



# Understanding the Difference Between the NC General Curriculum and Extended Content Standards

Supporting all learners in North Carolina schools

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# Purpose of This Presentation

01

Explain the North  
Carolina General  
Curriculum

02

Explain  
Extended  
Content  
Standards (ECS)

03

Compare key  
differences

04

Clarify who each  
curriculum is  
designed for

# What Is the North Carolina General Curriculum?



Standard curriculum taught to most students in NC



Based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study



Covers grade-level content in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies



Prepares students for grade-level assessments, college, and careers

# Who Uses the General Curriculum?

Most students in North Carolina public schools

Students who learn at or near grade level

Students who may receive accommodations but not modified standards

Students participate in EOG and EOC assessments

# What Are Extended Content Standards (ECS)?



Modified academic standards aligned to the General Curriculum



Designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities



Focus on essential knowledge and functional application



Reduced depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level standards



Students who follow this curriculum do NOT receive a High School Diploma. At the age of 22 (or earlier if parents opt out of extra years) will receive a certificate of completion

# Who Uses Extended Content Standards?

- A small percentage of students with disabilities
  - 1% of population
- Students with an IEP who meet specific eligibility criteria
  - The student must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP).
  - The student must have a significant cognitive disability.
  - The student's disability significantly impacts cognitive functioning and adaptive behaviors, defined as those skills which are essential for someone to live and function independently.
  - The student requires extensive and repeated individualized instruction and support to make meaningful gains.
  - The student uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways.

# Key Differences Between the Two Curricula

- General Curriculum:

- Full grade-level standards
- Higher rigor and complexity
- Abstract and academic focus
- Students may either follow future ready or occupational course of study in high school



- Both programs lead to earning a high school diploma

- Extended Content Standards

- Simplified, prioritized standards
- Reduced complexity
- Focus on foundational and functional skills
- Students DO NOT receive a high school diploma upon completion

# Environmental Differences

## General Curriculum Instruction

- Grade-level materials
- Whole-group instruction
- Independent practice and assessments
- Based on level of need, instructional supports from EC teacher can be provided either with non-disabled peers (inclusion) or in a separate room for a portion of the day (Resource)

## Extended Content Instruction

- Adapted materials and visuals
- Hands-on and repetitive instruction
- Explicit modeling and guided practice
- Functional and real-world learning
- Limited participation with non-disabled peers

# Examples of Differences

## Kindergarten Math Goal General Curriculum

- NC.K.CC.1 Know number names and recognize patterns in the counting sequence by:
  - Counting to 100 by ones.
  - Counting to 100 by tens.

## Kindergarten Math Goal Extended Content

- K.CC.1 Use concrete and pictorial representations to count up to 10 items by ones

# Examples of Differences

## Kindergarten Reading Goal General Curriculum

- RF.K.3 Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
  - D. Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words. (This does not include CVCs ending with /l/, /r/, or /x/.)

## Kindergarten Reading Goal Extended Content

- RF.1.3. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
  - b. With guidance and support, identify the picture or word that corresponds to orally presented segmented phonemes (e.g., C-A-T).

# Important Things to Remember



Both curricula are aligned to NC standards



Curriculum decisions are made by the IEP team



Goal is meaningful access to learning for all students

# Final Takeaway

- General Curriculum supports most students at grade level
- Extended Content Standards support students with significant cognitive disabilities
- Both pathways are designed to promote student growth and success

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