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## Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are research-based educational content standards that describe a set of learning goals that all American students should achieve so that they will be prepared for college or a career when they graduate. The CCSS are not a set of teaching materials, they are guidelines and benchmarks for what each student should learn.

By the 2014-15 school year, how teachers in Vermont teach and the materials they use will be guided by the standards. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of students receiving special education services should also align with the new standards.

### What are standards?

Standards represent a progression of knowledge and skills that students are expected to complete by the time they graduate each grade. For example, kindergartners work on phonics and letter sounds, while eighth graders work on building vocabulary, reading speed and accuracy.

In the past, each state has had a separate set of education standards. Vermont's educational standards are called The Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities. However, concerns about American student success and lack of preparation for college and careers have led to change.

National education leaders along with education leaders in 48 states got together and wrote a set of standards for students across the U.S. These standards were developed and revised based on feedback provided by parents, educators, and a variety of educational groups. Vermont educators were active in this process. These became the CCSS. They are designed to teach students academic skills that prepare them for careers and/or postsecondary education.

One way to become more familiar with the CCSS is to look through them. It will be helpful to get a feel for what your child will be learning as she moves through school. For parents of children receiving special education services, reviewing these standards can help you develop a clearer picture of what your child's IEP goals should include.

Individual educational goals in the IEP must directly connect to the grade-level content standards. This means that the IEP contains accommodations and supports that are designed to help your child to meet the standards.



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Even if your child is performing below or even far below grade-level he should still access grade-level content. Your child should receive instruction that includes accommodations, modifications, assistive technology, and supports that allow him to participate with his same-aged peers.

Questions that parents of children with disabilities receiving special education services can ask the IEP team include:

- What standard does each academic goal address?
- How do my child's behavioral goals support her academic achievement?
- What does my child have in place to access the standards that are being taught? Will there be accommodations, modifications, or assistive technology?
- What can I do to support my child's learning?

### **What is the difference between standards, curriculum, and IEPs?**

Standards are statements about what students should know and be able to do and how they will show that they have met the standard.

Classroom curriculum is developed by school districts to prepare students to meet the standards using activities, lessons, and educational materials as well as instructional techniques at grade level.

IEPs are for students with disabilities. IEPs address disability-related needs and describe how the student will access the general classroom curriculum.

### **Annual assessments**

All students enrolled in grades 3-8 and 11 will be required to take a statewide assessment for reading and math. Once the CCSS are in use, 99% of students will participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC). SBAC will be given instead of the New England Common Assessment (NECAP), starting in the spring of 2015.

SBAC is a test taken on a computer. This test contains built-in accessibility tools for students who need them. One example is a read aloud tool which is available to all students for math, and for reading if the student is in grade five or higher and the IEP or 504 team determines that the student has a reading disability that persists even after given direct, individualized instruction.

Students, who cannot participate in the SBAC even with accommodations, may be eligible to take the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment beginning in the fall of 2014. The DLM has been adopted by the state of Vermont and will replace the Vermont Alternate Assessment Portfolio (VTAAP) in reading and math. The Science VTAAP will continue to be given to eligible students in grades 4, 8, and 11 and replaces the Science NECAP assessment each spring.

As a member of the SBAC, Vermont has joined with a group of other states to develop tests for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. The SBAC is based on the CCSS.

### **Resources**

[Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)  
A national clearinghouse of information

[Dynamic Learning Maps](#)  
Information and resources on DLM  
855-277-9751

[The IDEA Partnership](#)  
877-433-2463

[National UDL Center](#)  
Resources and information on UDL  
781-245-2212

[Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium](#)  
Information and resources on SBAC  
855-833-1969

[Vermont Agency of Education](#)  
Help with the education system.  
802-479-1030

Email: [info@vtfn.org](mailto:info@vtfn.org) Website: [www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org](http://www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org)