



## MEMO

To: Special Education Interventionists  
From: Steve Sandoval, Director of Special Services  
Re: Progression among Special Education Students in a Competency-based System  
Date: November 14, 2012

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Purpose: To provide guidance for special education teams related to Performance Level progression of students with disabilities within a Competency-based System.

### Options:

1. For students with significant cognitive disabilities whose instruction is mostly or entirely derived from Alternate Standards (i.e., Extended Evidence Outcomes - EEOs), their Performance Level is determined by what their *natural* grade level would be based on *chronological age*. For example, a 10 year old working on 5<sup>th</sup> grade EEOs would be considered a Performance Level 5 student, even though she may be performing significantly lower than typical 5<sup>th</sup> grade or Performance Level 5 standards.
2. For students with moderate disabilities whose instruction is mostly or entirely derived from the Adams 50 Content Standards within a Competency-based System, IEP teams can decide to adjust the number or type of Measurement Topics or Learning Targets a student can show proficiency in for Performance Level promotion. For example, a student with a Learning Disability in Mathematics and who is in Math Level 5 may receive instruction from all seven Measurement Topics in Math Level 5, but would need to be held accountable to only four of them for promotion to Math Level 6.
3. For students with mild disabilities whose instruction is entirely derived from the Adams 50 Content Standards within a Competency-based System and is making adequate growth (e.g., 40<sup>th</sup> percentile growth or greater on T-CAP or use of progress monitoring tools), IEP teams may not make any adaptations to the number or type of Measurement Topics or Learning Targets he would need for promotion to the next Performance Level.

### Actions:

1. Discuss and make promotion decisions at each IEP meeting and have it reflected clearly on students' IEPs, under the *IEP Accommodations/Modifications* section and/or *Transition Services Plan* (for students age 15 or older).
2. Ensure that the IEP students' regular education teacher(s) and support staff are aware of these IEP team decisions for consistent implementation.

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Example language to be used in IEPs:

For Option 1: *“The IEP team has determined that (student) needs to be instructed with Alternate Standards (Extended Evidence Outcomes). As a result, (his/her) Performance Level will be determined by chronological age. The student is progressing toward a Certificate of Completion or General Diploma.”*

For Option 2: *“The IEP team has determined that (student) will be held responsible for mastering 4/7 Required Measurement Topics for Math Level 5, in order to show proficiency and be promoted to the next level. The student is progressing toward a General Diploma.”*

For Option 3: *“The IEP team has determined that (student) will be held accountable to all Model Content Standards with appropriate Special Education supports and services. The student is progressing toward an Endorsed Diploma or General Diploma.”*

Definitions:

**Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEOs):** These are Alternate—or modified—Standards created by CDE and intended for students with severe cognitive disabilities. EEOs are aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards and, therefore, are aligned with Adams 50 Content Standards.

**Adams 50 Content Standards:** These are standards the District uses as part of its Competency-based System which are aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards. *Measurement Topics* are the standards themselves and the *Learning Targets* are the learning objectives embedded within each Measurement Topic (standard).

**Mild Disabilities:** Refers to students whose disability impacts academic functioning and achievement to a relatively *small* degree. Typically, these students perform 0-1 year below expected grade level. An example disability category may include Speech-Language.

**Moderate Disabilities:** Refers to students whose disability impacts academic functioning and achievement to a *large* degree. Typically, these students perform 2-4 years below expected grade level. Example disability categories may include Significant Emotional Disability and Specific Learning Disability.

**Severe Disabilities:** Refers to students whose disability impacts a wide range of functional skills to a *significant* degree including academics, cognition, mobility, adaptive functioning, and emotional maturity. Typically, these students perform four (4) or more years below expected grade level. Example disability categories may include Significant Limited Intellectual Capacity, Multiple Disabilities and severe forms of Autism Spectrum Disorder.