

Must-Haves for Florida Students with Disabilities

Selecting Instructional Materials that Ensure Access for Students with Disabilities (SWDs)



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WHY THIS MATTERS

District leaders recognize that high-quality instructional materials (HQIMs) are one of the most powerful levers for improving student outcomes. However, materials often fall short in consistently supporting students with disabilities.

Too often:

- ▶ access depends on individual teacher adaptation
- ▶ accommodations are external, not embedded
- ▶ implementation varies widely across classrooms

As a result, students with disabilities may experience:

- ▶ reduced access to grade-level content
- ▶ inconsistent instructional supports
- ▶ limited opportunities to demonstrate understanding

The decisions districts make during materials adoption directly impact whether students with disabilities can:

- ▶ access rigorous, grade-level instruction
- ▶ engage meaningfully in learning
- ▶ demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways

These Must-Haves outline the features that instructional materials must include to ensure consistent, equitable access for students with disabilities across classrooms.

When requesting or reviewing instructional materials, insist upon:

- ▶ Embedded accessibility and usability features across all materials
- ▶ Structured scaffolds that maintain rigor while supporting access
- ▶ Integrated assessment systems that support monitoring and response to student needs

WHAT TO ASK: SUPPORTING STRONG ADOPTION DECISIONS

When requesting or reviewing instructional materials, district leaders should consider:

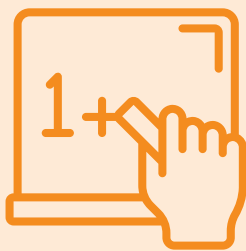
- ▶ Do materials embed accessibility features, or rely on external accommodations?
- ▶ Do scaffolds support access to grade-level content without reducing rigor?
- ▶ Do assessment systems allow teachers to identify and respond to student needs in real time?
- ▶ Will these materials support consistent implementation across classrooms?
- ▶ What level of local capacity (training, staffing, supports) is required for success?

THE RESULT: WHAT DISTRICTS GAIN

Selecting instructional materials that include these Must-Haves leads to:

- ▶ Increased access to grade-level content for students with disabilities
- ▶ More consistent instructional practices across classrooms and schools
- ▶ Stronger alignment between materials, instruction, and assessment systems
- ▶ Improved ability to identify and respond to student needs
- ▶ Reduced reliance on individual teacher adaptation

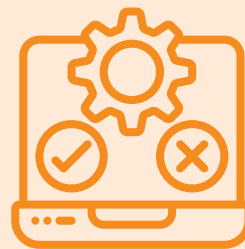
THE MUST-HAVES



Must-Have 1:
Accessible and
Usable by Design



Must-Have 2:
Scaffolds that
Maintain Rigor



Must-Have 3:
Assessment Systems
that Drive Instruction



MUST-HAVE 1: ACCESSIBLE & USABLE BY DESIGN

Description:

High-quality instructional materials are designed from the outset to be accessible and usable for students with a wide range of needs. Accessibility is embedded within materials—not dependent on external accommodations or individual teacher modification.

Look Fors:

These look-fors align directly to the **Accessibility & Usability Checklist** within the Florida Materials Navigator. District review teams may use the checklist tool to evaluate the extent to which instructional materials provide embedded accessibility supports, reduce barriers to participation, and support consistent implementation across classrooms and learning environments.

- ▶ Digital Accessibility
- ▶ Print Accessibility
- ▶ Alternative Formats
- ▶ Assistive Technology Compatibility
- ▶ Overall Accessibility and System Alignment

Impact:

When accessibility is built into materials:

- ▶ students experience consistent access across classrooms
- ▶ reliance on individual teacher adaptation is reduced
- ▶ implementation becomes more equitable and scalable

Questions to Ask:

How do these materials ensure that all students can access content without requiring significant adaptation or external support?



MUST-HAVE 2: SCAFFOLDS THAT MAINTAIN RIGOR

Description:

Instructional materials must include structured scaffolds that support access to grade-level content while maintaining the cognitive demand of the task. Supports should be intentional, progressive, and responsive to student needs.

Look Fors:

- ▶ Clear progression: modeling → guided practice → independent application
- ▶ Supports for unfinished learning and varied prior knowledge
- ▶ Multiple entry points into grade-level tasks
- ▶ Differentiation that does not reduce rigor
- ▶ Explicit supports for processing, organizing, and responding

Impact:

Effective scaffolding:

- ▶ enables students to engage in grade-level content
- ▶ prevents over-reliance on below-grade-level work
- ▶ supports consistent instructional practice across classrooms

Questions to Ask:

How do these materials support students in accessing grade-level content without lowering expectations?



MUST-HAVE 3: ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS THAT DRIVE INSTRUCTION

Description:

High-quality materials include integrated assessment systems that allow educators to monitor student understanding, identify needs, and adjust instruction. Assessment should be embedded, ongoing, and aligned to instructional goals.

Look Fors:

- ▶ Frequent checks for understanding embedded in lessons
- ▶ Progress monitoring aligned to grade-level expectations
- ▶ Clear success criteria and observable evidence of learning
- ▶ Multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding (multimodal)
- ▶ Structures for timely, specific, and actionable feedback

Impact:

Strong assessment systems:

- ▶ support early identification of student needs
- ▶ enable targeted instructional responses
- ▶ align to MTSS / RTII frameworks
- ▶ improve consistency of student outcomes

Questions to Ask:

How do these materials support teachers in identifying and responding to student needs in real time?

ALIGNMENT TO FLORIDA MATERIALS NAVIGATOR RESOURCES

Accessibility and Usability Checklist for Instructional Materials

Subgroup Criteria Bank

- ▶ Subgroup Domain 3: Scaffolding and Differentiation
- ▶ Subgroup Domain 5: Assessment and Feedback
- ▶ Subgroup Domain 6: Accessibility and Usability (SWD Focus)

District Reflection Tool

- ▶ Part E: Implications for Instructional Materials
- ▶ Part F: Implementation Readiness and Conditions

CLOSING

These Must-Haves Are Not Optional

These features are not add-ons or enhancements—they are essential components of high-quality instructional materials.

Materials that do not include these elements:

- ▶ may require significant local adaptation
- ▶ may lead to inconsistent implementation
- ▶ may limit access for students with disabilities

Districts should prioritize materials that:

- ▶ embed supports within design
- ▶ align to system-level implementation
- ▶ ensure consistent access across classrooms