



What Everyone Needs to Know About... Annual Goals and Objectives/Benchmarks.

When a group of education professionals, in collaboration with the parents, has determined that the unique learning needs of a student require special education services and programs, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed. The IDEA requires that each IEP must include a statement of measurable annual goals. The writing of annual goals flows from the content of the present level statement, where the IEP team described the student's current performance, the impact of the disability and the resulting special education needs. What skills, knowledge and behaviors must this student acquire to access the general curriculum? What growth and progress can be reasonably expected of this student in the coming year? Will the expected growth and rate of progress narrow the achievement gap for this student? These are among the most important questions we can ask every time an IEP team develops annual goals.

The IDEA & MARSE

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) and [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education](#) (MARSE) are the foundation of special education accountability requirements in Michigan.

300.320 Definition of Individualized Education Program (IEP) The term individualized education program or IEP means a written statement for each child with a disability that must include:

A statement of [measurable annual goals](#), including academic and functional goals designed to--

- Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and
- Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability;

For children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives; [A description of](#)

- How the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) of this section will be measured; and
- When periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided;

The IDEA uses the terms "academic and functional" to describe the kind of goals that need to be written in a student's IEP, indicating that the writing of measurable annual goals is linked to content in the present level statement. A student's annual goals must be crafted with careful attention to enabling the student to be involved in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum. A well-written goal should be positive and describe a skill or outcome that can be seen and measured. Goals should focus on areas of need prioritized by the IEP team and are, in part, a description of what specialized instruction is supposed to accomplish for the student.

Related regulation, rule and guidance

[Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA 2004)
[Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education](#) (MARSE)

[Michigan Alliance for Families – Goals and Objectives](#)
[Center For Parent Information & Resources – Goals](#)
[Center for Parent Information & Resources – STOs & Benchmarks](#)

NOTE: While the content of this page reflects general aspects of the law regarding students with disabilities as of the date of its creation, it is not intended to constitute or serve as legal advice for any particular student scenario. Schools should consult legal counsel for advice with regard to specific situations.