What the New Standards and Assessments Mean for Students with Disabilities

The state’s new academic standards and assessments will help ensure that all students are better prepared for college and career, including students with disabilities.

Because the new state standards include fewer topics at each grade level that students will be expected to understand more fully, students will have more time to move through the material and develop conceptual understanding. This will be especially helpful for students who struggle to process information.

Along with the new standards come new assessments, which will start for all students this spring. Most students with IEPs will take the same assessments as their peers, but those with significant cognitive disabilities may take an alternate assessment.

The new assessments use new technology that will adjust the difficulty of questions throughout the test, depending on how the student is performing. They will also include, as needed, various universal tools, supports and accommodations. This technology provides students an opportunity to show what they know and can do. It will help to provide more accurate and useful reports for parents and teachers.

Although the standards and assessments will bring some big changes for students with disabilities, there will also be much that remains familiar.

Individualized Education Programs, or IEPs, are one point of stability. They require teachers and parents of students with disabilities—and often students themselves—to meet regularly to discuss information and support as well as agreeing on specific, clear educational goals for the student.

Academic goals in an IEP must be aligned to grade-level standards. This ensures that students with disabilities have access to grade-level curriculum.

For more information about the assessments, visit www.sbcusd.com or the California Department of Education’s [CAASPP website](http://www.californiatac.org/).