

improved teaching, which ultimately lead to higher levels of student learning (Elmore and Rothman, Eds., 1999, available at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9609.html>). This theory suggests that for standards-based reform to benefit students with disabilities, certain conditions must be met. Among these are the following: (1) Assessments must be accessible and valid for the widest possible range of students with disabilities (with valid and reliable alternate assessments available for students with disabilities who cannot participate in general assessments); (2) Information on assessment results must be available to all appropriate parties in a timely fashion and must be applicable to instruction as well as to accountability; (3) Coherent standards-based instruction must be delivered, and student progress toward meeting standards must be monitored; (4) Principles of universal design must be applied to standards, assessments, curriculum, and instruction; and (5) Connections must be maintained between the components of the system, including standards, assessments, reporting, instructional planning, professional development, and instruction.

Priority

This priority supports a cooperative agreement for a center to conduct research, synthesize research, collect information, disseminate information, and provide assistance to States (in collaboration with other assistance providers) on the use of technology to maximize the benefits of standards-based reform for students with disabilities. Technologies may include, but are not limited to, technology-based assessments, computerized curriculum-based measurement, technology-based instruction, and technology-based systems for managing and analyzing information. The Center's work must address a range of the conditions necessary for standards-based reform to benefit students with disabilities as presented in the Background section of this priority, as well as other important conditions that become apparent during the course of the project.

The Center's activities must include, but are not limited to:

(a) *Conducting research syntheses and needs assessments.* The Center must conduct needs assessments through such means as stakeholder focus groups that include parents, individuals with disabilities, and others; analyze current State efforts and currently available products and approaches; and synthesize research relevant to the use of technology to increase the benefits of

standards-based reform for students with disabilities. The products of these activities must be disseminated by means of the Web site discussed in paragraph (f) of this section.

(b) *Developing and implementing a strategic plan.* Based on its needs assessments, analyses of State efforts, and research syntheses, the Center must develop a strategic plan that integrates its activities in research, research synthesis, information collection, dissemination, and assistance to States. The goal of the strategic plan is to ensure that the Center's efforts are coherent, targeted at high-priority needs, and likely to have widespread positive effects. The Center must submit the strategic plan for approval by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and must revise the plan as instructed.

(c) *Developing and evaluating approaches for using technology in standards-based reform.* In collaboration with State and local educational agencies and other stakeholders, the Center must develop, implement, and evaluate approaches for using technology to increase the benefits of standards-based reform for students with disabilities. These approaches must be implemented in the context of ongoing State or local efforts related to standards-based reform. Specific approaches may address specific topics, but overall the Center's activities must address a range of the conditions presented in the first paragraph of the Background section above. Outcome measures must include the performance of students with disabilities on standards-based assessments.

(d) *Providing collaborative assistance to States.* In collaboration with other projects and organizations, the Center must provide assistance to States on the use of technology to maximize the benefits of standards-based reform for students with disabilities. This assistance must be designed to help as many States as possible, and may be provided in the context of national or regional conferences, professional meetings, internet-based assistance, or similar approaches.

(e) *Coordinating with relevant Federal projects.* The Center must share information and coordinate plans with other relevant federally funded projects. These projects may include, but are not limited to, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO), the National Center on Technology Innovation (NCTI), the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum (NCAC), and the

Technology-Based Assessment (TBA) project sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics.

(f) *Maintaining a Web site.* The Center must maintain a Web site for the purpose of disseminating information products and maintaining communication with and among interested parties.

(g) *Conducting evaluations.* The Center must conduct evaluations of its specific activities and of the overall impact of its work. The Center must report its evaluation findings annually to the Federal project officer.

(h) *Convening an advisory committee.* The Center must: (1) form an advisory committee that represents researchers, policymakers, State and local educational personnel, developers and vendors, individuals with disabilities, and other relevant perspectives; and (2) convene the advisory committee annually in the Washington, DC area to review the Center's work and suggest future research and dissemination activities.

(i) *Maintaining communication with the Federal project officer.* The Center must conduct monthly phone conversations with the Federal project officer and must maintain e-mail communication as needed. The Center must submit annual performance reports and provide additional written materials as needed for the Federal project officer to monitor the Center's work.

Fourth and Fifth Years of Project

In deciding whether to continue this project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a) for continuation awards.

The Secretary will also consider the following:

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of experts selected by the Secretary. The team will conduct its review in Washington, DC during the last half of the project's second year. A project must budget for the travel associated with this one-day intensive review;

(b) The timeliness and effectiveness with which all requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The degree to which the project is making a positive contribution—and its strategies are demonstrating the potential for disseminating significant knowledge to State and local constituencies—to using technology to maximize the benefits of standards-based reform for students with disabilities.