

Guidance on Alternate Report Cards

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Alternate Report Cards: Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- ▶ What is required for Alternate Report Cards for students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- ▶ Alternate report cards apply to a very small number of students:
 - ▶ Students who may take the alternate assessment, may learn through alternate academic achievement standards, and are likely working towards a Certificate of Participation instead of a High School Diploma.
- ▶ Due to the large range of students' ability/achievement levels, educational placements, grade-levels, variation in report cards between districts...**an individualized Alternate Report Card may look very different for each student.**

Alternate Report Cards: Federal/Legal Guidance

- ▶ Federal Guidance from [Office of Civil Rights Q&A on Report Cards/Transcripts For Students With Disabilities](#) :
 - ▶ "Under Section 504 and Title II, in general, the LEA must provide students with disabilities report cards that are as informative and effective as the report cards provided for students without disabilities."
 - ▶ It is up to the LEA to determine the standards to be used to measure the student's progress or level of achievement.
 - ▶ Alternate report cards CAN indicate that a student is receiving special education or working on a modified/alternate curriculum, as long as the report card also provides an explanation of the student's progress that is as informative and effective as the explanation provided for students without disabilities.
 - ▶ Transcripts CANNOT have any designation of special education status.
- ▶ [Saddleback Valley USD vs OCR, 1990](#) "For students with severe disabilities, the use of an alternate reporting system must be **at least equivalent to the information and reporting frequency** consistent with section 504."

Alternate Report Cards: Effective Practices

- ▶ Possible effective practices and ideas to ensure an alternate report card is "at least equivalent" in information:
 - ▶ Start with the grade-level report card and standards. Individualize the report card from there.
 - ▶ Look at the student's **grade-level [Core Content Connectors](#)** (alternate academic achievement standards) for ELA/Math/Science, and then modify the content/achievement as it applies to the student.
 - ▶ **Elementary grades:** might list reading/writing/math skills and social skills being worked on in the gen ed classroom. Measurement might be "Emerging/Developed/Mastered" to be consistent with grade-level.
 - ▶ **Middle/High School grades:** might use CCC, with the measurement of "Pass/Fail" because an ABC grade is not accurate for achievement of course requirements.
 - ▶ **Self-contained placements:** might create courses on Infinite Campus such as Life Skills Reading, Life Skills Math, Daily Living Skills. Measurement might be "Pass/Fail".

Alternate Report Cards: IEP Team Considerations

- ▶ IEP Team Considerations:
 - ▶ Caution: Using the quarterly IEP Progress Report as a student's only "report card" may not be considered "at least equivalent" to the report card of grade-level students without disabilities.
 - ▶ Collaborate between special education and general education teachers; combine SPED expertise with content expertise. Document decisions/modifications in the IEP.
 - ▶ Ensure that parents are comfortable with the level of modifications on the alternate report card.
 - ▶ Make sure that parents understand how the alternate report card affects graduation requirements.
 - ▶ If a district's grading software does not allow what is needed for a student's alternate grading/reporting, then the IEP team, SPED teacher, or general education teacher may need to create an alternate report card via Word/Excel to ensure it is individualized to the student per the IEP.

Alternate Report Cards: Resources

- ▶ Districts can find further guidance and legal precedence on alternate report cards at:
 - ▶ US Dept of Education, Office of Civil Rights Q&A on Report Cards/Transcripts For Students With Disabilities:
 - <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-qa-20081017.html>
 - ▶ SPED Connection:
 - <https://www.specialedconnection.com/>
- ▶ Districts can interpret federal guidance and legal precedence with their district attorney.
- ▶ Thank you! Please reach out with questions.
- ▶ Alternate Assessment Specialist:
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