

# Curriculum

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy used by 40 states including South Dakota and Illinois, that are grounded in evidence and designed to ensure that all students have the academic knowledge and skills they need in these core subjects to succeed after high school. The CCSS were developed in a state-led process under the leadership of governors and chief state school officers with participation from 48 states. The process included the involvement of state departments of education, districts, teachers, community leaders, experts in a wide array of fields, and professional educator organizations. Core Content Connectors (CCCs) are used for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the alternate assessment. CCCs guide the development of appropriate academic goals that allow maximum engagement with the general curriculum and typical peers, with appropriate adaptations and modifications to grade-level materials and content.

LifeScape Specialty Schools instructional programs link to the National Common Core (CCSS) connecting skills scope and sequence based on individualized comprehensive assessment of the students. Individual teams consider how each student is able to access instruction in Common Core State Standards in their development of the student's learning plan. LifeScape utilizes the following CCSS guides to assist in decision making curricular scope and sequence for an individual.

- Learning Progression Frameworks: The Learning Progressions Frameworks (LPF) were designed for use with the Common Core State Standards in both English Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics. The LPFs are based on research that describes how understanding of core concepts in English Language Arts and Mathematics typically develop over time when students have the benefit of high-quality instruction. These frameworks offer a guide for the development of curriculum and assessment and assist educators in lesson planning. (Hess & Kearns, 2010, 2011).
- Graduated Understandings: The Graduated Understandings are comprised of Instructional Families and Element Cards. They present the areas of curricular emphasis within and across grades and the progression of learning within domains of the Common Core State Standards.
- Core Content Connectors: The Core Content Connectors make connections between the Learning Progressions Framework indicators and the CCSS.
- Content Modules: The Content Modules offer general background for educators in content areas covered in the Common Core State Standards. The Content Modules present information and examples of concepts across grade bands; providing examples of instruction and accommodations/adaptations for topics that may be difficult to teach.

LifeScape teachers are provided with instruction and resources to support the integration and alignment of instruction to the state instructional content standards. Due to the highly specialized population served by LifeScape, unique and specialized curricula are used to address students' comprehensive needs. These include Essential for Living (EFL) which provides children and young adults with moderate-to-severe disabilities, including but not limited to autism, a comprehensive life skills curriculum with social validity, along with evidence-based teaching and measurement strategies and procedures, that result in the dignity and quality of life these students deserve. LifeScape also uses Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)-based curriculum and assessment to include but not limited to the ABLLS, PEAK, VBMAPP, Assessment of Functional Living Skills, and the Eden Curriculum. LifeScape has evidence based curricula materials to match the teaching needs identified through these foundational curriculum assessment materials.

Young adults of transition age have the benefit of experiencing our Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES), a simulated work assessment and hands-on curriculum lab where students learn by doing in a structured environment. In the lab, students explore the following five career field areas: business/marketing, computer/technology, construction/industrial, processing/production, and consumer service. Students complete tasks using real tools and equipment. These tasks start at a basic level and build in complexity as the student's skills increase. The lab simulates a real-world work environment, so students become employees and teachers become supervisors when they walk through the door. The PAES lab allows students to experience and practice job skills that help prepare them for the world of work as well as assist them in finding direction for their desired career paths.

The use of other evidence-based curricula is based on student need and academic skill set. LifeScape employs an administrative leadership team highly versed in the areas of instruction. This provides oversight and guidance to the daily instructional processes and development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).