examine the validity of accommodations and how students are responding to them?

? What kind of training will be needed to ensure that appropriate accommodations are selected for individual children?

? What kind of monitoring of accommodations needs to occur?
Alternate Assessments

Statement in “Application to Students with Disabilities”

“Some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will require substantial supports and accommodations to have meaningful access to certain standards in both instruction and assessment, based on their communication and academic needs. These supports and accommodations should ensure that students receive access to multiple means of learning and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, but retain the rigor and high expectations of the Common Core State Standards.”
Questions!

? Do we have to “extend” the CCS to make them relevant to students with significant cognitive disabilities?

? Can we think about prioritizing and providing access to the standards rather than changing them for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

? What are the implications for training of the teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities?
Graduation Exams

- Not specifically addressed by CCS
- Number of states that use NCLB test for graduation exam – based on 2003 information from CEP:

19 of 26 states
(and the number has probably increased!)
Graduation/End of Course Exams – Alternative Routes

- Blue: State has an exit exam and at least one alternative route to a standard diploma (n = 19)
- Red: State has an exit exam and no alternative routes to a standard diploma (n = 7)
- Black: State does not have an exit exam (n = 24)
Questions!

? How do we ensure that students with disabilities can demonstrate their college and career readiness skills?
? Is there a risk of more use of graduation exams or end of course tests with the CCS?
? How important will alternative routes to demonstrating end-of-school (college and career ready) skills be for students with disabilities?