NCSC SCHEMA for Common Core State Standards Resources

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National Center and State Collaborative

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is applying the lessons learned from the past decade of research on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) to develop a multi-state comprehensive assessment system for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The project draws on a strong research base to develop an AA-AAS that is built from the ground up on powerful validity arguments linked to clear learning outcomes and defensible assessment results, to complement the work of the Race to the Top Common State Assessment Program (RTTA) consortia.

Our long-term goal is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. A well-designed summative assessment alone is insufficient to achieve that goal. Thus, NCSC is developing a full system intended to support educators, which includes formative assessment tools and strategies, professional development on appropriate interim uses of data for progress monitoring, and management systems to ease the burdens of administration and documentation. All partners share a commitment to the research-to-practice focus of the project and the development of a comprehensive model of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and supportive professional development. These supports will improve the alignment of the entire system and strengthen the validity of inferences of the system of assessments.

IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

The contents of this instructional resource were developed as part of the National Center and State Collaborative for a grant from the Department of Education (PR/Award #: H373X100002, Project Officer, Susan.Weigert@Ed.gov). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and no assumption of endorsement by the Federal government should be made.

These materials and documents were developed under the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) General Supervision Enhancement Grant and are consistent with its goals and foundations. Any changes to these materials are to be consistent with their intended purpose and use as defined by NCSC.

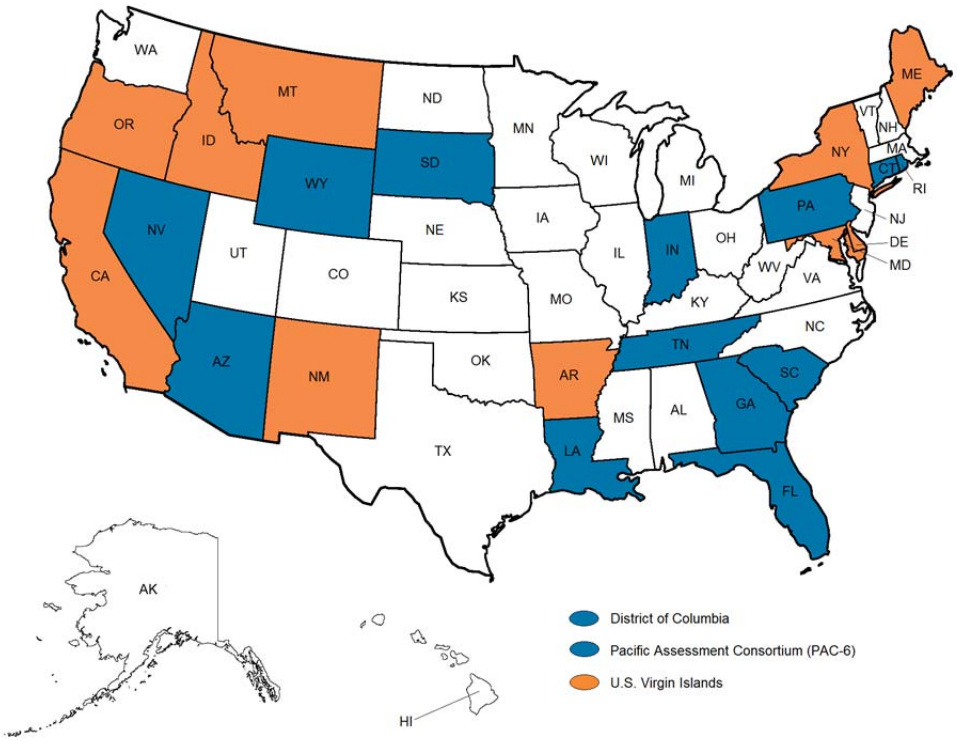
This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

National Center and State Collaborative

NCSC is a collaborative of 15 states and five organizations.

The states include (shown in blue on map): Arizona, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada, Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6)1, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

Tier II states are partners in curriculum, instruction, and professional development implementation but are not part of the assessment development work. They are (shown in orange on map): Arkansas, California, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and U.S. Virgin Islands.



*Core partner states are blue in color and Tier II states are orange in color.

[1] The Pacific Assessment Consortium (including the entities of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands) partner with NCSC as one state, led by the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (CEDDERS).

The five partner organizations include: The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota, The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment), The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, The University of Kentucky, and edCount, LLC.

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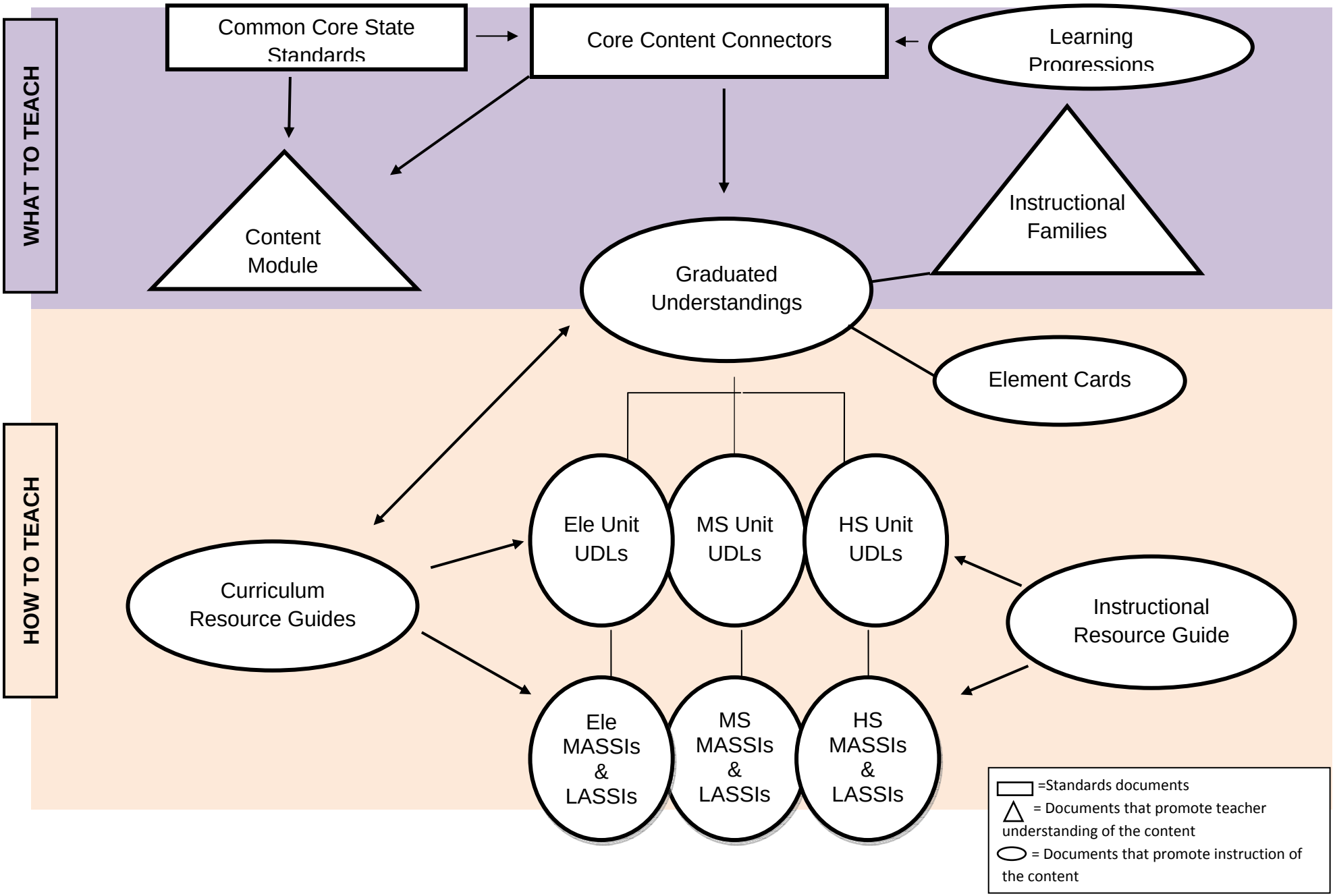
Figure 1. SCHEMA for Common Core State Standards Resources
NCSC Instructional Resources



Explanation of Schema for NCSC Instructional Resources in Mathematics

The NCSC instructional resources provide support for teachers to address the **Common Core State Standards** when teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. Their purpose is to build the capacity of teachers to plan instruction using the **Core Content Connectors (CCCs)**. As the schema in Figure 1 indicates, the Core Content Connectors link to both the Common Core Standards and the NCSC Learning Progressions Frameworks. These connectors have been dually aligned with both the standards and framework. The CCCs retain the grade level content focus of these two resources and are not extended. The CCCs do pinpoint the primary content of the Common Core Standards and organize it in the conceptual model of the **Learning Progressions Framework**. By focusing on the CCCs, teachers will be teaching the Common Core State Standards and promoting a progression of learning.

At first, the CCCs may seem overwhelming and confusing to teachers who do not have extensive training in the content area or who do not have extensive background in adapting the content to students with significant cognitive disabilities. NCSC is preparing a collection of resources to assist teachers in both understanding the content and planning instruction.

Understanding the Content. Two sets of resources are offered primarily to help teachers gain a deeper understanding of the content as they prepare to develop instructional adaptations. The **Content Modules** are an online multimedia resource that provides teachers with a deeper understanding of complex concepts. These make an excellent companion resource when viewing the CCCs. For example, if a teacher is not sure what “nets” are in geometry, a content module can be used to see explanations and examples of nets. The **Curriculum Resource Guides** are a second set of resources for understanding the CCCs. These guides also offer examples of how the content is taught in general education and ideas for teaching across content areas, assessment examples, ideas for real life use, examples of modifications and adaptations for students with specific learning needs, and ways to promote college and career readiness. Each guide covers a range of CCCs for grades 3 through high school. These guides focus on five topics that were derived from the priorities identified by the NCSC Work Group 1 for the Assessment. These guides should support teachers in preparing students for the NCSC alternate assessment. Both the Content Modules and Curriculum Resource Guides were developed by special educators with extensive experience in adapting general curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities. These resources have been validated by mathematics content experts for accuracy and by special education teachers for clarity.

Teaching the Content. Teaching requires designing instructional plans at various levels of intensity. The first level of planning should be to promote universal design of learning for all students. The **Units and Lesson Plans** provide models of universally designed

planning for an entire class of students. The Units and Lesson Plans illustrate how to target the CCCs within general education lessons. Examples are provided for planning for engagement, representation, and expression. That is, they offer a model for how to engage all students in well-designed instruction for the Common Core Standards. Many examples are offered for meeting the unique needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities. As all teachers know, even the best plans for a class may not be sufficient for some students to master specific mathematical concepts. The **MASSIs** offer intensive instruction based on evidence-based practices. These "Math Activities with Scripted Systematic Instruction" have several features. First, they target CCCs prioritized for assessment. Second, they offer a guide for instruction with increasing levels of difficulty. The first steps of the lesson are accessible to students with little to no understanding of the content. The lesson continues building understanding through a target component of the CCC. Third, the MASSIs use a real life activity to teach the concept that can be easily set up in most classrooms with inexpensive materials. That is, they bring math word problems to life using a hands-on activity. Finally, the instruction is scripted, making them easy for teachers to use, and include evidence-based practices shown to be effective in teaching mathematics skills to students with significant cognitive disabilities. The MASSIs come with data sheets that can be used for monitoring progress towards mastery and a skill test for practicing responding in a testing context. Neither the Units/Plans nor MASSIs provide everything needed to teach all CCCs at each level. Instead, they provide models for how to teach the content. In contrast, teachers may find they can apply these model plans as a way to get started in teaching the CCCs/Common Core. After teaching the model lesson plan or MASSI, teachers will gain practice in instructional strategies that are effective for teaching general mathematics content. LASSIs will serve the same purpose for ELA content as the MASSIs do for math content. LASSIs are currently in development. Consistent use of instructional strategies that have been shown to be effective when teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities will be crucial to student success. To help support teachers in using these effective teaching strategies, an Instructional Resource Guide provides guidance for teachers by explaining and providing examples on how to use these evidence-based prompting and instructional strategies. The Instructional Resource Guide will serve as a companion document to the MASSIs for teachers to reference quickly and easily and will help educators build knowledge of the essential systematic instructional methods and prompting strategies that are used in MASSIs to teach students targeted skills. Lastly, teachers will need to be prepared to teach the CCCs to a range of students with significant cognitive disabilities in a variety of educational settings. **Graduated Understandings** are made up of **Instructional Families** and **Element Cards**. Instructional Families group related CCCs into families (e.g., Counting and Representing Numbers). The Instructional Families allow teachers to view related content within and across grades. Element cards are written for select CCCs at each grade level. Each Element Card contains essential understandings. The essential understandings provide both the concrete and the symbolic (representational) understandings necessary for students to engage in the content described/identified by the CCC or a set of related CCCs. In addition, the Element Cards provide a range of instructional strategies intended to provide teachers with suggestions that will be applicable to a variety of students. Finally, each Element Card includes scaffolds and supports (e.g., use of a calculator or a raised grid) that may be necessary when teaching the content described/identified by the CCC(s).

Why This Content. Preparing all students to be ready for college, career and community opportunities after high school is critical. NCSC promotes the content already determined by the Common Core State Standards to support this goal. The priorities within the content and sequences for learning have been identified by mathematical experts. Some of this mathematical content students will use in their future jobs and life in the community. For example, a baker may need to know how to create a 4x5 array of rolls on a pan and someone who works in shipping may need to make decisions about the volume of a package. Some of the content may make the students better at problem solving in general as students learn to pose math questions and create solutions. Perhaps most importantly, our goal is to promote a full educational opportunity for all students. The challenge ahead is to make the content personally relevant and accessible to each student.

Quality Indicators. In all of the Instructional Resources, the following criteria are applied. Resources are developed, reviewed, field tested, and revised until the team considers them to meet all of these criteria.

Quality Indicators for Instructional Resources
➢ Promote Common Core State Standards o By using the Core Content Connectors ▪ Dually aligned with learning progressions and CCSS ➢ Set high expectations for all students ➢ Apply principles of universal design for learning ➢ Apply evidence-based teaching practices for students with SCD ➢ Use general curriculum resources and general education content experts' review ➢ Offer options for ALL students in the 1% ➢ Reflect same emphasis/ priorities being used for assessment in Work Group One ➢ Provide a teacher-friendly resource that promotes effective instruction