



MYTH #7:

Cognitive assessments (or a minimum IQ score) are necessary for academic goals and instruction.

FACT:

All students are general education students. All students receive academic instruction.

The Truth Is...

- IEP goals and service areas—including academic, adaptive, social, and functional skills—should be aligned to grade-level learning standards and reflect student needs. They should not be determined by a single test score or measure.
- Students with significant cognitive disabilities should have access and exposure to age-appropriate, grade-level content in addition to instruction that meets their functional and adaptive needs.
- Online IEP systems used by districts should offer case managers flexibility to individualize service areas. For example, IEP service areas should not have "locked" categories that only map back to the evaluation.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE FACTS:

- Federal education laws require that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities receive instruction in the same grade-level content as all other students, although the achievement expected on grade-level content can be reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity.
- [OSERS Policy Guidance on Free Appropriate Public Education \(FAPE\)](#)
- OSPI assessment resources: [Guidance for IEP Teams: Student Participation in Statewide Assessments](#); [WA-AIM Access Point Frameworks](#)
- TIES Center Brief #4: [Providing Meaningful General Education Curriculum Access to Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#)
- TIES Center Resource: [Comprehensive Educational Planning tool](#)

STRATEGIES FOR DISPELLING THE MYTH:

- Plan instruction based on grade-level standards and utilize [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) to make general education lessons accessible and effective for all.
- Identify natural learning opportunities during general education transitions/routines and maximize these embedded opportunities to teach adaptive skills using effective instructional strategies.
- Special curriculum resources used for students with the most significant disabilities should be based on [peer-reviewed research](#) and aligned to the student's enrolled grade-level content.
- Provide training to support IEP teams (including parents) on how to write inclusive, standards-aligned IEPs and IEP goals.
- [All students with disabilities, including those with significant cognitive disabilities, must be included in MTSS planning and implementation.](#)