

## Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services  
October 10, 2024

PRESENTED BY

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Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance



### Intended Outcomes

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Identify sources of data in creating a robust Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP).
- Name and describe the types of input and stakeholders necessary in developing a PLAAFP for a student with a disability.
- Describe how to craft a PLAAFP.
- Review and analyze samples PLAAFPs to ensure alignment to requirements.

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### Presentation Outline

1. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources
2. Integrating Family, Student, and Local Education Agency Input
3. Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

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**Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources**

1. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources
2. Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input
3. Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

- Participants will understand the role of different types of data in the development of the PLAAFP.
- Participants will select and analyze appropriate data for different areas of need.

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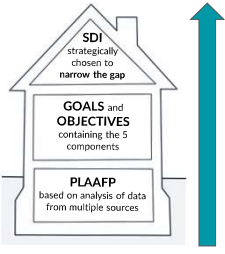
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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

**Building an Effective IEP with Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources**



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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

**What's Included in a PLAAFP?**

- PLAAFPs include:
  - Instructional grade level
  - Reflects student performance in relation to grade level standards and age-appropriate expectations
  - Information on use of skills, strategies, and supports in multiple contexts
  - Objective and reliable
  - Includes multiple sources of data, including discussion of formal and informal data

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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

### Academic Area (Reading, Math, and Writing) PLAAFP Standards for Various Groups

- Students K-21:
  - Singular grade; no multi-grade spans.
  - The current instructional level of performance may also not if the student is performing in the "early, mid, or late" state of a singular grade level, if appropriate. For example, "mid 8<sup>th</sup> grade."
  - Early learning areas of need, such as early literacy and early numeracy, should not be included in an IEP for a student enrolled in kindergarten or above.
- Students participating in the Alternate Framework:
  - Singular grade; no developmental ranges
  - The current instructional level of performance may also not if the student is performing in the "early, mid, or late" state of a singular grade level, if appropriate. For example, "Mid 8<sup>th</sup> grade."
  - Students participating in the Alternate Framework must have at least one grade-aligned goal in reading, writing, and math.
- Preschool and Pre-K students:
  - Developmental ages or ranges.
  - For preschool and pre-k students a developmental age/range is often an appropriate and helpful way to describe present levels and should be used when appropriate.

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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

### Nonacademic Area PLAAFP Standards for Various Groups

- Included but not limited to fine and gross motor, speech and language, social-emotional/behavioral:
  - A grade level is not required, but the PLAAFP must provide a comparison to typical peers (i.e., below same-aged peers).
  - An age of grade equivalency is not expected for a health PLAAFP

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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

### PLAAFP Data

- Provides the foundation for:
  - Identifying student strengths and needs
  - Analyzing progress trends over time
  - Selecting accommodations, supplementary aids, supports, and interventions
  - Setting ambitious, attainable IEP goals and objectives
  - Developing student-centered transition activities

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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

## Types of Data

<p><b>Quantitative</b></p> <p>Numeric data, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard scores</li> <li>Percentiles</li> <li>Grade or age equivalences</li> <li>Percent accuracy</li> <li>Rates (e.g., words read per minute or number of questions asked per hour)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Qualitative</b></p> <p>Descriptive data, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured observations</li> <li>Teacher/Provider input</li> <li>Family/Student input</li> <li>Work samples and artifacts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Both</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Necessary for an effective PLAAFP</li> <li>Critical for academic and functional skills</li> <li>Must be integrated and analyzed</li> </ul>
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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

## Quantitative Data

Sources:

- Individual standardized assessments
- Standardized assessments (e.g., MCAP, Dynamic Learning Systems – Alternate Assessment, benchmarks)
- Screening assessments (e.g., iReady, Dibels, etc.)
- CCR standards
- Curriculum based measures
- Individualized data collection records (e.g., IEP goal progress monitoring data, behavior plan data, secondary transition activities progress monitoring data)

Uses:

- Determine instructional grade level
- Prioritize skills for instructional focus
- Establish baselines for progress monitoring
- Set criteria for goals

Best Practices:

- Combine information from multiple sources
- Interpret standard scores thoughtfully
- Analyze specific skills demonstrated, patterns and types of errors, etc.

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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

## Qualitative Data

Sources:

- Structured observations
- Teacher/Service provider reports
- Family/Student reports
- Work samples and artifacts

Uses:

- Describe HOW the student applies skills
- Reflect effort, compensatory strategies, response to supports
- Identify family/student priorities, concerns, and strategies

Best Practices:

- Provide specific, detailed observations
- Focus on skills and behaviors, not traits
- Gather information in advance

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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

### Putting the Pieces Together

Skill Performance Area	Possible Quantitative Data Sources	Possible Qualitative Data Sources
Performance on grade-level academic skills/standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardized assessments and benchmarks</li> <li>Classroom-based assessments</li> <li>CBM and other probes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work samples</li> <li>Teacher observations</li> <li>Family report</li> </ul>
Mastery of foundational/below grade level skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervention data</li> <li>CBM and other probes</li> <li>IEP progress reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work samples</li> <li>Teacher observations</li> <li>Family report</li> </ul>
Performance on functional skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher/therapist data collection records</li> <li>Criterion-referenced assessments and checklists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher/therapist observations</li> <li>Family report</li> </ul>
Impact of accommodations and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Probes/data records of performance with and without accommodations</li> <li>Implementation data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher/therapist observations</li> <li>Family report</li> <li>Student report</li> </ul>

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Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources 

### Qualitative and Quantitative Data Sources

Considerations for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities:

- Include information on grade-level and instructional level performance from formal and classroom-based assessments
- Recognize the limitations of standardized assessments for students with sensory, motor, and communication disabilities. Supplement with individualized skill measures and qualitative information
- Describe adaptations and supports the presentation of information and the student's method of responding (e.g., eye gaze, verbal vs. written)
- Include qualitative descriptions of use of skills in a variety of contexts

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- Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources
- Integrating Family, Student, and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input
- Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

### Integrating Family, Student, and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input

- Participants will identify the impact of utilizing input from a variety of IEP team members (including special educator, family, the student themselves, as appropriate, and LEA representatives) to develop PLAAFPs which accurately describes all aspects of the student's learning experience.
- Participants will incorporate a variety of input to strengthen PLAAFP narratives.

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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input

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## Importance of Input and an Accurate PLAAFP

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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input

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## Legal Requirements of Including Diverse Input

**"To meet its substantive obligation under IDEA, the IEP team must offer an IEP that is 'a fact-intensive exercise (that) will be informed not only by the expertise of school officials, but also by the input of the child's parents.' *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, 580 U.S. (2017)."**

Excerpt from MSDE DEI/SES Technical Assistance Bulletin #19-01: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (revised November 2019).  
[https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special%20Ed/TAB/19-01\\_Curriculum\\_Instruction\\_and\\_Assessment\\_Final\\_508\\_2022.docx](https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special%20Ed/TAB/19-01_Curriculum_Instruction_and_Assessment_Final_508_2022.docx)

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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input

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## Collaborative IEP Team Input for PLAAFPs

- IEP team members work together, utilizing their knowledge and expertise of grade level standards and essential skills paired with their knowledge and expertise of the student's academic history, learning characteristics, and impact of their disability to identify gaps in skill development and the trajectory of skill acquisition
- Engages all participants in the collaborative decision-making process
- Ensures data collected from variety of sources
- Provides information which cannot be obtained from traditional standardized assessments
- Fosters positive, ongoing relationships with families
- Ensures skills targeted are important to all IEP participants
- Ensures all participants understand the process of IEP development, implementation, and evaluation
- Ensures IEP is reasonably calculated and legally compliant

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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input 

## Parent and Student Input Contributions

<p><b>Parent/Family</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family's priorities for learning and future goals for the student.</li> <li>Family's insights and concerns about student's skill development, learning progression, and progress.</li> <li>Impact of cultural, racial, or ethnic differences on collaboration, identification of instructional priorities, and other factors related to student's education.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student's priorities for learning and future goals.</li> <li>Student's individual strengths and interests.</li> <li>Student's experiences with accommodations and supplementary aids and services.</li> </ul>
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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input 

## Additional Participant Input

**Related Service Providers**

- Knowledge of student's individual skill development related to behavior, communication, gross motor, fine motor, sensory, or other specific areas
- Knowledge of gap between same-age peers and individual student
- Knowledge of strategies to address skill gaps

**Transition Teachers or Other Transition Support Personnel**

- Knowledge of the student's strengths and needs in relation to working towards post-secondary goals
- Knowledge of student's and family's future goals, and steps/skills needed to reach them

**Administrators**

- Knowledge related to curriculum
- Knowledge of resources available at the student's school

**Additional External Participants Working with the Student (tutors, outside service providers, etc.)**

- Additional data collected in supplemental instruction outside of school day
- Historical knowledge of student
- Knowledge of how the student performs skills in a different environment

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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input 

## Strategies for Gathering Input

- Interviews with specific questions:
  - May have specific questions related to priorities, concerns, or other factors
  - May be adapted for students with disabilities to respond (read-to-text, answer choices, include picture cues, etc.)
  - Conducted by phone, in-person, or through a virtual meetings
- Surveys
  - Can be electronic or paper-based
- Documentation of ongoing conversations/communication log notes
- Information from family conferences or periodic IEP meetings
- Summaries of data analysis conversations with team
- Collaborative planning session notes

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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input 

### Tips for Eliciting and Including IEP Team Member Input

- Establish a protocol and timeline for engaging stakeholders, including school-based personnel working with the student and families, to elicit input as part of the IEP development.
  - Who will be responsible for reaching out and gathering information?
  - How will information be gathered?
  - Consider the need for flexibility in scheduling meetings or conversations to gather this information.
- Ensure LEA representatives, related service providers, and other personnel understand their collaborative role in IEP development, including the collection and analysis of data to be included in the PLAAFP.
- Provide support and preparation for students to actively engage in the IEP process, including providing meaningful input for PLAAFP development.
  - Recognize student may need preparation related to purpose of the meeting.
  - Integrate strategies (communication, calming, engagement, etc.) to enable the student to participate in the meeting.
- Consider providing the family/family with resources prior to the IEP annual review to prepare for their participation and to provide input.

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Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input 

### Considerations for Eliciting Input for Students with Communication Challenges and/or Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- Input from the student should be incorporated whenever and however possible.
- Use the student's accommodations and program modifications to adapt traditional input strategies:
  - Providing choice
  - Structuring a yes/no questions
  - Ranking preference
  - Utilize familiar assistive technology
- Incorporate other informal and formal data sources for input, such as classroom activities/assignments:
  - Activities identifying preferences and interests
  - Goal writing activities
- Collaborate with other team members to structure and adapt traditional methods (special educators, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapist, transition teachers, LEA representatives, etc.)

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- Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources
- Integrating Family, Student and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input
- Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance**

### Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

- Participants will be able to describe the major sections of the Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance and the impact of each in creating a holistic and well-rounded description of the student to inform instructional decision-making.

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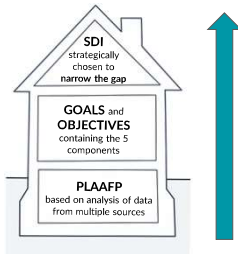
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Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance 

## Building an Effective IEP



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Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance 

## Parental Input

- The parental input section describes the parents concerns and priorities for their child's education, including immediate and long-term goals.
- This information can be gathered through conversations, interviews, surveys, etc.
- This needs to occur in advance of the meeting as well as discussed at the IEP team table.

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Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance 

## Students Strengths, Interests, Personal Attributes, and Accomplishments

May include:

- Areas of strength of the student
- A strength as compared to others
- An area of motivation or interest
- Personal attributes
- Personal accomplishments
- Interests currently and for post-secondary goals



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Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance 

## Drafting Strengths and Interest Statement Considerations

For students with significant cognitive disabilities, it's the same process!

- For all students, including students with a significant cognitive disability, strengths and interests should be considered across a variety of areas to motivate and engage the student and allow greater access to the curriculum.
- For a student with a significant cognitive disability, consider whether the student has a consistent and reliable means of communication that is used across various school settings and at home.
- Many students with a significant cognitive disability may not be at the same developmental level as their peers. As a result, they may have interests aligned more closely to those of a younger child.
- Be flexible and individualize statements to highlight information which will be impactful on the development of specially designed instruction to support the student.

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Preschool and School-Age Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance 

## Engagement Activity

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Wrap-Up 

## Contact Information

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Wrap-Up 

### Session Evaluation

Evaluation #2: Writing High Quality Present Levels



Please scan the QR code to complete the evaluation for today's session.

Specialty Designed Instruction and High-Leverage Practices 09.26.2024 31

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## **Most Significant Cognitive Disability Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Case Study**

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### **IMPORTANT NOTE**

Students who are identified as having a most significant cognitive disability face the most profound and complex learning challenges and require the most intensive supports. These challenges are pervasive and affect learning across ALL content areas, as well as independent functioning, community living, leisure, and vocational activities. They require SDI to address ALL areas of need. Please note, for the purposes of this document, this example will only focus on ONE area (Reading Comprehension) for a 7th grade student with a most significant cognitive disability.

### **Meet Alex**

Alex is a seventh-grade student with a most significant cognitive disability who participates in the Alternate Framework (assessment and instruction aligned to the Alternate Academic Achievement Standards).

### **Background Information**

Alex was determined eligible for special education services in second grade under the disability category of Autism. At her most recent reevaluation in 6th grade, the IEP team determined Alex continues to qualify for special education services in the areas of reading, math, writing, communication, social interaction skills, and social emotional behavior. Alex communicates primarily with 3–4-word phrases, and she uses an Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) device to communicate basic needs, make choices, and express her preferences. She requires ongoing support to expand her communication skills, specifically in initiating conversations, responding to open-ended questions, building more complex sentences, and independently utilizing her device in varied contexts and settings. Alex is able to perform basic daily living skills with some support such as dressing, grooming, managing personal hygiene, and following a visual schedule to complete and transition between familiar home and school routines. She requires significant supports in more complex daily living tasks, such as managing her time, organizing her belongings, and following multi-step directions. Alex requires support in developing self-management skills such as managing her emotions and behavior when she is feeling overwhelmed or frustrated. She benefits from clear expectations, consistent routines, and the availability of sensory supports, frequent breaks, and calming strategies.

Alex's specially designed instruction based on the Alternate Framework reflects content from the grade level standards at a reduced breadth, depth, and level of complexity. In her English class, she currently uses modified reading materials that allow her to access the central concepts of the text and the skills emphasized in the grade-level Essential Elements aligned to grade level standards, such as an adapted version of the class text with simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, accompanied by pictures to support her comprehension. She is assessed using multiple choice questions presented orally with picture options while other students take a written test requiring short answer and essay questions. With adult support, Alex utilizes her AAC device to participate in small and large group discussions, as well as engage in social interactions with the peers in her class.

### Most Recent Assessment Data (from 6<sup>th</sup> grade)

Diagnostic Educational Assessment Scores		
Composite	Score	Description
Reading Comprehension	44	Very Low Range
Reading Phonics	48	Very Low Range
Math Calculation	49	Very Low Range
Math Problem Solving	<40	Very Low Range
Written Expression	42	Very Low Range

Cognitive Assessment Scores		
Composite	Score	Description
Working Memory	<40	Extremely Low Range
Fluid Reasoning	40	Extremely Low Range
Processing Speed	43	Extremely Low Range
Verbal Comprehension	54	Extremely Low Range
Visual Spatial	50	Extremely Low Range

Adaptive Assessment Scores				
Composite	Teacher Score	Description	Parent Score	Description
General Adaptive Composite	53	Extremely Low Range	60	Low Range
Conceptual	55	Extremely Low Range	62	Low Range
Social	56	Extremely Low Range	57	Extremely Low Range
Practical	60	Low Range	62	Low Range

**Impact Statement**

Alex’s diagnosis of Autism impacts her ability to engage with grade level content independently as well as the pace at which she acquires and retains new information. Her most recent cognitive and adaptive assessments indicate that her cognitive and adaptive functioning fall within the extremely low range when compared to her same-aged peers, affecting her academic performance in the areas of reading phonics and comprehension, math calculation and problem solving, writing, communication, social emotional behavior, and social interaction. The nature and severity of Alex’s disability further impacts her ability to communicate her wants and needs, navigate social situations, engage in self-regulation, and process sensory input. Alex utilizes an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device to support her expressive and receptive communication needs. She requires extensive, direct, individualized, and repeated instruction with substantial supports to access and make measurable progress in grade level curriculum aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards and to support direct instruction in independent and functional learning activities.

**Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP): Reading Comprehension**

Source(s): Universal screening assessments, IEP goal progress, and classroom observation

Level of Performance: 2nd grade

Summary of Assessment Findings:

Universal Screener Trend Data		
Year Administered	Skill Area	Grade Level Equivalent
4th Grade End of Year	Vocabulary	Kindergarten Level
	Comprehension: Literature	Kindergarten Level
	Comprehension: Informational Text	Kindergarten Level
5th Grade End of Year	Vocabulary	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Level
	Comprehension: Literature	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Level
	Comprehension: Informational Text	Kindergarten Level
6th Grade End of Year	Vocabulary	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Level
	Comprehension: Literature	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Level
	Comprehension: Informational Text	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Level
Current Year (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade-Winter)	Vocabulary	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Level (End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade)
	Comprehension: Literature	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Level (End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade)
	Comprehension: Informational Text	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Level (End of 1 <sup>st</sup> grade)

Alex’s most recent Universal Screening Assessment data reveals varying levels of performance across different reading domains, including Vocabulary, Comprehension of Literature, and Comprehension of Informational Text.

Alex demonstrated strengths in the areas of identifying story elements such as character actions and simple cause and effect relationships and identifying familiar vocabulary words found frequently in text. She demonstrated challenges with advanced, less common vocabulary words, comprehending informational text, particularly identifying key details and the main idea, navigating the structure of informational texts, and making inferences. Assessment results indicate that while Alex demonstrated strengths in some areas, overall, she is performing at the 2nd grade level in the area of reading comprehension.

Based on classroom observations, Alex has demonstrated improvement in her reading comprehension skills, particularly in her ability to identify key details in a text when provided with visual supports. She enjoys listening to stories and appears to be the most engaged when they are paired with visuals. She often spontaneously comments on what she sees in the visuals using short 2–3-word verbal phrases or her Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device. Alex shows a consistent willingness to learn and engage in classroom activities, and she responds well to positive reinforcement and encouragement. While Alex has demonstrated

progress in her reading comprehension skills, particularly with responding to “wh” questions regarding explicit details of a text, she continues to perform significantly below grade level with ongoing challenges in independently reading and comprehending grade-level texts, identifying main ideas, inferencing, and summarizing texts without the use of significant supports.

Alex’s ELA teacher reports that Alex is attentive and engaged during class read alouds and discussions, especially when texts are adapted and paired with visual aids. However, she struggles with independent reading assignments and often requires one-on-one support to complete comprehension tasks. She benefits from small group instruction, modeling, and graphic organizers to help her organize her thoughts. While Alex currently requires adult support to engage with peers using her AAC device, she appears to enjoy being placed in small groups for discussions and projects.

Alex’s case manager reports that Alex has shown progress in identifying key details from a text when given visual choices, but she continues to need significant support with identifying the main idea or drawing inferences. Alex also demonstrates difficulty with retaining new vocabulary words and applying them in different contexts, which directly influences her performance in comprehending both literary and informational texts. She benefits from explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, pre-teaching vocabulary words, visual supports, chunking text into smaller sections, and responds well to structured and predictable learning activities. With support from adults, Alex also utilizes a “break” card to indicate when she is feeling overwhelmed and needs to go to a designated calming area in the classroom to engage in previously taught calming strategies.

Alex’s parents report that they have noticed improvements in her ability to discuss simple stories and texts read at home, especially those that are familiar and related to her interests. They have concerns about her continued struggle with more complex reading materials and have observed that she becomes frustrated when she cannot understand or complete reading assignments independently. They would like to see her become more confident and gain more independence in reading.

**Previous IEP Goal:** By March 2024, given a modified grade-level text read aloud and access to her AAC device, Alex will use visuals and/or text to identify the main idea and explicit key details of the text with 80% accuracy or greater on 4 out of 5 trials as measured by classroom-based assessments.



**Previous IEP Goal Progress:** Alex did not achieve this goal. While she consistently demonstrates the ability to identify key details in the text when provided with “wh” questions and at least 3 answer choices, she continues to require prompting to identify the main idea. Alex has achieved 80% accuracy on 3 out of 5 classroom-based assessments. Continued support is needed to reach the full goal.

Does this area impact the student’s academic achievement and/or functional performance? YES

## Skill Expectations

### Reading Comprehension

Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade are expected to:

- **Analyze text structure**
  - Understand how the structure of a text (e.g., cause/effect, problem/solution) contributes to its meaning
- **Identify themes**
  - Determine the central theme or main idea of a text and analyze how it is developed through details, character actions, and plot events
- **Cite textual evidence**
  - Support analysis and inferences about a text by citing specific evidence from the text
- **Make inferences**
  - Draw conclusions based on implicit information and details provided in the text
- **Compare and contrast texts**
  - Analyze similarities and differences between characters, settings, themes, or perspectives in different texts
- **Understand figurative language**
  - Interpret the meaning figurative language (e.g., metaphors, similes) and its impact on the text
- **Evaluate arguments and claims**
  - Identify and evaluate arguments and claims in non-fiction texts, including assessing the relevance and sufficiency of evidence

### Priority Skills

Using their collective expertise and knowledge, the team determined that Alex’s upcoming IEP will focus on the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Element that aligns with the 7th grade Maryland College and Career Readiness (MCCR)

Reading Literature standard requiring students to determine the theme or central idea of the text, analyze its development over the course of the text, and provide an objective summary. The Essential Element aligned to this grade level content standard requires students to identify the events in a text that are related to the theme or central idea. Alex’s Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) indicate that while she can respond to simple “wh” questions to identify explicit details in a text, she has difficulty identifying the main idea or central theme, making inferences, and connecting details within the text. The team prioritized this specific standard in order to build upon Alex’s previous progress and continue to narrow the gap in her reading comprehension skills, which will support her in fostering independence and increasing self-confidence when accessing grade level content across all academic areas.

Skill Focus	Grade-Level Standard	DLM Essential Element	Skill/Behavior
Reading Comprehension	ELA- Reading (Literature)- RL.7.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.	ELA.EE.RL.7.2- Identify events in a text that are related to the theme or central idea.	Identify the main idea of a text and events or details that support it.

**Goals and Objectives**

After the team prioritized skills, they developed a goal aligned to the grade level standard of focus. Each goal and objective they developed includes conditions, behavior, criteria (mastery and retention), method of measurement, and time frame

**Reading Comprehension Goal and Objectives**

**Goal:** By March 2025, given access to her AAC device, modeling, and a modified grade level text read aloud, Alex will identify the main idea of the text and at least two supporting details on 4 out of 5 trials as measured by classroom-based assessments.

**Objective 1:** By March 2025, given access to her AAC device, modeling, fading adult support, and a modified grade level paragraph read aloud, Alex will correctly choose the main idea of the paragraph from a field of at least three answer choices on 4 out of 5 trials as measured by classroom-based assessments.

**Objective 2:** By March 2025, given access to her AAC device, modeling, fading adult support, a graphic organizer, and pre-selected details from a familiar text, Alex will

correctly sort which details support the main idea of the text on 4 out of 5 trials as measured by classroom-based assessments.

**Objective 3:** By March 2025, given access to her AAC device, modeling, fading adult support, and a modified grade level paragraph read aloud, Alex will highlight or underline at least 2 key words or phrases related to the main idea of the paragraph on 4 out of 5 trials as measured by classroom-based assessments.

**Objective 4:** By March 2025, given access to her AAC device, fading adult support, and a modified grade level text read aloud, Alex will identify the main idea of the text and at least one supporting detail on 4 out of 5 trials as measured by classroom-based assessments.

## Specially Designed Instruction

### Instruction and Intervention

Alex receives core reading instruction in her English class with the delivery of SDI from her special education teacher and the support of a paraeducator daily. During daily instruction, Alex receives warm-ups that focus on activating prior knowledge of a component of the lesson that day, reviewing previously taught vocabulary words related to that day's lesson, or a warm-up that focuses specifically on her IEP goals and objectives. Alex also receives intensive reading intervention daily to target her skill deficits in the areas of reading, writing, and vocabulary skills. During small group time, Alex receives explicit instruction from her special education teacher, which includes repeated practice and immediate feedback, as well as pre-teaching and re-teaching key concepts. She participates in large group activities or discussions with the support of her AAC device and a paraeducator, who facilitates intentional opportunities to engage with peers. At the close of the lesson, she participates in a modified version of the exit ticket, which includes visuals, simplified language, and allows for multiple modes of responding, including the use of her AAC device. Alex utilizes a visual schedule that she reviews with the paraeducator at the beginning of class and checks after each activity, so she is aware of what is coming next and what is expected of her. Frequent, short breaks are built into the schedule to help her remain focused and engaged. Alex's AAC device is consistently integrated throughout the lesson, allowing her to participate by expressing her understanding of concepts, asking questions, and interacting with her peers. The special education teacher and paraeducator work with Alex to increase her independence with using her device by modeling, giving verbal or gestural cues, providing wait time for responses, and positive reinforcement and encouragement, with the intent to gradually fade these supports as Alex becomes more independent.

The special educator and paraeducator meet weekly to collaboratively plan for the delivery of Alex's specially designed instruction. They discuss the lesson objectives, which materials need to be adapted or modified, relevant vocabulary words to be pre-programmed into the AAC device, how supports will be integrated throughout the lesson, and opportunities within the lesson to capitalize on peer engagement. They also discuss Alex's progress, any adjustments that need to be made, and review data to ensure that SDI is being implemented with fidelity. Bi-weekly, the Speech and Language Pathologist and the Occupational Therapist will join the collaborative meeting to provide support on the implementation of Alex's AAC device as well as provide input on strategies for meeting Alex's sensory needs to optimize engagement and self-regulation. Additionally, brief daily check-ins may occur before

and after each lesson to discuss necessary adjustments or evaluate and reflect on Alex's progress.

### **Accommodations**

- Text to Speech/Human Reader- Alex requires text to be read aloud, especially when material is above her independent reading level. This support will provide her access to complex grade level content.
- Human Scribe- Alex requires access to a human scribe in order to assist her with expressing her ideas and answers during writing activities. This can involve transcribing Alex's verbal or AAC device responses into written form.
- Frequent breaks- Alex requires regular, scheduled breaks during instructional periods in order to maintain focus and engagement in classroom activities and promote self-regulation.
- Extended time- Alex requires extended time to complete tasks and assessments to accommodate her processing speed and to allow for the use of her AAC device.

### **Supplementary Aids and Services**

- Visual schedule- Alex will be provided with a visual schedule in order to help her understand and anticipate the structure of the class period. Staff will direct Alex to check her schedule as each activity is completed, so she knows what to expect next.
- Clear, direct instructions- Alex will be provided with clear, concise, and direct instructions to support her understanding of task expectations.
- Repeat directions and check for understanding- Alex requires directions to be repeated and clarified as needed, to ensure she comprehends material.
- Adult support- Alex requires adult support in order to manage transitions, remain on task, facilitate scheduled breaks, break down tasks into manageable steps, offer prompts when needed, reinforce the use of her AAC device, and facilitate peer interaction.
- Use of AAC device- Alex requires consistent access to her AAC device throughout her school day in order to support her communication needs. She requires ongoing training, modeling, and support to ensure she is using it as independently as possible to express her wants, needs, and ideas.

- Modified content aligned to alternate standards- Alex requires text, materials, assignments, and assessments that are aligned to the alternate achievement standards and modified to include simplified language, reduced length and complexity, and visual aides.
- Alternate response formats- Alex requires alternate response formats in order to demonstrate her understanding of content. This can include but is not limited to, verbal responses, using her AAC device, and offering alternative formats such as multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank options with word banks, sorting or matching activities, etc.
- Explicit instruction- Alex benefits from explicit instruction in key academic and functional skills. This includes direct teaching of reading comprehension strategies and clear step-by-step directions that are explicitly taught and modeled, and frequent checks for understanding.
- Graphic organizers and visual aides- Alex requires visual aides throughout instruction to support comprehension, as well as visual graphic organizers to help her organize information and ideas.
- Small group instruction- Alex requires instruction in small group settings when learning new concepts or receiving interventions in order to access more individualized attention and support, as well as to reduce distractions and assist Alex with maintaining focus during lessons.
- Flexible seating- Alex will be provided with flexible seating options as necessary in order to accommodate her sensory needs and promote focus and engagement.
- Access to sensory materials- Alex will be provided with access to a menu of sensory materials in order to accommodate her sensory needs, promote self-regulation, and promote focus and attention.
- Structured peer interactions- Alex requires support in facilitation of structured peer interactions during instruction to encourage social communication, using her AAC device as needed.

### **Support to Personnel**

- English Language Arts Teacher- Alex's ELA teacher will be provided with training from the case manager on each of Alex's supplementary aids, services, and accommodations. Progress on Alex's IEP goals and objectives are shared by the

case manager and reviewed regularly by the team at their collaboration meetings so they can adjust instruction as necessary in order to accelerate progress on Alex's goals and objectives, as well as in the grade level curriculum. Alex's speech and language pathologist and occupational therapist also provide training and support on embedding the use of Alex's AAC device and sensory supports throughout instruction.

- Paraeducator: Paraeducators who interact with Alex also receive training from the case manager on each of Alex's supplementary aids, services, and modifications, utilizing Alex's AAC device, and providing sensory supports to enhance self-regulation and promote attention. They will additionally receive training from the special education teacher on how to monitor progress on Alex's goals and objectives, and prompt fading in order to promote independence during instruction and social interactions. The paraeducator assigned to Alex's English class will attend weekly collaborative planning sessions in order to participate in discussions related to Alex progress and any adjustments that need to be made to instruction.