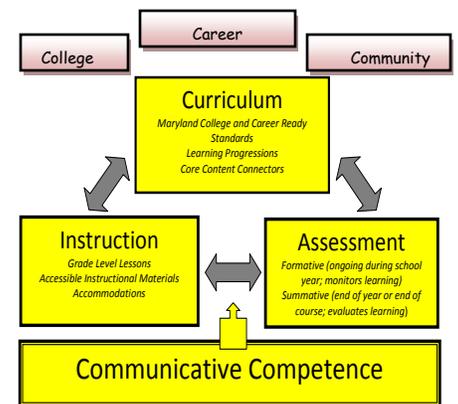


Alternate Education Program News

Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards prepare students with significant cognitive disabilities for post-secondary options

Focus on Real-World Learning Application

Maryland public schools will implement the National Center for State Collaborative (NCSC) assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The NCSC instructional framework (right) uses a triangle to illustrate three key interconnected parts: **curriculum**, **instruction**, and **assessment**. At the base of the triangle is **Communicative Competence**, a set of behaviors that students must have to communicate what they know and to get their needs met. At the top of the triangle, three post-secondary options crown the framework as goals for all students.



Adapted from NCSC Instructional Framework

Using the NCSC Core Content Connectors, which are aligned with the Maryland College and Career-Ready standards, master teachers and content specialists from six regions across the state are writing lesson units that focus on real-world learning applications. Students will have ongoing opportunities to learn academic content while engaging in learning that builds the skills necessary for post-secondary success.

NCSC Instructional Framework

Assessment

The NCSC assessment will replace the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA) in Reading and Math during the 2015-16 school year in grades 3-8 and 11. (The Alt-MSA Science assessment will continue to be given in grades 5, 8, and 10.) The NCSC assessment will be online (with a paper and pencil option) and results will reflect five performance levels with descriptors for each level.

Proposed Timeline

2014-15

- NCSC assessments piloted in select Maryland schools.
- Master teachers write lesson units.
- Professional development provided for teachers and related service providers.

2015-16

- NCSC curriculum, instruction, and assessments fully implemented in Maryland schools.
- Ongoing professional development provided for teachers and related service providers.

- Maryland implements NCSC to prepare students for post-secondary options
- Communicative Competence facilitates student learning
- Real-world learning applications build student skills
- NCSC assessment replaces Alt-MSA Reading and Mathematics assessments

For questions about NCSC, please contact :

Nancy Schmitt:
nancy.schmitt@maryland.gov

Trinell Bowman:
trinell.bowman@maryland.gov

What Does THAT Mean? Key Terms You Need to Know



**Voices From the Field:
Answers to
Questions on Your
Mind**

- **NCSC** = National Center and State Collaborative; a consortium of 24 states of whom Maryland is a member, developed the new alternate assessment for students following alternate outcomes (AA-AAS).
- **AA-AAS** = Alternate Assessment on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards they are used to measure academic performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.
- **MCCRS** = Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards are based on the Common Core State Standards they clarify what students are expected to learn as they progress through grades K-12.
- **CCC** = Core Content Connectors (CCC) are based on the “big ideas” of grade level content . The CCC are the starting points for planning instruction and assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities as they move through grades K-12.

Q.1. What does “College and Career Ready” mean for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

*The NCSC definition of college and career-ready includes **community** readiness. The academic instruction will have value because it will promote improvements in communication skills, reading and math performance, independent and team work skills, chronological age-expected social skills and skills for identifying and requesting wants and needs, all skills needed for post-secondary success.*

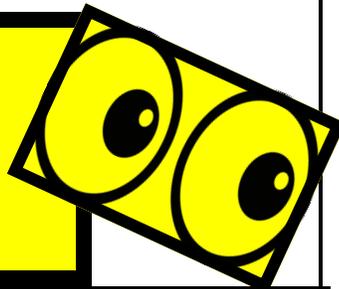
Q. 2. What is meant by Communicative Competence?

Communicative Competence is a set of behaviors that a learner must have to convey what they know and to have their needs met. Communication at some level is possible and identifiable for all students regardless of functional “level,” and is the starting point for developing communicative competence. Communication skills are critical and must be developed early, especially for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities.

Q.3. Why did Maryland adopt the NCSC Instructional Framework?

Research supports the use of standards-based curriculum that is aligned to alternate grade-level instruction with real-world learning applications that improves a student’s independent level in both their current and future environments. Providing educators with a set of standards that include curriculum, instruction, and, assessment will prepare students for post-secondary options.

Looking Ahead!



Coming in the next issue!

Differences between the Alt-MSA and NCSC assessment

Criteria For NCSC Participation

Voices from the Field: Q & A

More Key Terms