

Supported Independence Curriculum Framework Project

The Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE) has sponsored the development of a model curriculum framework, or guide, for the Supported Independence student population. The Supervisors of Low Incidence Programs (SLIP), a subcommittee of MAASE, pulled together many stakeholders and curricula from various districts across the state to develop a comprehensive framework representing best practices and high standards for students functioning in the Supported Independence range. This work was a continuation of the curriculum framework developed and distributed in 2004 for the Participation (P) student population.

The Supported Independence curriculum guide contains instructions on its use and interpretation, an outline for quickly finding a desired topic, and lists of activities and skills sorted by the Performance Expectations (PEs) outlined in *Addressing Unique Educational Needs of Students with Disabilities (AUEN)*. The framework also contains a new section that includes skills and activities from the general education curriculum that have been adapted for students who have, or function as if they have, this level of cognitive impairment. The new section includes mathematics, English language arts, technology, science, and social studies content. The new section was developed after the SLIP team reached consensus that these concepts should be taught to Supported Independence students, albeit in real life contexts. Quite a few of the ideas in the new section are already represented in the eight PEs in AUEN.

The focus on academic content areas within each PE is related to how the grade level content expectations and benchmarks were extended for MI-Access. Several of the SLIP members participated in the development of MI-Access assessments, and some of the information compiled for the Supported Independence curriculum framework was presented and considered by the MI-Access Assessment Plan Writing Teams (APWTs), the members of which were assembled over the past several months to develop extended expectations and benchmarks for the Participation and Supported Independence populations in English language arts, mathematics, and science. This collaboration is important since consistency in efforts coming from the field, such as the Supported Independence curriculum guide, and efforts coming from the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA), such as alternate assessments, need to align to the greatest extent possible.

The Supported Independence curriculum framework's content and design should prove useful to Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams as they develop short-term goals, annual goals, and performance objectives for their students. This very thorough document is cross-referenced so that teachers can find objectives related to similar content across multiple PEs. Each skill or activity can be customized for an individual student's IEP by adding appropriate qualifiers—such as frequency and duration—to make them measurable.

To obtain more information on the SLIP subcommittee and the development of this document—including how interested parties may participate in the next steps—contact Marcia O'Brien at mobrien@inghamisd.org.