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## **Application of Common Core State Standards for Gifted and Talented Students**

The common core language arts and mathematics state standards have been written to uphold and advance high standards for all students. But, one size does not fit all. For some students – those at the top end of the performance spectrum – fidelity to grade-level standards can actually limit learning.

Gifted and talented students learn more quickly and differently from their classmates. They come from every ethnic background and socioeconomic group and vary from their age peers and from other gifted students in the ways and rate at which they learn, and the domains in which they are gifted. These differences require modifications to curriculum and instruction, as well as to assessments, to ensure that these students are appropriately challenged. Too many advanced students languish in today's classrooms with little rigor and much repetition. With careful planning, the new standards offer the prospect of improving the classroom experience for high-ability students in significant ways; not only in how the new materials are developed and presented, but also the ways in which student knowledge is measured, leading to appropriate instructional decision-making.

In considering advanced students, grade-level standards will be inadequate in challenging them each day with new information. Gifted learners are well able to meet, and exceed, the core standards on a faster timetable than their age peers. Therefore, it is critical that curriculum is matched to student ability through a range of content acceleration strategies and that teachers are able to implement an array of differentiation strategies to supplement and extend the curriculum. These include a variety of flexible grouping strategies, creative and critical-thinking opportunities, and other approaches designed to add depth and complexity to the curriculum. Significantly, the professional development investment in these differentiation skills benefits the entire student spectrum. It is particularly important in schools without gifted and talented programs, often in low-income communities, where students are dependent on the regular classroom teacher to meet their needs.

Assessment is a critical component of teaching and learning and, therefore, teachers and other key personnel should be familiar with a range of student assessment tools to ensure that students are able to transfer and apply learned content. Assessments should also measure student knowledge of above-grade level standards in order to make instructional modifications necessary to ensure that advanced students are continuing to learn new material and concepts every day.

The new math and language arts standards provide an opportunity for advanced students to succeed, with the support of rigorous curriculum, teaching strategies to adjust the depth and complexity, and assessments that measure the true level of student knowledge. Standards and accompanying instructional materials that consider their needs will help gifted students and their classmates succeed.