

Learning Disabilities and Achieving HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION STANDARDS



The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) affirms the goals of the Common Core State Standards, on which many state standards are based, to provide high quality education for all students, including students with learning disabilities (LD). It is important for students with LD to achieve high quality education standards (HQES) and they are capable of doing so. Concerted efforts on the part of educators— supports, strategies, professional development—are required for students with LD to meet rigorous education standards.

HQES articulate rigorous content and require students to use higher-order skills to think more deeply and progress within a more complex and challenging curriculum. In keeping with broader trends in special education, all students, including students with LD, are expected to meet HQES. LD affect about half of all students with disabilities in the United States and make learning academic content and skills difficult and frustrating. Without specialized individualized instruction, students with LD often struggle to meet grade-level standards. These students require support beyond high-quality instruction in general education classrooms (K–12) if they are to make expected academic progress and be career ready. With appropriate supports and individualized instruction, as well as strong collaboration among education professionals, comes a genuine opportunity for students with LD to master HQES and enhance their college and career readiness.

5 CRITICAL AREAS OF ATTENTION:



1. PROVIDE ONGOING HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development that aligns with the emergence of inter-professional models of education and practice is an important component.

Keys to success include:

- administrative support
- universal design for learning
- use of data
- mentoring/coaching
- collaborative process
- roles and responsibilities
- team planning time/opportunities

2. ALIGN CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH LD

Educators need more guidance on how to teach and assess skills in order to prepare students to meet challenging standards.

Keys to success include:

- research-based instruction
- curriculum alignment
- instructional strategies
- schoolwide support

3. USE VALID & APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENTS THAT REVEAL STUDENTS' STRENGTHS, NEEDS, AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

Statewide assessments must be designed and delivered with consideration for the specific needs and strengths of students with LD, including accommodations and modifications reflected on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans.

Keys to success include:

- reflect rigor of HQES
- inform parents
- foundational skills
- determine areas in need of intervention

4. DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE "WHOLE CHILD," IN ORDER TO SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVE HQES

Stakeholders must intentionally and effectively communicate interprofessionally to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the whole child with LD.

Keys to success include:

- characteristics of the student
- self-advocacy
- complexity and depth of demands
- supports and services
- response to instruction
- develop self-esteem
- behavioral success

5. USE TRANSITION PLANNING TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE OR A CAREER

Development in academics, social behaviors, communication strategies, and technical skills can be integrated into the transition process in the form of goals, objectives, and functional performances.

Keys to success include:

- engage the student
- self-determination skills
- technological skills
- individual transition plan
- employment skills
- community services

THE NJCLD ADVOCATES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF HQES FOR ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.

Educators providing instruction and/or intervention to students with LD need a deeper knowledge of learning processes, broader set of instructional strategies, and comprehensive understanding about specific students' learning needs across learning and social environments.

Although research is still in its infancy regarding the implementation of high quality state standards and their impact on student achievement, educators should continue to use emerging findings to fully prepare students to be college and career ready.

