CSESA

The Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

About CSESA

CSESA is a research and development project funded by the U. S. Department of Education that focuses on developing, adapting, and studying a comprehensive school- and community-based education program for high school students on the autism spectrum. It builds on school and student strengths and incorporates evidence-based practices and strategies in order to help students succeed in high school and prepare them for life after high school.

What Is the CSESA Model?

CSESA has five components that work together to best meet the needs of students, school staff, community partners, and families. CSESA aligns with and supports state and school-wide initiatives such as Common Core State Standards, Positive Behavior Supports, Career Readiness Campaign, and Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

CSESA Foundations

Provides professional development and ongoing coaching to school teams as they develop high quality programming for all students, including those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Why?

Schools are serving more students with autism than ever before (Scull & Winkler, 2011). It is essential that high school teams feel adequately prepared to meet the needs of these students.

How?

- Offers a profile of program quality and supports school teams in addressing areas of need
- Supports development of goals for compliant IEPs and related transition plans
- Provides professional development and ongoing coaching to support educators implementing evidence-based strategies and monitoring student progress

Examples of Links to Standards and Initiatives

- Facilitates alignment with "Standards for Professional Learning," statewide expectations for **North Carolina** teachers, which emphasizes high-quality professional development that links to teacher effectiveness and student results
- Facilitates alignment with Standard 6 of **California's** Standards for Teaching Profession ("Developing as Professional Educator"), which requires collaborative professional development designed to support student learning
- Facilitates alignment with **Wisconsin** Standards for Teacher Development, which requires that team members seek out opportunities to grow professionally and draw upon professional colleagues in and outside of the school (Standard 9)

Independence & Behavior
(termed PRISM, for Promoting Responsibility, Independence, and Self-Management)

Supports school teams, families, and students in identifying goals related to increased independence, and working towards those goals collaboratively

Why?
Functional independence is a key contributor to optimal post-secondary outcomes for all students, and plays a critical role in the success of students with ASD.

How?
- Supports teams in ensuring that IEP goals link to transition plans and ideal post-secondary outcomes through the use of the Secondary School Success Checklist
- Prioritizes goals across team members and provides a planning process to target and meet goals
- Incorporates evidence-based practices to increase student independence across settings while decreasing interfering behaviors

Examples of Links to Standards and Initiatives
- Facilitates alignment with Common Core and Extended Common Core State Standards (especially Speaking and Listening Standards related to communication and collaboration, and Civics and Governance Standards)
- Fosters problem solving, initiative and self-direction, as well as flexibility and adaptability (Life and Career Skills, Social and Cross-cultural Skills, Communication and Collaboration Skills, identified as priorities by Partnership for 21st Century Skills)
- Aligns with secondary and tertiary prevention and intervention supports as part of School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support initiatives

Academic
Provides two literacy-based interventions that focus on comprehension in the content areas

- Alternate Achievement Literacy (AAL) is a teaching approach using evidence-based practices designed to individualize literacy supports for students accessing alternate assessments, who have significant reading difficulties or are non-readers.
- Collaborative Strategic Reading-High School (CSR–HS) is an evidence-based instructional approach with a cooperative learning component for students accessing the state-wide assessments

Why?
Reading comprehension across the curriculum has proven to be a contributor to academic success and to overall quality of life for students.

How?
- Uses adaptations, modifications, and technology to provide access to modified grade level text (AAL)
- Supports students working collaboratively in mixed ability groupings to improve comprehension of a variety of texts across content areas (CSR–HS)

Examples of Links to Standards and Initiatives
- Facilitates alignment with Common Core and Extended Common Core State Standards for students who are reading above, at, or below grade level (especially College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Literacy in English Language Arts, Speaking and Listening 1-3, as well as History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 1-9)
- Fosters collaboration among peers (Communication and Collaboration Skills, identified as priorities by Partnership for 21st Century Skills)
- Aligns with state and school-wide literacy initiatives such as **California's** "Reading Apprenticeship" (a Strategic Literacy Initiative)
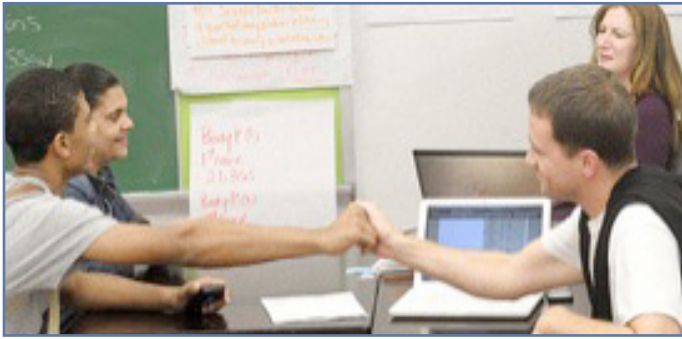
Social Competence

Enhances social skills and creates opportunities for students with and without ASD to build connections and relationships

Why?

Positive relationships with peers, staff, employers, colleagues, and the broader community play an instrumental role in adolescent development, and students with ASD often require additional support in this area.

How?

- Creates social networks within school communities to support students with ASD, as well as teaching peers how to connect with and enjoy a diverse student body
- Establishes peer supports across classrooms to encourage collaboration and community membership
- Supports the development of specific social skills, including perspective taking and problem solving, to enhance the social experience of high school students with ASD and prepare for post-secondary experiences

Examples of Links to Standards and Initiatives

- Facilitates alignment with Common Core and Extended Common Core State Standards (especially Speaking and Listening Standards related to communication and collaboration, and Civics and Governance Standards)
- Fosters effective interaction, working in diverse teams, and collaboration with others (Social and Cross-cultural Skills, Communication and Collaboration Skills, identified as priorities by Partnership for 21st Century Skills)
- Supports the mission of the National School Climate Center and School-wide Bullying Prevention programs in building safe, supportive, and civil schools by enhancing connectedness and engagement in high schools

Transition and Families

Assists teams of families, staff, and students in developing and implementing high quality transition planning and community experiences to ensure successful transition to post-secondary options

Why?

Actively involving families, students, staff, and community members in the transition process has shown to improve the outcomes for students with ASD as they transition to life beyond high school.

How?

- Creates maps of community and school resources related to student needs around transition
- Supports school staff and families in transition planning and programming, while also increasing student participation in IEP meetings and providing work-based learning experiences
- Provides direct support to families through a parent education group focused on problem solving, post-secondary planning, and accessing community resources

Examples of Links to Standards and Initiatives

- Fosters productivity, initiative, and accessing community information and resources (Life and Career Skills, Information, Media, & Technology Skills, identified as priorities by Partnership for 21st Century Skills)
- Ensures compliance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Indicator 13 (appropriate transition assessment, postsecondary goals and experiences to reach goals, student involvement in the IEP process)
- Supports transition process, meeting student needs, and providing work-based learning experiences—priorities for initiatives such as the **Wisconsin** Statewide Transition Initiative, **North Carolina's** Ready for Success Initiative, and the **California** Career Readiness Campaign

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