



Information Alert for Parents of Special Education Students

Common Core State Standards... What will be different for my Special Education child?

What are Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?

In the 2014-15 School Year, all school districts in California will be implementing new standards for core curriculum. Based on a set of standards adopted by states from all over the country, these are the academic skills that all school children in the state are expected to learn. The standards are a coordinated set of skills in English/Language Arts and Math that are designed to prepare young people to be ready for college and careers.

There are similarities and differences between the CCSS and the former California Core Curriculum standards that were in place in the past. Both address basic skills in literacy, writing, and math problem solving and application. The new standards systematically build upon each other at each grade level and have an equal focus on reading of literature as well as informational text. In addition, the CCSS focus on the technology skills that our students will need to be successful.

CCSS will be used to assess performance of our students as well as our schools. Using standards that are agreed upon at the national level helps us to compare students in California with those across the nation. Special Education students will have IEP goals correlated to CCSS which address areas of need in Core Curriculum.

How will students be assessed in the CCSS?

There is a new statewide achievement test that is designed to assess student progress in the CCSS, which is called the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). All students grades 3-11 will eventually be assessed using the SBAC, which is only administered electronically via computer, laptop, or tablet. The SBAC is "Computer Assisted" which means that it adjusts to reflect the student's capabilities. Most Special Education students will take the SBAC, except students with significant disabilities (about 1%) who will take an alternative assessment. Special Education students may use accommodations and supports to take the SBAC, if specified on the IEP. These include Braille, text to speech, readers, etc.

How can I help my child to prepare for all this?

1. Become familiar with the CCSS for your child's grade level, provide support with school work and homework, and communicate with the teacher regularly.
2. Find out what computer platform your child will be assessed with (iPad, Mac, etc) and make sure he or she has opportunities to do school work and take the practice SBAC test using that format.
3. Become familiar with available accommodations for the SBAC, work with the IEP to note those he or she might need, and then make sure there are lots of opportunities to practice using those accommodations.