

**STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SEPTEMBER 3, 2015**

SUBJECT

Temporary Rule Amending IDAPA 08.02.03.004.07, Rules Governing Thoroughness, Incorporation by Reference, The Idaho Alternate Assessment Achievement Standards.

REFERENCE

May 18, 2011

The State Board approved the Idaho Alternate Assessment Achievement Standards.

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

Section 33-105, Idaho Code and Section 33-1612, Idaho Code
IDAPA 08.02.03 – Rules Governing Thoroughness

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

In 2011, Idaho joined the National Center and State Collaborative, a project led by 24 states and five (5) centers to develop an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The goal of the NCSC project was to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and develop college, career and community ready skills.

A Temporary Rule is necessary for the 2015-2016 school year to adopt the achievement levels and performance level descriptions for the Alternate Assessment, and to be in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Idaho's Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Accountability Waiver, approved by the US Department of Education August 2015.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Temporary amendments IDAPA 08.02.03.004.07	Page 3
Attachment 2 – NCSC Alternate Achievement Standards in ELA and Mathematics, Grades 3-8 and 11.	Page 6
Attachment 3 – Idaho Impact Data	Page 20
Attachment 4 – Supporting Documents Related to the Standards	Page 26

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the timing of work being done at the national level the achievement standards were not finalized in time for consideration at the August Board meeting. These descriptors must be considered by the Board prior to October 1st so that they may be used to determine proficiency levels for these groups of students by the October 1st deadline included in Idaho's ESEA waiver request.

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BOARD ACTION

I move to adopt the Alternate Assessment Achievement Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics, grades three (3) through eight (8) and eleven (11) as submitted in Attachment 2.

AND

I move to approve the Temporary Rule amendment to IDAPA 08.02.03.004.07 Rules Governing Thoroughness, Incorporation By Reference, as submitted in Attachment 1.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

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**IDAPA 08
TITLE 02
CHAPTER 03**

08.02.03 - RULES GOVERNING THOROUGHNESS

000. LEGAL AUTHORITY.

All rules in this Thoroughness chapter (IDAPA 08.02.03) are promulgated pursuant to the authority of the State Board of Education under Article IX, Section 2 of the Idaho Constitution and under sections 33-116, 33-118, and 33-1612, Idaho Code. Specific statutory references for particular rules are also noted as additional authority where appropriate. (4-5-00)

001. TITLE AND SCOPE.

01. Title. These rules shall be known as IDAPA 08.02.03 "Rules Governing Thoroughness." (4-5-00)

02. Scope. These rules shall govern the thorough education of all public school students in Idaho. (4-5-00)

002. WRITTEN INTERPRETATIONS.

Any written interpretations are on file at the office of the State Board of Education at 650 West State Street, Boise, Idaho 83702. (3-15-02)

003. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS.

Unless otherwise provided for in the Rules of the State Board of Education or in the State Board of Education Governing Policies and Procedures, all administrative appeals allowed by law shall be conducted pursuant to the Idaho Administrative Procedure Act and IDAPA 04.11.01, "Idaho Rules of Administrative Procedure of the Attorney General." (4-5-00)

004. INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE.

The following documents are incorporated into this rule: (3-30-07)

01. The Idaho Content Standards. The Idaho Content Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education. Individual subject content standards are adopted in various years in relation to the curricular materials adoption schedule. Copies of the document can be found on the State Board of Education website__at www.boardofed.idaho.gov. (3-29-10)

a. Driver Education, as revised and adopted on August 21, 2008. (3-29-10)

b. Health, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009. (3-29-10)

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- c. Humanities Categories: (3-29-10)
 - i. Art, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009; (3-29-10)
 - ii. Dance, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009; (3-29-10)
 - iii. Drama, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009; (3-29-10)
 - iv. Interdisciplinary, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009; (3-29-10)
 - v. Music, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009; (3-29-10)
 - vi. World languages, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009. (3-29-10)
- d. English Language Arts, as revised and adopted on August 11, 2010. (4-7-11)
- e. Limited English Proficiency, as revised and adopted on August 21, 2008. (3-29-10)
- f. Mathematics, as revised and adopted on August 11, 2010. (4-7-11)
- g. Physical Education, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009. (3-29-10)
- h. Science, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009. (3-29-10)
- i. Social Studies, as revised and adopted on April 17, 2009. (3-29-10)
- j. Information and Communication Technology, as revised and adopted on April 22, 2010. (4-7-11)

02. The English Language Development (ELD) Standards. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) 2012 English Language Development (ELD) Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education on August 16, 2012. Copies of the document can be found on the WIDA website at www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx. (4-4-13)

03. The Limited English Proficiency Program Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) and Accountability Procedures. The Limited English Proficiency Program Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives and Accountability Procedures as adopted by the State Board of Education on November 11, 2009. Copies of the document can be found on the State Department of Education website at www.sde.idaho.gov. (4-7-11)

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04. The Idaho English Language Assessment (IELA) Achievement Standards. The Idaho English Language Assessment (IELA) Achievement Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education on November 11, 2009. Copies of the document can be found on the State Department of Education website at www.sde.idaho.gov.

(4-7-11)

05. The Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) Achievement Standards. Achievement Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education on February 19, 2015. Copies of the document can be found on the State Board of Education website at www.boardofed.idaho.gov. (2-19-15)

06. The Idaho Extended Content Standards. The Idaho Extended Content Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education on April 17, 2008. Copies of the document can be found at the State Board of Education website at www.boardofed.idaho.gov. (5-8-09)

07. The Idaho Alternate Assessment Achievement Standards. Alternate Assessment Achievement Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education on ~~May 18, 2011~~. September 3, 2015. Copies of the document can be found on the State Board of Education website at www.boardofed.idaho.gov. ~~(3-29-12)~~ ()

08. The Idaho Standards for Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. As adopted by the State Board of Education on October 11, 2007. Copies of the document can be found on the State Board of Education website at www.boardofed.idaho.gov. (4-2-08)

09. The Idaho Standards for Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. As adopted by the State Board of Education on October 11, 2007. Copies of the document can be found on the State Board of Education website at www.boardofed.idaho.gov. (4-2-08)

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Grade 3 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>
In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the topic of a literary text identify a detail from a literary text identify a character or setting in a literary text identify the topic of an informational text identify a title, caption, or heading in an informational text identify an illustration related to a given topic identify a topic presented by an illustration identify the meaning of words (i.e., nouns) 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the central idea and supporting details in literary text determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text determine the main idea of visually presented information identify the purpose of text features in informational text use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the central idea and supporting details in literary text determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text determine the main idea of visually presented information identify the purpose of text features in informational text use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the central idea and supporting details in literary text determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text determine the main idea of visually presented information identify the purpose of text features in informational text use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words
	AND with Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	AND with High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details from a literary text to answer specific questions describe the relationship between characters, and character and setting in literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details from a literary text to answer specific questions describe the relationship between characters, and character and setting in literary text 	
	AND with accuracy, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify simple words (i.e., words with a consonant at the beginning, a consonant at the end, and a short vowel in the middle) 	AND with accuracy, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify grade level words 	
AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a statement related to an everyday topic 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify elements of a narrative text to include beginning, middle, and end identify the category related to a set of facts 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a text feature (e.g., captions, graphs or diagrams) to present information in explanatory text 	

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Grade 4 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>
In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a topic of a literary text identify a detail from a literary text identify a character in a literary text identify charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in an informational text identify a topic of an informational text use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words identify general academic words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the theme of literary text and identify supportive details describe character traits using text-based details in literary text determine the main idea of informational text locate information in charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions use general academic words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the theme of literary text and identify supportive details determine the main idea of informational text explain how the information provided in charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines contributes to an understanding of informational text use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions use general academic words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the theme of literary text and identify supportive details determine the main idea of informational text explain how the information provided in charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines contributes to an understanding of informational text use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions use general academic words
	AND with Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	AND with High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details from a literary text to answer specific questions use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details from a literary text to answer specific questions describe character traits using text-based details in literary text use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	
	AND with accuracy, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify simple words (i.e., words with a consonant at the beginning, a consonant at the end, and a short vowel in the middle) 	AND with accuracy, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify grade level words 	
AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the concluding sentence in a short explanatory text 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify elements of a narrative text to include beginning, middle, and end identify a concluding sentence related to information in explanatory text 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a text feature (e.g., headings, charts, or diagrams) to present information in explanatory text 	

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Grade 5 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>
In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify an event from the beginning of a literary text identify a detail from a literary text identify a character, setting and event in a literary text identify the topic of an informational text identify the main idea of an informational text identify the difference in how information is presented in two sentences 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare characters, settings, and events in literary text determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text use details from the text to support an author's point in informational text compare and contrast how information and events are presented in two informational texts use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare characters, settings, and events in literary text determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text use details from the text to support an author's point in informational text compare and contrast how information and events are presented in two informational texts use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare characters, settings, and events in literary text determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text use details from the text to support an author's point in informational text compare and contrast how information and events are presented in two informational texts use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words
	AND with Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize a literary text from beginning to end use details from a literary text to answer specific questions 	AND with High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize a literary text from beginning to end use details from a literary text to answer specific questions 	
	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the category related to a set of common nouns 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support an explanatory text topic with relevant information 	

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Grade 6 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>
In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify an event from the beginning or end of a literary text identify a detail from a literary text identify a character in a literary text identify the topic of an informational text identify the main idea of an informational text identify a fact from an informational text identify a description of an individual or event in an informational text use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words identify the meaning of general academic words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize a literary text from beginning to end without including personal opinions support inferences about characters using details in literary text use details from the text to elaborate a key idea in informational text 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize a literary text from beginning to end without including personal opinions support inferences about characters using details in literary text summarize an informational text without including personal opinions use details from the text to elaborate a key idea in informational text use evidence from the text to support an author's claim in informational text summarize information presented in two informational texts use domain specific words accurately 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize a literary text from beginning to end without including personal opinions use details from a literary text to answer specific questions support inferences about characters using details in literary text use details from the text to elaborate a key idea in an informational text use evidence from the text to support an author's claim in informational text use domain specific words accurately
	AND with Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	AND with High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details from a literary text to answer specific questions use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details from a literary text to answer specific questions use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words 	
AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify an everyday order of events 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify elements of an explanatory text to include introduction, body, and conclusion identify the next event in a brief narrative 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify transition words and phrases to convey a sequence of events in narrative text 	

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Grade 7 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>
In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a theme from a literary text identify an inference from a literary text identify a conclusion from an informational text identify a claim the author makes in an informational text compare and contrast two statements related to the same topic use context to identify the meaning of words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the relationship between individuals or events in an informational text use evidence from the text to support an author's claim in informational text in informational text 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a conclusion from informational text use details to explain how the interactions between individuals, events or ideas in informational texts are influenced by each other use evidence from the text to support an author's claim in informational text compare and contrast how two authors write about the same topic in informational texts use context to identify the meaning of grade-level phrases 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a conclusion from informational text use details to explain how the interactions between individuals, events or ideas in informational texts are influenced by each other use evidence from the text to support an author's claim in informational text compare and contrast how two authors write about the same topic in informational texts use context to identify the meaning of grade-level phrases
	AND with Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	AND with High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support themes from literary text use details to support inferences from literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support themes from literary text use details to support inferences from literary text 	
AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a graphic that includes an event as described in a text 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify elements of an explanatory text to include introduction, body, and conclusion identify the next event in a brief narrative 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a sentence that provides a conclusion in narrative text 	

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Grade 8 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>
In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a theme from a literary text identify an inference from a literary text identify a fact related to a presented argument in informational text identify a similar topic in two informational texts use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words identify the meaning of general academic words 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a conclusion from literary text identify an inference drawn from an informational text identify the portion of text which contains specific information identify an argument the author makes in informational text examine parts of two informational texts to identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation use domain specific words or phrases accurately 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a conclusion from literary text use details to support an inference from informational text identify the information (e.g., facts or quotes) in a section of text that contributes to the development of an idea identify an argument the author makes in informational text examine parts of two informational texts to identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation use domain specific words and phrases accurately 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a conclusion from literary text use details to support an inference from informational text identify the information (e.g., facts or quotes) in a section of text that contributes to the development of an idea identify an argument the author makes in informational text examine parts of two informational texts to identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation use domain specific words and phrases accurately
	AND with Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	AND with High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze the development of a theme including the relationship between a character and an event in literary text use context to identify the meaning of grade-level words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze the development of a theme including the relationship between a character and an event in literary text use context to identify the meaning of grade-level words and phrases 	
AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a writer's opinion 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify elements of an explanatory text to include introduction, body, and conclusion identify an idea relevant to a claim 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify relevant information to support a claim 	

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Grade 11 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Low text complexity - <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>	Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>	High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i>
In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a summary of a literary text identify an event from a literary text identify the central idea of an informational text identify facts from an informational text identify what an author tells about a topic in informational text use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words identify a word used to describe a person, place, thing, action or event 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a summary of literary text identify a conclusion from an informational text identify key details that support the development of a central idea of an informational text use details presented in two informational texts to answer a question explain why an author uses specific word choices within texts 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a summary of literary text use details to support a conclusion presented in informational text identify key details that support the development of a central idea of an informational text use details presented in two informational texts to answer a question explain why an author uses specific word choices within texts 	In reading, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use details to support a summary of literary text use details to support a conclusion presented in informational text identify key details that support the development of a central idea of an informational text use details presented in two informational texts to answer a question explain why an author uses specific word choices within texts
	AND with Moderate text complexity - <i>Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate how the author's use of specific details in literary text contributes to the text determine an author's point of view about a topic in informational text use context to identify the meaning of grade-level phrases 	AND with High text complexity - <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate how the author's use of specific details in literary text contributes to the text determine an author's point of view about a topic in informational text use context to identify the meaning of grade-level phrases 	
	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify information which is unrelated to a given topic 	AND in writing, he/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify elements of an argument to include introduction, claim, evidence, and conclusion identify how to group information for a specific text structure 	

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Grade 3 Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	High task complexity - <i>Multiple mathematical ideas presented in problems using various mathematical terms and symbolic representations of numbers, variables, and other item elements</i>
He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve addition problems • identify growing number patterns • identify an object showing a specified number of parts shaded • identify which object has the greater number of parts shaded • identify an object equally divided in two parts • identify the number of objects to be represented in a pictograph 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve addition and subtraction word problems • identify an arrangement of objects which represents factors in a problem • solve multiplication equations in which both numbers are equal to or less than five • identify multiplication patterns • identify a set of objects as nearer to 1 or 10 • identify a representation of the area of a rectangle 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve addition and subtraction word problems • check the correctness of an answer in the context of a scenario • solve multiplication equations in which both numbers are equal to or less than five • identify multiplication patterns • match fraction models to unitary fractions • compare fractions with different numerators and the same denominator • transfer data from an organized list to a bar graph 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve addition and subtraction word problems • check the correctness of an answer in the context of a scenario • solve multiplication equations in which both numbers are equal to or less than five • identify multiplication patterns • match fraction models to unitary fractions • compare fractions with different numerators and the same denominator • transfer data from an organized list to a bar graph
	AND with Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	AND with High task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify geometric figures which are divided into equal parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • round numbers to nearest 10 • identify geometric figures which are divided into equal parts • count unit squares to compute the area of a rectangle 	

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Grade 4 Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	High task complexity - <i>Multiple mathematical ideas presented in problems using various mathematical terms and symbolic representations of numbers, variables, and other item elements</i>
He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify an array with the same number of objects in each row identify values rounded to nearest tens place identify equivalent representations of a fraction (e.g., shaded diagram) compare representations of a fraction (e.g., shaded diagram) identify a rectangle with the larger or smaller perimeter identify a given attribute of a shape identify the data drawn in a bar graph that represents the greatest value 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> match a model to an multiplication expression using two single digit numbers identify a model of a multiplicative comparison show division of objects into equal groups round numbers to nearest 10, 100 or 1000 differentiate parts and wholes compute the perimeter of a rectangle 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve multiplication word problems show division of objects into equal groups round numbers to nearest 10, 100, or 1000 compare two fractions with different denominators sort a set of 2-dimensional shapes compute the perimeter of a rectangle transfer data to a graph 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve multiplication word problems show division of objects into equal groups round numbers to nearest 10, 100 or 1000 compare two fractions with different denominators sort a set of 2-dimensional shapes compute the perimeter of a rectangle transfer data to a graph
	AND with Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify equivalent fractions select a 2-dimensional shape with a given attribute 	AND with High task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve a multiplicative comparison word problem using up to two-digit numbers check the correctness of an answer in the context of a scenario identify equivalent fractions 	

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Grade 5 Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	High task complexity - <i>Multiple mathematical ideas presented in problems using various mathematical terms and symbolic representations of numbers, variables, and other item elements</i>
He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve one-step subtraction word problems • divide sets (no greater than 6) into two equal parts • identify values in the tenths place • identify a number in the ones, tens or hundreds place • identify a given axis of a coordinate plan • match the conversion of 3 feet to 1 yard to a model • calculate elapsed time (i.e., hours) • identify whether the values increase or decrease in a line graph 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify if the total will increase or decrease when combining sets • perform operations with decimals • identify a symbolic representation of the addition of two fractions • identify place values to the hundredths place • convert standard measurements 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve multiplication and division word problems • perform operations with decimals • solve word problems involving fractions • identify place values to the hundredths place • locate a given point on a coordinate plane when given an ordered pair • convert standard measurements • convert between minutes and hours • make quantitative comparisons between data sets shown as line graphs 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solve multiplication and division word problems • perform operations with decimals • solve word problems involving fractions • identify place values to the hundredths place • locate a given point on a coordinate plane when given an ordered pair • convert standard measurements • convert between minutes and hours • make quantitative comparisons between data sets shown as line graphs
	AND with Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	AND with High task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare the values of two products based upon multipliers • round decimals to nearest whole number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare the values of two products based upon multipliers • round decimals to nearest whole number 	

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Grade 6 Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	High task complexity - <i>Multiple mathematical ideas presented in problems using various mathematical terms and symbolic representations of numbers, variables, and other item elements</i>
He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a model of a given percent match a given unit rate to a model identify a representation of two equal sets identify a number less than zero on a number line identify the meaning of an unknown in a modeled equation count the number of grids or tiles inside a rectangle to find the area of a rectangle identify the object that appears most frequently in a set of data (mode) identify a representation of a set of data arranged into even groups (mean) 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> match a given ratio to a model recognize a representation of the sum of two halves solve real world measurement problems involving unit rates identify a representation of a value less than zero identify the median or the equation needed to determine the mean of a set of data 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perform operations using up to three-digit numbers solve real world measurement problems involving unit rates identify positive and negative values on a number line determine the meaning of a value from a set of positive and negative integers solve word problems with expressions including variables compute the area of a parallelogram identify the median or the equation needed to determine the mean of a set of data 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve real world measurement problems involving unit rates identify positive and negative values on a number line solve word problems with expressions including variables compute the area of a parallelogram identify the median or the equation needed to determine the mean of a set of data
	AND with Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	AND with High task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perform one-step operations with two decimal numbers solve word problems using a percent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perform one-step operations with two decimal numbers solve word problems using a percent solve word problems using ratios and rates 	

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Grade 7 Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	High task complexity - <i>Multiple mathematical ideas presented in problems using various mathematical terms and symbolic representations of numbers, variables, and other item elements</i>
He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a representation which represents a negative number and its multiplication or division by a positive number identify representations of area and circumference of a circle identify representations of surface area make qualitative comparisons when interpreting a data set presented on a bar graph or in a table 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> match a given ratio to a model identify the meaning of an unknown in a modeled equation describe a directly proportional relationship (i.e., increases or decreases) find the surface area of three-dimensional right prism 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve division problems with positive/negative whole numbers solve word problems involving ratios use a proportional relationship to solve a percentage problem identify proportional relationships between quantities represented in a table identify unit rate (constant of proportionality) in tables and graphs of proportional relationships compute the area of a circle find the surface area of a three-dimensional right prism 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve division problems with positive/negative whole numbers solve word problems involving ratios identify proportional relationships between quantities represented in a table compute the area of a circle find the surface area of a three-dimensional right prism
	AND with Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	AND with High task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve multiplication problems with positive/negative whole numbers interpret graphs to qualitatively contrast data sets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> solve multiplication problems with positive/negative whole numbers evaluate variable expressions that represent word problems interpret graphs to qualitatively contrast data sets 	

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Grade 8 Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	High task complexity - <i>Multiple mathematical ideas presented in problems using various mathematical terms and symbolic representations of numbers, variables, and other item elements</i>
He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate a given decimal number on a number line identify the relatively larger data set when given two data sets presented in a graph identify congruent rectangles identify similar rectangles identify an attribute of a cylinder identify a rectangle with the larger or smaller area as compared to another rectangle identify an ordered pair and its point on a graph 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the solution to an equation which contains a variable identify the y-intercept of a linear graph match a given relationship between two variables to a model identify a data display that represents a given situation interpret data presented in graphs to identify associations between variables 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate approximate placement of an irrational number on a number line solve a linear equation which contains a variable identify the relationship shown on a linear graph calculate slope of a positive linear graph compute the change in area of a figure when its dimensions are changed solve for the volume of a cylinder plot provided data on a graph 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate approximate placement of an irrational number on a number line solve a linear equation which contains a variable identify the relationship shown on a linear graph compute the change in area of a figure when its dimensions are changed plot provided data on a graph
	AND with Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	AND with High task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify congruent figures use properties of similarity to identify similar figures interpret data tables to identify the relationship between variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpret data presented in graphs to identify associations between variables interpret data tables to identify the relationship between variables use properties of similarity to identify similar figures identify congruent figures 	

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Grade 11 Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Low task complexity - <i>Simple problems using common mathematical terms and symbols</i>	Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	High task complexity - <i>Multiple mathematical ideas presented in problems using various mathematical terms and symbolic representations of numbers, variables, and other item elements</i>
He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrange a given number of objects into two sets in multiple combinations • match an equation with a variable to a provided real world situation • determine whether a given point is or is not part of a data set shown on a graph • identify an extension of a linear graph • use a table to match a unit conversion • complete the formula for area of a figure 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the model that represents a square number • identify variable expressions which represent word problems • identify the hypotenuse of a right triangle • identify the greatest or least value in a set of data shown on a number line • identify the missing label on a histogram • calculate the mean and median of a set of data 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compute the value of an expression that includes an exponent • identify variable expressions which represent word problems • solve real world measurement problems that require unit conversions • find the missing attribute of a three-dimensional figure • determine two similar right triangles when a scale factor is given • make predictions from data tables and graphs to solve problems • plot data on a histogram • calculate the mean and median of a set of data 	He/she is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify variable expressions which represent word problems • solve real world measurement problems that require unit conversions • determine two similar right triangles when a scale factor is given • make predictions from data tables and graphs to solve problems • plot data on a histogram • calculate the mean and median of a set of data
	AND with Moderate task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	AND with High task complexity - <i>Common problems presented in mathematical context using various mathematical terms and symbols</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the linear representation of a provided real world situation • use an equation or a linear graphical representation to solve a word problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the linear representation of a provided real world situation • use an equation or a linear graphical representation to solve a word problem • identify a histogram which represents a provided data set 	

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SEPTEMBER 3, 2015**



National Center and State Collaborative

To: NCSC Operational Assessment State Partners
From: NCSC Project Staff Leads
Subject: NCSC Cut Scores and Approval Process
Date: August 14, 2015

Overview of Standard Setting Process

During the week of August 9-13, 2015, NCSC conducted a three-stage process where educators and policy makers from member states recommended three cut scores resulting in four performance levels: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4. The three-stage process included a Bookmark standard setting workshop, an articulation committee, and a meeting of state-level representatives from NCSC member states.

The Bookmark method involves rank-ordering the items by difficulty in an ordered item booklet. Panelists placed bookmarks to indicate the content that students should know in order to be placed in each performance level. During the standard setting meeting the panelists participated in three rounds of discussion and bookmark placement.

The cut scores resulting from the third round of judgments were brought to the Articulation Committee. The panelists in the Articulation Committee reviewed the system of cut scores and impact data across all the grades within a content area. The panelists recommended small adjustments to the cut scores for both Mathematics (3 cuts) and English Language Arts (4 cuts).

Finally, the NCSC state representatives discussed the recommendations from the articulation committee. Based on discussion and a review of the ordered item book, the NCSC state representatives moved one cut in mathematics and one cut in English Language Arts.

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Table 1. Overview of Process for Establishing NCSC Cut Scores

Date	Process	Attendees	Purpose
August 10-12	Bookmark Standard Setting	Educators from NCSC States	During this three-day workshop, educators recommended content-based cut scores based on NCSC's performance-level descriptors and NCSC test items.
August 13	Articulation Committee	Subset of Bookmark Panelists	During this committee meeting, educators discussed the pattern of cut scores across grades within a content area.
August 13	States finalize recommendation	Representatives from NCSC Member States	NCSC states reviewed and discussed the results of the standard setting and articulation committees. This group made small adjustments to the cut scores.
August 21	State Vote/Approval	Representatives (e.g., BOE) in Member States	States will approve the NCSC cut scores

NCSC Results Based on Recommended Cuts

The recommended cuts by grade and content area have resulted in the following results for the NCSC consortia 2015 operational assessment. The NCSC data below are confidential. States will receive their individual state impact data on Friday, August 14, 2015 through the secure Measured Progress FTP site.

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NCSC Mathematics							
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
% Level 1	25	32	22	30	16	25	19
% Level 2	20	28	31	29	33	23	31
% Level 3	36	23	32	17	34	26	25
% Level 4	20	17	14	24	17	25	25
% Level 3 & 4	56	40	46	41	51	51	50

CONFIDENTIAL

NCSC English Language Arts							
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
% Level 1	39	34	23	33	32	28	28
% Level 2	25	20	30	30	17	28	18
% Level 3	26	36	37	26	36	26	35
% Level 4	9	10	10	11	15	18	19
% Level 3 & 4	35	46	47	37	51	44	54

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On Tuesday, August 18, states will have their regular Tuesday, 2:00 – 4:00 ET call and will discuss each state's progress towards approval and any concerns. States must email Susan Izard at Izard.Susan@measuredprogress.org and Sharon Hall at Shall@edcount.com with your state's approval by 6:00pm ET on August 21, 2015. States must also notify Susan and Sharon if they choose not to use the NCSC recommended cut scores.

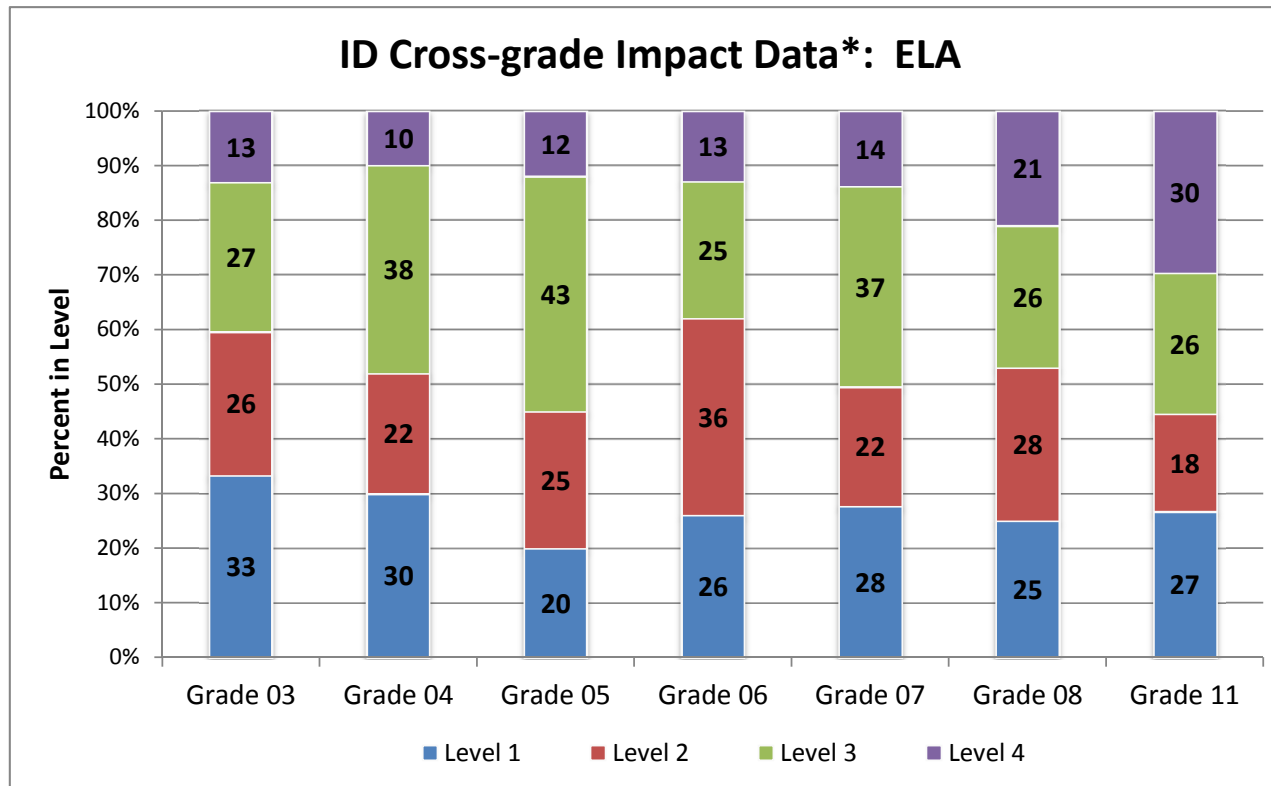
If an individual state chooses to establish its own cut scores, that state must procure its own reporting contract to include any additional work required for analysis, reporting, and interpretation guides. States that establish its own cut scores must also clearly indicate that its scores are not comparable to other NCSC states when reporting results. NCSC reports will be based on the cut scores that result from the process described above.

Sharon E. Hall
NCSC Director of Assessments

Rachel F. Quenemoen
NCSC Project Director

**STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SEPTEMBER 3, 2015**

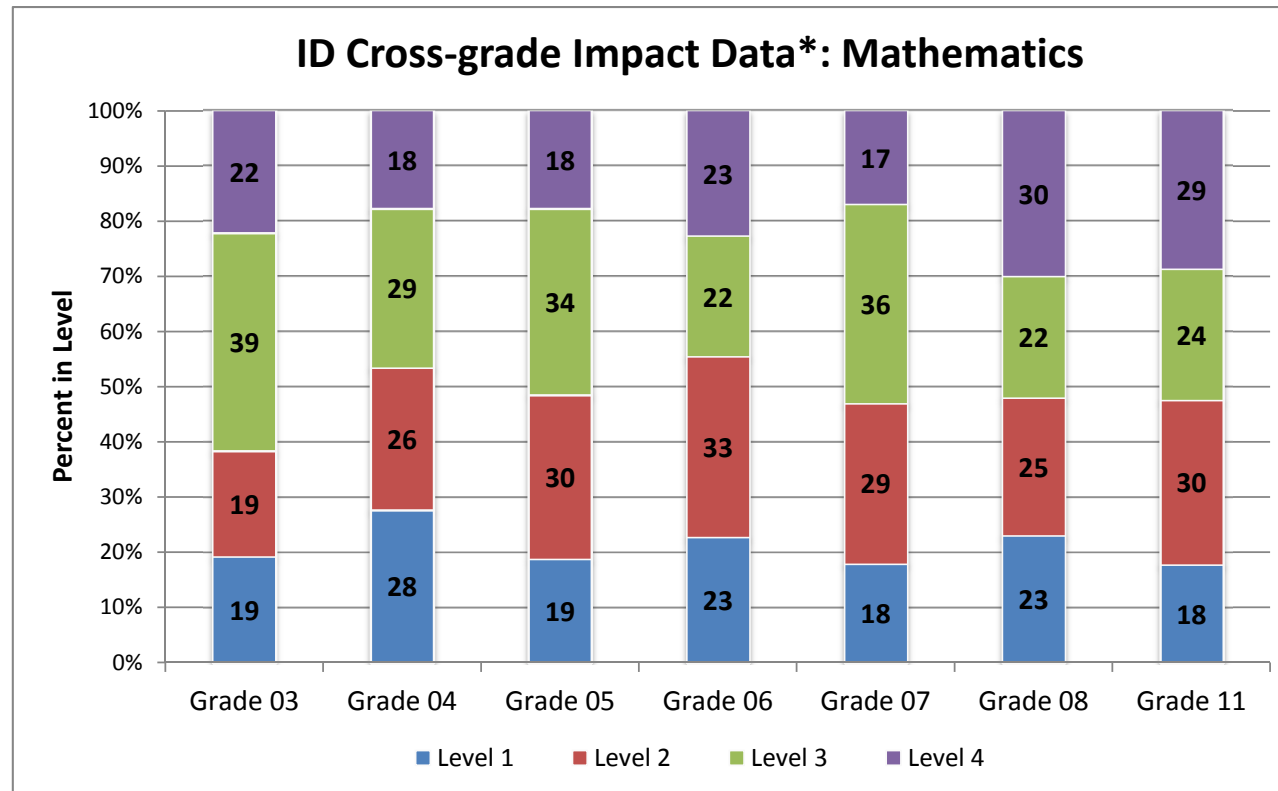
subject	subgroup	level	grade03	grade04	grade05	grade06	grade07	grade08	grade11
ela	ID	1	33.2	29.7	19.9	25.9	27.9	25.3	26.7
ela	ID	2	26.4	22.4	24.8	35.8	21.7	27.9	17.8
ela	ID	3	27.3	37.5	42.9	25.4	36.5	26.2	26
ela	ID	4	13.2	10.4	12.4	12.9	13.9	20.5	29.5



*This preliminary ELA report does not include students with a closed test.
 A student receives a closed test indicator if they were unable to communicate a response to the first four items on the test *AS WELL AS* did not communicate a response during the student response check prior to test administration. A student with a closed test will be included in performance level 1.

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subject	subgroup	level	grade03	grade04	grade05	grade06	grade07	grade08	grade11
mat	ID	1	19.4	27.7	18.6	22.6	18.2	22.8	17.6
mat	ID	2	19.4	25.8	30.1	33	28.9	24.6	29.7
mat	ID	3	38.9	28.5	33.6	21.7	36.4	22.4	23.6
mat	ID	4	22.2	18.1	17.7	22.6	16.5	30.2	29.1



*This preliminary mathematics report does not include students with a closed test. A student receives a closed test indicator if they were unable to communicate a response to the first four items on the test *AS WELL AS* did not communicate a response during the student response check prior to test administration. A student with a closed test will be included in performance level 1.



National Center and State Collaborative

NCSC Brief

Number 1

June 2015

AA-AAS: Standards That Are the “Same but Different”

Introduction

Alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) are designed to measure the knowledge and skills of students with significant cognitive disabilities. When first required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,¹ there was limited understanding of the content on which the assessments should be based. There was even less understanding of appropriate expectations for the students participating in these new assessments.

At that time, most educators assumed that students with significant cognitive disabilities could not learn academic content, nor would they benefit from academic content if they could learn it. Their curriculum was based on an assumption that functional life-skills were the only appropriate and feasible path to the future. Yet, there were small pockets of educators using evidence-based practices and a commitment to including ALL students in standards-based reform. Through their efforts, teachers, parents, and the students themselves demonstrated the assumption that only functional life-skills could be learned was not true. Consistent with the principle of the “least dangerous assumption,”²

the values of age-appropriate content and least restrictive alternatives led to more students with significant cognitive disabilities being included in grade-level settings, and participating actively in the grade-level curriculum.

The IDEA requirement to assess students with significant cognitive disabilities as part of standards-based reform was in response to this early evidence that it was time to raise the bars of opportunity and expectation for these students. Although there was agreement that students with significant cognitive disabilities would need adapted curricular materials, with reduced depth, breadth, and complexity, they had demonstrated that they could participate fully in the big ideas and activities of the grade-level curriculum and build skills and knowledge that supported their active engagement in the school, community, and with peers. Evidence was building that they could benefit from the same content as their peers, but at a different level of expectation and achievement.

In the time that has passed since the AA-AAS was first required, much has been learned about the students who participate in the AA-AAS and the standards for both content and achievement on which they are based. Still, there is confusion about what it means to have the assessment based on the **same** grade-level content standards but **different** achievement standards from those on which the general assessments are based. This Brief provides definitions and examples of

¹Alternate assessments were first required in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997.

²“The criterion of least dangerous assumption holds that in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the likelihood that students will be able to function independently as adults.” Source: Donnellan,

A. (1984). The criterion of the least dangerous assumption. *Behavioral Disorders*, 9, 141-150.

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same grade-level content standards and different achievement standards.

Same Grade-Level Content Standards

Content standards define the content being assessed. In the past several years, states and consortia of states have been developing assessments based on college and career ready standards. These include both general assessments and alternate assessments meant to measure college and career readiness, based on the same content that is defined by the state as the content standard for each grade level. Alternate assessments are based on the same foundation of rigorous content as the general assessments.

Just as teachers found success and benefits from including students with significant cognitive disabilities in the curriculum of their grade-level peers, but with less depth, breadth, and complexity in their content expectations, alternate assessments cover the same carefully prioritized content. For example, at grade 4, all students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities, will work on area and perimeter, as stated in this content standard: Apply the area and perimeter formulas for rectangles in real world and mathematical problems. Educators will use this content standard to adapt instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities using evidence-based practices³—adjusting the depth, breadth, and complexity of the instructional content as the students learn.

Different Achievement Standards

As teachers work to include all students in the grade-level curriculum in the least restrictive

³ See https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Main_Page for specific guidance on evidence-based practice and strategies to adapt appropriately for all students, including specific instructional strategies at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Instructional_Resource_Guide and progress monitoring tools at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Systematic_Activities_for_Scripted_Systematic_Instruction.

environment, they may struggle to determine what level of achievement they should expect, and to ensure they are not reducing depth, breadth, or complexity in ways that prevent opportunities for all students to learn. That is also true with alternate assessments—what should we expect that students with significant cognitive disabilities can reasonably achieve on the grade-level content?

Alternate achievement standards⁴ define *how well* students need to perform on the content to be considered proficient. They include four components:⁵

- (1) **Levels:** These provide descriptive labels or narratives for student performance (i.e., proficient, advanced, etc.).
- (2) **Descriptions:** These indicate what students at each level must demonstrate relative to the assessment tasks. These are referred to as *performance level descriptors*⁶ (PLDs) or *achievement level descriptors* (ALDs).
- (3) **Student Work Examples:** These illustrate the range of performance within each level.
- (4) **Cut Scores:** These clearly separate each performance level.

Performance/Achievement level descriptors (PLDs) reflect both the content assessed and the expectations for students. They describe how different performance levels on a test reflect specific skills and knowledge in the content being assessed. It is through PLDs that teachers, parents, and the public can see not only what grade-level content a student should know and do to be proficient, but also how well the student needs to perform—what depth, breadth, and complexity is an appropriately

⁴ Achievement standards are also known as *performance standards*.

⁵ Components identified by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2001). Source: Sheinker, J. M., & Redfield, D. L. (2001). *Handbook for professional development on assessment literacy*. Washington, DC: CCSSO.

⁶ ESEA and IDEA use the term *achievement level descriptors*. The terms are used interchangeably.

high expectation.

PLDs show how one level of achievement differs from another level. In doing so, they also show the specific content, skills, or knowledge that are the next steps in learning.

Achievement standards for AA-AAS are set in the same way as achievement standards are set for general assessments. States have differed in the decisions they have made about whether the achievement standards reflect high expectations closely aligned to grade level performance or they reflect low expectations. In the past, it often was the case that states set reasonably high expectations for the general assessment but low expectations for the AA-AAS.

For example, states or consortia have developed PLDs to reflect appropriately high expectations for students in the AA-AAS. The examples below reflect high, low, and very low expectations, currently reflected in state or consortia PLDs, using the grade 4 content standard noted earlier.

Grade 4 Content Standard: Apply the area and perimeter formulas for rectangles in real world and mathematical problems.

PLD for Grade 4 Proficient Expectation for General Assessment: The student who is proficient solves problems that include

calculating area and perimeter, including those in which side lengths are missing.

Same Content and Different Achievement Standards for Student Success

PLDs provide powerful policy statements about both the content standards and the achievement standards for the AA-AAS. Further, they give teachers information about the next steps in learning and directions of focus for their teaching.

Through the use of PLDs, teachers can build their understanding of how students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided meaningful access to the curriculum. Resources are available to build teacher understanding of both the grade-level content and appropriate instructional strategies to reduce depth, breadth, and complexity for appropriate but high achievement. For example, the online instructional resources at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Instructional_Resources were developed to support educators in the delivery of instruction aligned to college and career ready standards, with grade-level content standards and alternate achievement standards as the least dangerous assumption for student success!

Examples of AA-AAS PLDs for Grade 4 Proficient Expectations That Reflect High, Low, and Very Low Expectations

High Expectation	Lower Expectation	Very Low Expectation
The student who is proficient solves problems using perimeter and area.	The student who is proficient identifies differences in circles, squares, and triangles	The student who is proficient can make a rectangular bed.

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SEPTEMBER 3, 2015**

National Center and State Collaborative

NCSC Brief #1

June 2015

This Brief reflects the work of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC).
Authors of this report are Rachel F. Quenemoen and Martha L. Thurlow.



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The NCSC state partners participating in the spring 2015 NCSC operational assessment are: Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Idaho, Indiana, Pacific Assessment Consortium, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, and US Virgin Islands. As of spring 2015, additional states are members of the NCSC Consortium, representing varying levels of participation. They are: California, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

NCSC includes five partner organizations (National Center on Educational Outcomes – NCEO – at the University of Minnesota; National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment – Center for Assessment, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Kentucky, and edCount, LLC). NCSC is supported by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (H373X100002, Project Officer: Susan.Weigert@ed.gov). The contents of this Brief do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no assumption of endorsement by the Federal government should be made.

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National Center and State Collaborative

NCSC Brief

Number 2

June 2015

AA-AAS: Defining High Expectations for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Introduction

States have implemented alternate assessments for nearly two decades.¹ All states now use alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) in their accountability systems.²

Expectations for students on the AA-AAS in the late 1990s and early 2000s reflected a prevalent belief that students with significant cognitive disabilities could not learn academic content or could only learn very basic skills. This prevalent belief was reflected in alternate achievement standards that reflected functional content or limited academic skills despite emerging evidence that learning age-appropriate academic content with less depth, breadth, and complexity was possible for students with significant cognitive disabilities.³

¹Alternate assessments were first required in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997.

²An Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) regulation in 2003 allowed the use of proficient and advanced performance on the AA-AAS to count for Title I accountability.

³The evidence emerged from educators who adhered to the least dangerous assumption, which "...holds that in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the likelihood that students will be able to function independently as adults." Source: Donnellan, A. (1984). The criterion of the least dangerous assumption. *Behavioral Disorders*, 9, 141-150.

Evidence is accumulating to suggest that past expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities, reflected in states' AA-AAS, have been too low. This Brief shows state data that highlight the low expectations defined for AA-AAS in the past, and presents recent evidence from educators that highlights the need to define higher expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Low Expectations in AA-AAS

Alternate achievement standards that define *how well* students need to perform typically have three or more levels—for example, *Below proficient*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. Some states have more than three levels. Some states use the same labels for the alternate achievement standards as they use for the general assessment. Other states use different labels. Nevertheless, all states define a "proficient" level or performance level that is "on track," defining the level of performance that is expected of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Evidence of the low expectations held for students with significant cognitive disabilities comes in part from the ways that some states have defined their expectations through their performance level descriptors (PLDs).⁴ The ways that states have defined the proficient level are

⁴See NCSC Brief #1 for information on content and achievement standards (also referred to as performance standards) for states' AA-AAS.

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shown in the following example:

Proficient Expectation for Grade 4 General

Assessment: The student who is proficient solves problems that include calculating area and perimeter, including those in which side lengths are missing.

Low Proficient Expectation for Grade 4 AA-

AAS: The student who is proficient identifies differences in circles, squares, and triangles.

Very Low Proficient Expectation for Grade 4

AA-AAS: The student who is proficient can make a rectangular bed.

High Proficient Expectation for Grade 4

AA-AAS for the same content would be the following:

The student who is proficient solves problems using perimeter and area.

To work toward the high expectation, educators would work on area and perimeter, adapting instruction using evidence-based practices⁵—reducing the depth, breadth, and complexity of the instructional content to support student learning, and then increasing them as appropriate as they make progress.

AA-AAS Results Reflect Low Expectation

States annually report on the percentage of students showing proficient and advanced performance of students with disabilities on the general assessment and on the AA-AAS for reading and mathematics. Side-by-side portrayals of these percentages for several states from 2007 to 2014 are shown here for reading and math. They show how different the expectations for adequate performance are for students with disabilities who participate in the general

assessment and for students who participate in the AA-AAS. If the expectations were about the same, the percentages of proficient students in the two assessments would be about the same. In contrast, much higher percentages of students in the AA-AAS are deemed proficient and advanced than are students with disabilities in the general assessment.

Figure 1 shows the percent proficient for students with disabilities on the grade 4 general reading assessment across years followed by the percent proficient for the grade 4 reading AA-AAS across the same years. Two states' data are presented as examples of what is seen generally across states.

Figure 2 shows the percent of students with disabilities proficient for the grade 8 general math assessment across years followed by the percent proficient for the grade 8 math AA-AAS across the same years. The two states included in this figure are different states from those included in Figure 1.

Figure 3 includes two states, different from those in either Figure 1 or Figure 2. This figure shows high school assessment results, first for reading (students with disabilities on general assessment followed by AA-AAS) then for math (students with disabilities on general assessment followed by AA-AAS). These figures show the missing years of data often seen at the high school level. Even with the missing data, the difference in expectations for students with disabilities in general assessments and those in alternate assessments is obvious.

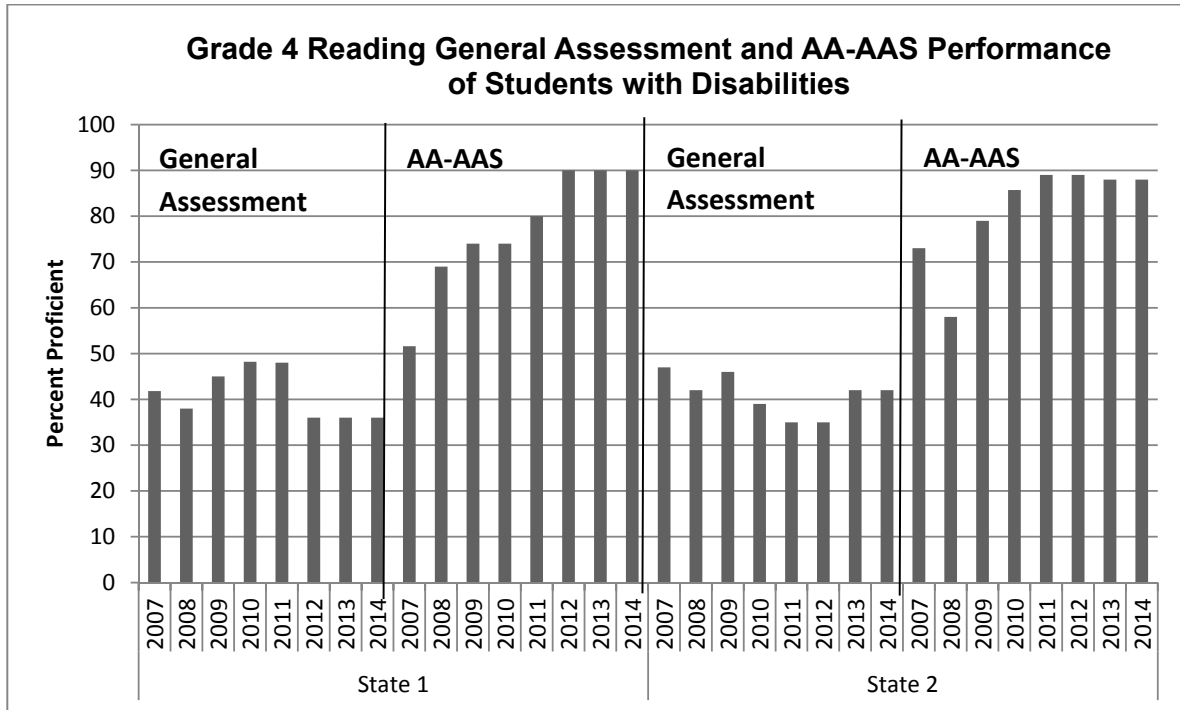
These side-by-side portrayals show the dramatic differences in expectations for students with disabilities who participate in the AA-AAS compared to those who participate in general assessments. Comparisons of proficiency rates on the AA-AAS to overall proficiency rates of all students or students without disabilities on the general assessment show similar, although smaller, differences in expectations.

⁵See https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Main_Page for specific guidance on evidence-based practice and strategies to adapt appropriately for all students, including specific instructional strategies at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Instructional_Resource_Guide and progress monitoring tools at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Systematic_Activities_for_Scripted_Systematic_Instruction.

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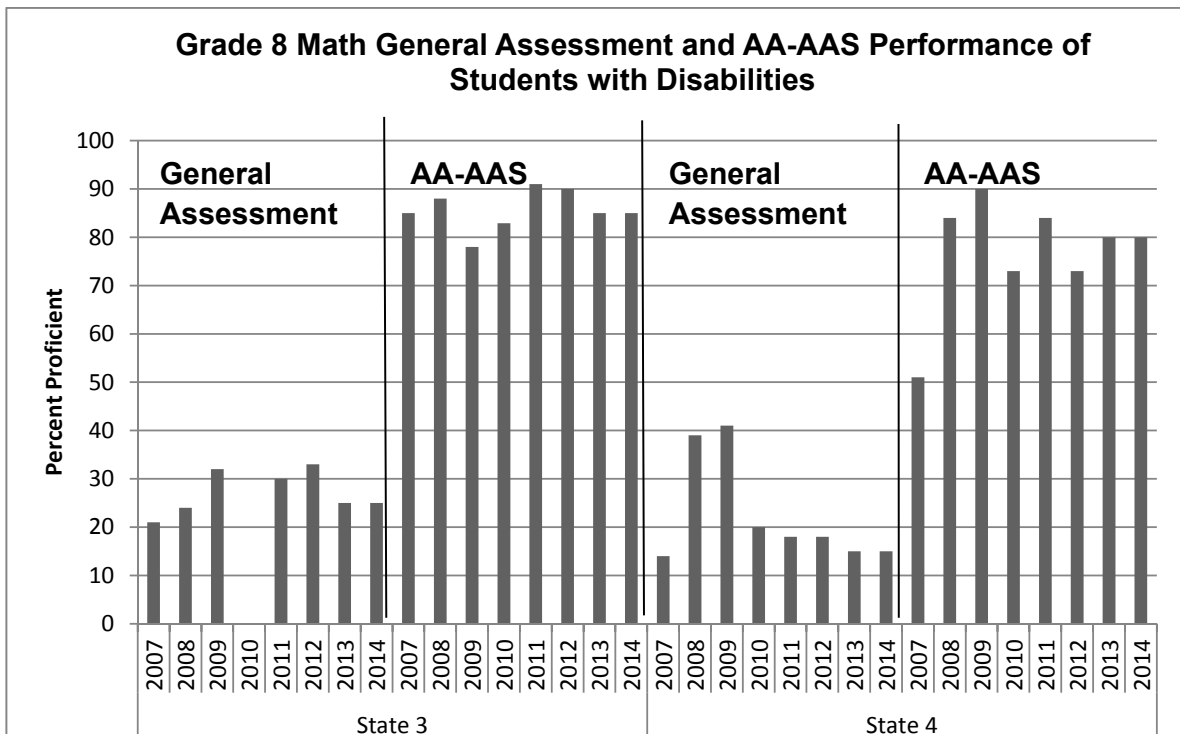
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Figure 1. Grade 4 Reading Performance in Example States



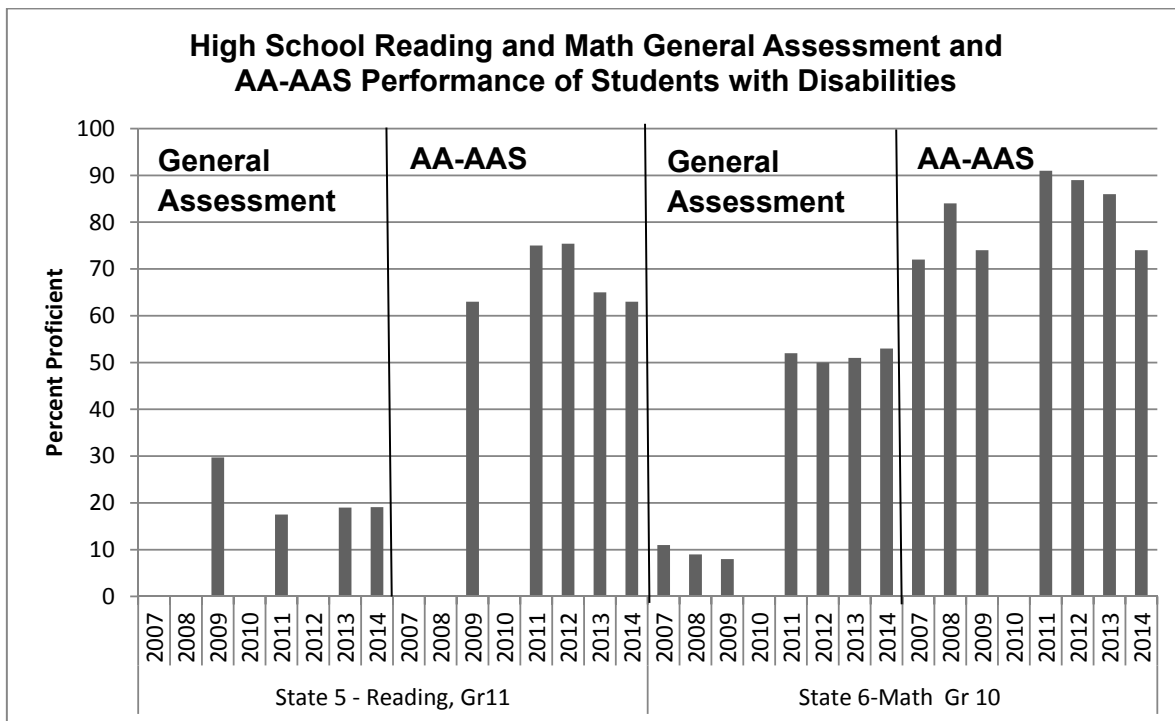
Note: State 2 changed to a new general assessment in 2009-10.

Figure 2. Grade 8 Math Performance in Example States



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Figure 3. High School Reading and Math Performance in Example States



Note: State 5 changed to a new general assessment in 2008-09. State 6 changed to a new general assessment in 2011-12.

Classroom Evidence Highlights Need for Higher Expectations

Teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities have reported on the current levels of performance of their students through the *Learner Characteristics Inventory*.⁶ The analysis of data from 5,285 teachers indicated that students with significant cognitive disabilities show a large range in performance, with the majority having consistent reading and math skills:⁷

⁶The *Learner Characteristics Inventory* was developed at the University of Kentucky to collect information on students with significant cognitive disabilities. It was used by the National Center and State Collaborative to collect, among other information, data on the current reading and math performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities in NCSC states. Source: Towles-Reeves, E., Kearns, J., Flowers, C., Hart, L., Kerbel, A., Kleinert, H., Quenemoen, R., & Thurlow, M. (2012). *Learner Characteristics inventory project report* (A product of the NCSC validity evaluation). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center and State Collaborative

⁷Source: Lee, A., Towles-Reeves, E., Flowers, C., Hart, L., Kearns, J., Kerbel, A., Kleinert, H., & Thurlow, M. (2013).

Reading Skills of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities:

- 65% read written text or braille
 - 39% read basic sight words, simple sentences, directions, bullets, and/or lists in print or braille (These students can be building literacy skills like comprehension through read-aloud techniques while continuing to develop decoding fluency.)
 - 22% read fluently with basic, literal understanding of print or braille
 - 4% read fluently with critical understanding in print or braille
- 19% are beginning to build reading skills

Teacher Perceptions of Students Participating in AA-AAS: Cross-State Summary (A product of the NCSC validity evaluation). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center and State Collaborative.

- 16% have no observable awareness of print or braille

maintaining appropriate high expectations for achievement.

Math Skills of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities:

- 66% actively engage in mathematics
 - 42% performed computations, either with or without a calculator
 - 26% counted with 1:1 correspondence to at least 10, or made numbered sets of items
- 17% are beginning to use numbers
- 15% have no observable awareness of numbers

Specific guidance on evidence-based practice and strategies to adapt instruction and curriculum materials for all students is available at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Main_Page. It includes specific instructional strategies at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Instructional_Resource_Guide.

These percentages suggest that the AA-AAS needs to focus most of its items on the skills that these students already know. In test development, it is important to structure the test to discriminate between the student who is proficient/on track and the student who is not proficient/on track. Most items need to address the skills of the 65% of students who read written text or braille, and the 66% of students who actively engage in mathematics.

Not many items are needed to determine that a student is just beginning to build reading skills or use numbers, or the student who does not yet have a consistent means of communication, or who has no knowledge of print, braille, or numbers. For these students, use of fine-grained progress monitoring tools used by teachers in daily instruction in the classroom, or documentation of communication interventions, are more helpful measures of their progress than an assessment used for system accountability.

The AA-AAS must define high expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Educators can use available resources to ensure that they know the instructional strategies to use to reduce the depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level content, while at the same time

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AA-AAS: How Do Our Students Learn and Show What They Know?

Introduction

Over the past several decades, powerful insights have been gained into how students represent knowledge and develop competence in specific domains. We also are learning how tasks and learning opportunities can be designed to provide evidence for inferences about what students know and can do across a full range of performance. The growing body of evidence that students with significant cognitive disabilities can learn academic content has motivated educators to rethink previous models of learning that were developmental in nature and focused heavily on the skills students were lacking when compared to their same age peers.¹

This Brief presents the conceptual model of learning and understanding that was the basis for the development of the NCSC mathematics and English language arts resources.²

Conceptual Model of Learning and Understanding

Two of the dominant perspectives for understanding how learning occurs³ are the behaviorist and situative perspectives. The

behaviorist perspective is rooted in applied behavior analysis and promotes the use of task analyses where content or skills are broken down into measurable and observable steps. This perspective has had a strong influence on the education of students with disabilities, but does not address how students organize and use knowledge.

The **situative** perspective places an emphasis on how learning is mediated by one's environment, including peers. There is substantial research showing the benefits of learning in an inclusive environment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.⁴ Another concept derived from the situative perspective is the importance of opportunity to learn and practice skills in real world contexts.

Both the behaviorist and the situative perspectives are reflected in the NCSC Model of Learning and Understanding. The NCSC model provides a conceptual foundation for the NCSC Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) materials.⁵

⁴Sources: Jackson, L. B., Ryndak, D. L., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2010). The dynamic relationship between context, curriculum, and student learning: A case for inclusive education as a research-based practice. *Research & Practice for Persons with Significant Cognitive Disabilities*, 33-4 (4-1), 175-195.; Matzen, K., Ryndak, D., & Nakao, T. (2009). Middle school teams increasing access to general education students with significant disabilities: Issues encountered and activities observed across context. *Remedial and Special Education*, 31, 287-304.; Peetsma, T., Vergeer, M., Roeleveld, J., & Karsten, S. (2001). Inclusion in education: Comparing pupils' development in special and regular education. *Educational Review*, 53, 125-135.

⁵Source: Browder, D. M., Gibbs, S. L., Ahlgrim-Dezell, L., Courtade, G., Mraz, M., & Flowers, C. (2008). Literacy for students with severe developmental disabilities—what

¹Source: Kleinert, H. L., Browder, D. M., & Towles-Reeves, E. A. (2009). Models of cognition for students with significant cognitive disabilities: Implications for assessment. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 301-326.

²See <https://wiki.ncscpartners.org> to view the C&I materials.

³Source: Pellegrino, J., Chudowsky, N., & Glaser, R. (Eds.). (2001). *Knowing what students know: The science and design of educational assessment*. Washington, DC: National Research Council.

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A behaviorist perspective is reflected in materials such as the MASSIs⁶ and LASSIs⁷ that use a systematic approach to instruction, but also include evolving models of how to form a graduated understanding that builds from big ideas. A situative perspective is reflected in other NCSC C&I materials such as the grade-level Universal Design for Learning (UDL) units, which promote instruction in an inclusive environment and provide examples of real world applications of the targeted skills and knowledge.

Conceptual Foundation for Grade-aligned Mathematics Instruction

Past Practice and a New Approach

Access to grade-aligned mathematics content is necessary for students to develop 21st century skills. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, there is often a discrepancy between achievement in math and expectations for their chronological age.

Some educators approach mathematics instruction by beginning at the developmental level of skills students are missing and teaching through the traditional sequence of skills. Others, who teach students with mild cognitive disabilities, may choose to remediate several grade levels of content in a year. Sometimes educators have simply bypassed general curricular expectations in math in favor of teaching the most essential skills needed for daily living, like purchasing or measurement. These approaches may restrict opportunities to learn age- and grade-appropriate content and restrict inclusive learning.

Given the limitations of previous approaches to math instruction, NCSC's C&I materials for math are based on a different approach. The idea behind this approach is to teach students the math content of their assigned grade and chronological age, with the content prioritized

should we teach and what should we hope to achieve? *Remedial and Special Education*, 30, 269-282.

⁶Mathematics Systematic Structured Instruction

⁷Language Arts Systematic Structured Instruction

to focus on the critical content for progressing from grade to grade, and supports provided to compensate for not yet mastered prerequisites. This approach assumes that when grade-aligned math content is taught in a meaningful context, and appropriate supports and scaffolds are provided, students with significant cognitive disabilities can be successful.

What are we learning from studies of what is possible with reasonable instruction?

Research on teaching math content has provided evidence that students with significant cognitive disabilities can learn skills within the context of grade-aligned content. Two recent studies⁸ demonstrated that middle and high school students with intellectual disability or autism could use a task analysis and graphic organizer to solve word problems linked to state standards. The authors suggest that when students are taught number sense and other early numeracy concepts, these skills can be applied to grade-aligned content in general education classes. It may be necessary to use smaller numbers, less complex examples, and technology such as calculators to compensate for missing skills.

A six step grade-aligned process to promote numeracy skills creates access to the general education curriculum

A six-step process for creating grade-aligned lesson plans has been developed, based on what has been learned from research:

1. Select the content and objectives for the lesson from grade-level content targeted by the general education teacher or prioritized with content partners within and across grades.

⁸Studies showing success with mathematics content: Browder, D. M., Jimenez, B., & Trela, K. (2012). Grade-aligned math instruction for secondary students with moderate intellectual disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 47, 373-388.; Browder, D. M., Trela, K., Courtade, G. R., Jimenez, B. A., Knight, V., & Flowers, C. (2012). Teaching mathematics and science standards to students with moderate and severe developmental disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education*, 46, 26-35.

Summary of Math Approach

- Students should receive intensive early skills instruction in early grades
 - Focus on the standards of the grade level, building early skills through grade- and age-appropriate applications
 - Use real-life and high interest context and evidence-based practices
 - Provide students with a step by step process and supports to compensate for not yet mastered skills
2. Identify a real-life activity for the lesson to give the content purpose.
 3. Use evidence-based practices with content broken into smaller objectives and sequenced.
 4. Use instructional supports and graphic organizers to keep track of steps to solve the problem.
 5. Plan methods to monitor progress (both steps used to solve and number of problems solved).
 6. Promote generalization through application to untaught problems and different real-life situations.

Conceptual Foundation for Grade-aligned English Language Arts (ELA) Instruction

Past Practice and a New Approach

In the past, reading instruction for students with disabilities focused on accessing text through sight reading of functional words. Sight words can be used in some functional applications, but do not provide access to literature and informational text, both of which require

managing passages of text. Text has little purpose unless students gain meaning, and decoding without comprehension is not useful for future learning or life.

Browder and colleagues⁹ proposed a conceptual model for literacy that focuses on listening comprehension while also building the capacity for as many students as possible to learn to access text through decoding. The NCSC C&I materials for ELA were developed based on this conceptual model. Regardless of a student's potential to decode, being able to understand a text passage, whether it is read independently or accessed through technology or a human reader, is the most important goal of literacy. This idea is especially important when considering how students will demonstrate understanding. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, the assessment of standards on gaining meaning from text must be separated from the demands of decoding.

Text comprehension focus does not negate decoding instruction

Similar to math, there is a body of research that provides guidance for teaching early reading skills to all students with significant cognitive disabilities,¹⁰ including those who are non-verbal.¹¹ The pace of learning to decode

⁹Source: Browder, D. M., Gibbs, S. L., Ahlgrim-Dezell, L., Courtade, G., Mraz, M., & Flowers, C. (2008). Literacy for students with severe developmental disabilities—what should we teach and what should we hope to achieve? *Remedial and Special Education, 30*, 269-282.

¹⁰Studies providing guidance on teaching reading: Bradford, S., Shippen, M. E., Alberto, P., Houchins, D. E., & Flores, M. (2006). Using systematic instruction to teach decoding skills to middle school students with moderate intellectual disabilities. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 41*, 333-343; Browder, D. M., Ahlgrim-Dezell, L., Flowers, C., & Baker, J. N. (2012). An evaluation of a multicomponent early literacy program for students with severe developmental disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 33*, 237-246; Flores, M. M., Shippen, M. E., & Alberto, P. (2004). Teaching letter-sound correspondence to students with moderate intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Direct Instruction, 4*, 173-188; Ganz, J., & Flores, M. (2009). The effectiveness of direct instruction for teaching language to children with autism spectrum disorders: Identifying materials. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 39*, 75– 83.

¹¹Source: Heller, K. W., Frederick, L. D., Tumlin, J., & Brineman,

Summary of ELA Approach

- Language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities should reflect access to the general curriculum.
- Use literature and informational texts from the student's assigned grade level and focus on the grade-level content, with an alternate achievement literacy focus.
- Work within and across grades to ensure students benefit from language arts that progress with increasing levels.

is typically steady but very slow, and requires multiple years to achieve a single year of progress when compared to typical peers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Educators should continue to teach decoding skills as students reach middle grades, but by this time alternate ways to gain fluency in meaning from text will need to be established to ensure age- and grade-appropriate access to the general curriculum. For example, all LASSIs include a brief summary of the targeted text, an approach that provides opportunities for emerging readers to practice decoding skills. The majority of the lesson is conducted by the teacher, who reads aloud to the students the adapted text and excerpts from the original text.

Methods used to teach and assess multiple standards

An interactive read aloud can be an efficient way to teach and assess multiple standards in reading for a student's assigned grade level. Interactive read alouds or shared stories are an evidence-based practice for students with significant

cognitive disabilities.¹² There is evidence that interactive read alouds are effective when providing access to grade-level literature to a wide range of students including those with complex multiple disabilities who may have few entry level literacy skills.¹³ In most cases supports and scaffolds are used to make the text accessible, including summarizing passages, object supports, and summarizing repeated sentences.

Alternate Achievement Literacy

The term *alternate achievement literacy* is used to refer to the approach of using text adaptations and interactive read alouds to address standards for students participating in alternate assessments.¹⁴ Once students are given alternatives (e.g., text read aloud) to augment any emerging decoding skills, the focus of instruction can be the standards of the student's assigned grade level.

Developing lessons using this approach

Several decisions must be made when developing a language arts lesson using an alternate achievement literacy approach.

¹²Source: Hudson, M. E., & Test, D. W. (2011). Evaluating the evidence base for using shared story reading to promote literacy for students with extensive support needs. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 36, 34-45.

¹³Studies showing the effectiveness of read alouds with a range of students: Browder, D. M., Lee, A., & Mims, P. J. (2011). Using shared stories and individual response modes to promote comprehension and engagement in literacy for students with multiple, severe disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 46, 339-351; Mims, P., Browder, D., Baker, J., Lee, A., & Spooner, F. (2009). Increasing comprehension of students with significant intellectual disabilities and visual impairments during shared stories. *Education and Treatment in Developmental Disabilities*, 44, 409-420; Mims, P., Hudson, M., & Browder, D. (2012). Using read alouds of grade-level biographies and systematic prompting to promote comprehension for students with moderate and severe developmental disabilities. *Focus on Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 27, 65-78.

¹⁴The term "alternate achievement literacy" was coined by: Fleury, V., Hedges, S., Hume, K., Browder, D., El Zein, F., Thompson, J. L., Reutebuch, C., Fallin, K., & Vaughn, S. (2014). Academic performance of secondary students on the autism spectrum. *Remedial and Special Education*, 35, 68-79.

D. G. (2002). Teaching decoding for generalization using the nonverbal reading approach. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 14(14), 19-35.

1. Select the target text—same as assigned grade level targets, with opportunities for inclusive instruction, interaction with peers.
2. Adapt text as needed—look for picture supports and headings already included; some texts may need simplification or a summary.
3. Augment the text for understanding. This may include providing picture symbols for key vocabulary, a summary sentence that is repeated, or highlighting key vocabulary. “No more different than necessary” is a general rule of thumb.
4. Identify multiple ways (e.g., human reader, technology) that the student could access the text. The passage should always be in view so the student can apply his or her reading skills. During instruction, the student should have the opportunity to request to “read it again” if he or she is unsure of the answer to a comprehension question. A “reread” can be requested using either the symbol provided for “reread” or the student’s own communication system.
5. Consider how the student will demonstrate understanding. Although some students with

significant cognitive disabilities will have a speech or communication system to generate answers to open-ended questions, many will need to select from an array of responses (e.g., words or pictures). Response options should be familiar to students or pre-taught prior to being used for responding.

Summary

By basing the NCSC C&I resources on a model of learning that promotes (a) the use of evidence-based strategies, (b) instruction provided in a meaningful context, and (c) the provision of supports and scaffolds, general curriculum access becomes achievable for students with disabilities. Studies designed to pilot the C&I materials have already demonstrated that students with significant cognitive disabilities can have success with rigorous academic content that is aligned with grade level standards.

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