

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**Consent Agenda**  
**July 18, 2019**

**OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

- B. Approval to establish the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Health, Career Readiness, and Life Skills Development  
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments)

**Executive Summary**

The Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (MS-AAAS) for students with significant cognitive disabilities are aligned with the Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards (MS-CCRS) for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Health. The MS-AAAS are developed to provide students with significant cognitive disabilities the skills, education, and experiences that prepare them for opportunities beyond high school. The Life Skills Development standards are developed to provide students with significant cognitive disabilities the skills they need to function as independently as possible in their homes and communities.

These expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities will provide the basis for lesson plan development, instructional delivery, and assessment development and revisions which must occur in 2019-2020.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

**APA Comment Summary on Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (MS AAAS) for (1) Alternate ELA, (2) Alternate Math, (3) Alternate Science Elements II, (4) Alternate Health Elements, (5) Career Readiness I & II, and (6) Life Skills Development I & II**

The Office of Special Education received the following APA comments about the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards for (1) Alternate ELA, (2) Alternate Math, (3) Alternate Science Elements II, (4) Alternate Health Elements, (5) Career Readiness I & II, and (6) Life Skills Development I & II. Clarification will also be provided in extensive training sessions throughout the 2019-2020 school term.

Summary of Comment	MDE Response
<p>The phrase "with guidance and support" is included with several standards. It is our hope that MDE will provide some direction on what this phrase "looks like" for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.</p>	<p>A summary explanation of this phrase is being added to the front matter of each standards document.</p>
<p>It is our hope that the MDE will offer professional development on a wide variety of teaching strategies related to these new standards in order to help teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. A deeper understanding of the individual standards, like what has been done for CCRS, is not what is of greatest need for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Per the document, the focus of AAAS is more about the breadth rather than depth. Instead, we recommend that training focus on coherence of standards (not just alignment to the grade-level CCRS) within and across grade levels.</p>	<p>The MDE will design training that assists teachers with cross-curricular standards instruction to promote a comprehensive understanding of the MS-AAAS standards.</p>
<p>Resource lists of activities, books, and a variety of obtainable materials, though referenced throughout the document, are not included for each Alternate Achievement area. Have these been created? If not, when will they be completed?</p>	<p>No Change Recommended. A Teacher Resource Guide (TRG) for (1) Alternate ELA, (2) Alternate Math, (3) Alternate Science Elements II, (4) Alternate Health Elements, (5) Career Readiness I &amp; II, and (6) Life Skills Development I &amp; II will be developed using stakeholder input and feedback once the MS-AAAS for these courses have been approved. The Teacher Resource guide will address prior knowledge and scaffold the performance objectives through a matrix of most complex to least complex.</p>

**APA Comment Summary on Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (MS AAAS) for (1) Alternate ELA, (2) Alternate Math, (3) Alternate Science Elements II, (4) Alternate Health Elements, (5) Career Readiness I & II, and (6) Life Skills Development I & II**

Summary of Comment	MDE Response
<p>In ELA, if a CCRS does not have a corresponding alternate standard, a corresponding alternate code is listed and "Not applicable" is listed beside the non-existent alternate standard code. In Math, the non-existent code is absent and in its place is written "Not applicable. Addressed in [corresponding alternate standard(s)]." Our preference is the way this was addressed in the alternate standards for Mathematics. This helps our teachers know where to look for the corresponding alternate standard, improving coherence in mathematics.</p>	<p>The ELA and Math Alternate Standards documents were modeled after the Dynamic Learning Maps. The MDE will provide an explanation in the front matter of each standards document to indicate what "not applicable" means.</p>
<p>It is unclear why, in Alternate Science Elements II, the standard L.K. IB and corresponding alternate standards are listed under HAP.5 (Muscular System). Nowhere else in these standards does this happen. Was it an accident?</p>	<p>This editorial correction will be made to the document.</p>
<p>In general, we would have preferred a more similar presentation of standards across content areas. We understand the need to link to the grade-level standard, but why did we change the format of the standards in different content areas as well as the standard coding, moving to letters from numbers in previous content areas (i.e. using "1.a" rather than "1.1")?</p>	<p>No change recommended. Each Alternate Standards document was modeled after the corresponding General Education curriculum counterpart. Efforts will be made in the future to develop a template for the Alternate Standards documents to be utilized across all content areas during subsequent revisions.</p>

**APA Comment Summary on Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (MS AAAS) for (1) Alternate ELA, (2) Alternate Math, (3) Alternate Science Elements II, (4) Alternate Health Elements, (5) Career Readiness I & II, and (6) Life Skills Development I & II**

June 17, 2019

Mr. Bobby Richardson  
Mississippi Department of Education Office of Special Education  
359 North West Street  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771  
alterenatestandardscomments@mdek12 .org

Dear Mr. Richardson,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed standards for our students with significant cognitive disabilities. The Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (MS AAAS) for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Alternate Science Elements II, Alternate Health Elements, Career Readiness I-II, and Life Skills Development I-II will be very beneficial to our classroom teachers. Two of our staff members were given the opportunity to go to Jackson for working sessions where they were allowed to give feedback on all areas of the standards. It comforts us to know that there was so much thought and effort put into the development of the standards, from the classroom teacher to the university level. It is also encouraging to know these standards are aligned with the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards (MS CCRS).

As our Special Services Department reviewed these new alternate standards from a curriculum perspective, we realized how important it is for our teachers to have tools such as this to guide their instruction. The standards are written to support student success in all content areas, focusing on a broad range of skills and applications. Teachers will be able to use it as a basis for curriculum development, but we believe that further development is necessary. Teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities is quite different from teaching students in a general education classroom. It is our hope MDE will offer a variety of professional development opportunities to support our novice teachers as well as our teachers who have been in the classroom for several years.

Thank you for your consideration for each of the concerns listed on the following page, and thank you again for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,  
Robert L. French

**APA Comment Summary on Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (MS AAAS) for (1) Alternate ELA, (2) Alternate Math, (3) Alternate Science Elements II, (4) Alternate Health Elements, (5) Career Readiness I & II, and (6) Life Skills Development I & II**

**Public Comments from the Past Christian School District**

1. The phrase "with guidance and support" is included with several standards. It is our hope that MDE will provide some direction on what this phrase "looks like" for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.
2. It is our hope that the MDE will offer professional development on a wide variety of teaching strategies related to these new standards in order to help teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. A deeper understanding of the individual standards, like what has been done for CCRS, is not what is of greatest need for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Per the document, the focus of AAAS is more about the breadth rather than depth. Instead, we recommend that training focus on coherence of standards (not just alignment to the grade-level CCRS) within and across grade levels.
3. Resource lists of activities, books, and a variety of obtainable materials, though referenced throughout the document, are not included for each Alternate Achievement area. Have these been created? If not, when will they be completed?
4. In ELA, if a CCRS does not have a corresponding alternate standard, a corresponding alternate code is listed and "Not applicable" is listed beside the non-existent alternate standard code. In Math, the non-existent code is absent and in its place is written "Not applicable. Addressed in [ corresponding alternate standard(s)]." Our preference is the way this was addressed in the alternate standards for Mathematics. This helps our teachers know where to look for the corresponding alternate standard, improving coherence in mathematics.
5. It is unclear why, in Alternate Science Elements II, the standard L.K. IB and corresponding alternate standards are listed under HAP.5 (Muscular System). Nowhere else in these standards does this happen. Was it an accident?
6. In general, we would have preferred a more similar presentation of standards across content areas. We understand the need to link to the grade-level standard, but why did we change the format of the standards in different content areas as well as the standard coding, moving to letters from numbers in previous content areas (i.e. using "1.a" rather than "1.1")?

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From: Michelle McKenzie <mmckenzie@stoneschools.org>

Date: Monday, June 17, 2019 at 10:00 AM

To: SPED alternate standards comments <alternatestandardscomments@mdek12.org>

Subject: APA Draft Standards for Mississippi Alternate Diploma

I want to let you know that I like each and every standard drafted in the entire packet. I am most especially impressed with Life Skills and Health, as well as Career Prep because I believe self advocacy is most important for our students.

I was pleased to see that component in the Health standards, and that goal setting was covered. So many of my students have no idea how to set goals for themselves or even that they need to set goals.

Thank you for all the hard work that went into these standards. I eagerly await their approval, but most importantly, I eagerly await the Teacher Resource Guides that I pray will eventually accompany them.

Again, thanks!

Michelle McKenzie

Michelle McKenzie

Stone High School

Special Education Teacher / SCD

601.928.5492

Extension 2035

[mmckenzie@stoneschools.org](mailto:mmckenzie@stoneschools.org)

The back-up materials for Tab B are large documents. A copy of each Standard is on the side table for your review.