



## Guidance

# Measurable Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives— Substantive Compliance

**Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education  
October 2019**

This document serves as a supplement to the original procedural-based Measurable Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives document, dated August 2019. It is advised to distinguish the procedural requirement from the substantive issue of educational benefit.

The following language is specific to measurable goals and short-term objectives. This information applies to determining substantive compliance for the purposes of educational benefit.

## Educational Benefit

Each student with a disability as defined in 34 CFR § 300.8 is entitled to an individualized education program (IEP) designed to convey educational benefit to the student. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and the *Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education* (MARSE) require as one component of the IEP, measurable annual goals and short-term objectives. The OSEP Dear Colleague letter from November 2015 states, “IEP goals must be aligned with grade-level content standards for all children with disabilities.”

More information regarding determining measurability is provided in the procedural measurable goal and short-term objective document titled [Measurable Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives](#).

To provide educational benefit, the IDEA and the MARSE require goals and short-term objectives designed to:

- A. Meet the student's needs resulting from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and
- B. Meet each of the student's other educational needs resulting from the student's disability. *34 CFR § 300.320(a)(2)*

### **Components of the IEP to Be Reviewed for Substantive Compliance**

- A. Areas of need; *34 CFR § 300.324(a)(1)(iv)*
- B. Current level of performance; *34 CFR § 300.320(a)(1)*
- C. Alignment of needs, current level, and goals; and *34 CFR § 300.324*
- D. Progress reports. *34 CFR § 300.320(a)(3)*

### **Description**

- A. Areas of need—The academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student. Skills or behaviors that are a result of the student's disability which require specially designed instruction. *34 CFR § 300.324(a)(1)(iv)*
- B. Current level of performance—For each identified area of need, data, either quantitative or qualitative, are provided which give information regarding the student's present level of academic achievement or functional performance. *34 CFR § 300.320(a)(1)*
- C. Alignment of needs/current levels/goals—For every area of need identified in the IEP, there is a reasonably calculated goal or service. *34 CFR § 300.324*
- D. Progress Reports—Periodic reports on the progress the student is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as, through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards). *34 CFR § 300.320(a)(3)*

This information may be found in the goal itself or in other areas throughout the IEP.

**Important Note:** The IDEA does not establish a specific number of goals to be included in an IEP as this may contradict the premise which requires an IEP to be individualized. However, each area of need must be clearly defined in a student's IEP and addressed

either in goals and short-term objectives, supplementary aids and services, related services and programs, and/or transition services.

**Goals for Transitional Age Students:** Measurable annual goals included in an IEP for a transition-aged student must meet all the above compliance requirements. At least one measurable goal must relate to the student's transition services needs.