

# Modifying Tier 1 Curriculum for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities



Best Practices for Including Students with Disabilities

Access Points-Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AP-AAAS) provide opportunities for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to have access to the general education curriculum, as defined by Rule 6A-1.09401, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). A student who has a most significant cognitive disability, as defined by Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C., may be eligible for modifications to grade-level content and receive direct academic instruction based on AP-AAAS. In Florida, modifications are defined as “changes in what a student is expected to learn, and may include changes to content, requirements, and expected level of mastery” (Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C.).

A collaboration with:



The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team is responsible for determining the most appropriate standards (i.e., general curriculum or AP-AAAS) a student will be instructed on and where the student will be instructed (i.e., the least restrictive environment). Standards, whether AP-AAAS or general curriculum, are setting-neutral.



Instruction on AP-AAAS can have an affect on future trajectory and student success. Modifications may include changes to content, requirements and expected level of mastery. Changes that modify the requirements of the standard can impact progress of the student and may limit post-secondary opportunities.

**Short-term:** Student's instruction is in less depth, breadth, and complexity than the instruction of other students.

**Long-term:** Student may not meet the requirements for some states' graduation diploma. In Florida, all students who get a diploma, including those who take the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA), receive the same diploma.

**Longer-term:** Student may not pursue or be prepared for some post-secondary opportunities. Florida's longitudinal study data shows students taking the FAA may drop out of school or have a difficult time competing with individuals exposed to more rigorous and complex instruction.

## Steps in Planning for Instruction on AP-AAAS in General Education Settings

**1. Locate standards:** Planning for instruction on AP-AAAS begins with locating the desired state academic standard(s) and corresponding AP-AAAS(s). There are two ways to find the AP-AAAS(s), as shown below:

- CPALMS ([www.cpalms.org](http://www.cpalms.org))

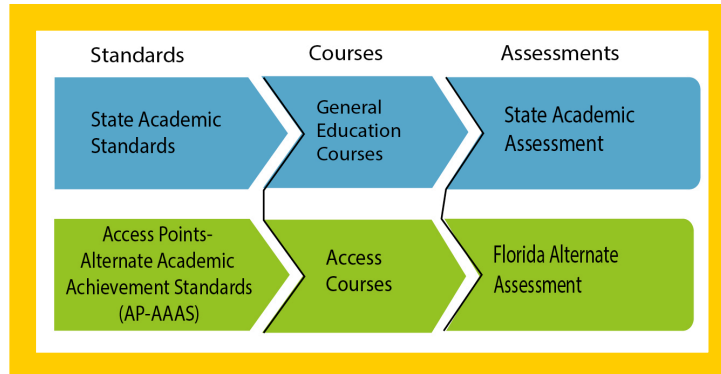


- Access Project website ([www.accesstofls.org](http://www.accesstofls.org))



# Steps in Planning for Instruction on AP-AAAS in General Education Settings

- 2. Collaborate to plan for specially designed instruction (SDI) using an in-class model of support:** General and special educators work together to provide SDI to students with disabilities as stated on their IEP. If the general education teacher is not dually certified, at a minimum there must be a regularly scheduled support facilitator providing in-class support to the student. Consultation (special education teacher support to the general education teacher) is not sufficient.
- 3. Align standards, courses and assessments:** Students instructed on AP-AAAS are enrolled in Access Point courses, and will take the Florida Alternate Assessment.



- 4. Develop a lesson that is optimal for all learners, using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles:**
  - View the UDL guidelines at <https://www.tlc-mtss.com/udl>
  - View a video about the UDL guidelines at <https://youtu.be/U1B6yQXsr0c>
- 5. Identify modifications and/or accommodations:** These are determined by the IEP team, and are documented on the student's IEP. Accommodations and/or modifications may be implemented in any setting.
- 6. Consider the student's mode of communication:**
  - Does the student utilize an augmentative and alternative communication system?
  - Does the student require supports for communication?
  - What form of expressive written communication does the student utilize?
- 7. Identify tools to objectively collect data:** For students who are instructed on AP-AAAS, the IEP team determines how to use grading procedures that reflect the student's level of performance in relation to progress toward preestablished learning criteria. It is essential that all members of the IEP team, including the student and parent(s), have a clear understanding of how the student's progress will be graded in accordance with district guidelines. Once established, grading continuity must be kept in throughout the school year and generalized if applicable, from subject to subject.

Visit the Access Project website for examples of progress monitoring rubrics:  
[https://acesstofls.org/Classroom\\_Resources.html](https://acesstofls.org/Classroom_Resources.html)