

## Technical Assistance Bulletin

### Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

April 2018

#### Overall Emphasis and Purpose:

The focus of the technical assistance bulletin is to emphasize the interdependency of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that if implemented effectively, result in positive outcomes for students with disabilities. For students with disabilities, this is achieved through the provision of specially designed instruction (SDI), based on goals and services that have been identified to address a students' unique needs. Students with disabilities make progress toward grade level content standards and narrow the gap. The development, implementation, and evaluation of SDI is reliant on the collection and analysis of data attributed to student growth over time. SDI is most effective when delivered within an Integrated Tiered System of Supports framework and is in addition to, not a replacement for, the proactive planning that incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and/or the reactive adjustments supported through Differentiated Instruction (DI).

#### What this means for you as a Special Educator/Special Service Provider:

- Following the requirements of IDEA in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment is critical to the effective development of IEP's and the provision of services and specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.
- Understand that there are qualities that distinguish SDI and the differences and relationship among Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI) and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI).
- Consider the combination of accommodations, supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and personnel support when developing a student's unique SDI.
- Ensure the development of a student's IEP is collaborative. Professionals working with the student, parents, and often the student, need to work together to design special education and related services the student receives.
- Decisions regarding SDI and progress need to be data driven.

#### What the Special Educator/Special Service Provider needs to do if not already doing:

- Apply the information and skills presented during the 4-day Specialized Instruction training.
- Be knowledgeable about the age-appropriate or grade level standards in either the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) or Maryland Alternate Academic Standards (MAAS)
- Analyze gaps between current skills and expectations of grade-level standards when identifying target skills and setting goals that are estimates of the student's anticipated growth.
- Consider the student's current performance and the relationship between the SDI provided to the student and the annual IEP goals to be achieved when determining the frequency (how often a service is provided) and intensity (the duration of each session) of special education and related services.
- Track progress on instructional targets that will lead to the achievement of the annual goal and objectives/benchmarks, not just the goal itself. In general, the more intensive the supports and/or the larger the gap between the student's present levels of performance and age appropriate or grade-level standards, the more frequently data needs to be collected and analyzed.
- Complete a formal progress report on IEP goals quarterly. These progress reports should be based on data and observations (as described in the goal and objectives/benchmarks) and clearly describe the student's growth and response to instruction.