

School Modification Ideas for Students Who Receive Special Education Services

Students with disabilities who receive special education services sometimes need modifications in their educational programs. A modification is an adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the assignment or test is supposed to measure. A modification alters what is expected of the student.

A modification changes what the student learns and are used with students who require more support or adjustments than accommodations can provide. Every effort must first be made to provide students with an IEP full access to the general education curriculum with accommodations before considering modifications. Modifications change what the student learns.

Modifications should be discussed by the IEP team and chosen to fit the student's individual needs. IEP modifications are used only when the IEP team agrees that the student's disability significantly impacts access to the general curriculum, and when learning goals are best aligned with individualized, alternative outcomes. Modifications must be clearly documented in the IEP and revisited at least annually.

The following modifications are provided as examples, which may or may not be appropriate for an individual student. This list is not exhaustive

Materials

- Provide alternative books with similar concepts but at an easier reading level
- Use of adapted materials to engage in peer learning

Student Response

- Fewer questions on assignments or assessments to focus on mastery of key concepts rather than all concepts
- Reduced writing requirements on writing assignments (ex. short answers instead of essays)
- Use recognition tests (true-false, multiple choice, or matching) for key concepts
- Word banks or sentence starters provided
- Give an alternate assignment
- Allow take-home or open-book tests

Instruction

- Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts rather than all concepts
- Shorten spelling words to functional words
- Focus on mastery of more practical math concepts
- Participate in class discussions with visual or verbal supports

Grading

- Graded based on individualized goals or effort rather than standard criteria
- Pass/fail grading system instead of letter grades
- Modified report cards with progress toward IEP goals
- Rubrics adjusted to reflect personal growth instead of grade-level benchmarks
- Allow a student to rework missed problems for a higher grade



Families are key partners in determining what adjustments are needed in the IEP. If your child has modifications in their annual IEP, make sure you understand the impact. Changes to learning expectations can impact meeting the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements for a diploma.