



## TEACHER FIELD GUIDE

## Education law

# Same test. More questions

## Does this task show what someone knows?

A single score can follow a student into placement, support and how teachers see them. Knowing what the law requires before a school decides a student needs special education helps students ask for support without diagnosing each other.

## WHAT STUDENTS MAKE

**Annotated sketch plus 3–5 sentence explanation**

## THE CIVIC IDEA

## Words that do the work.

---

### Learning goal *Meta de aprendizaje*

The knowledge or skill a task is meant to show.

The practice brief says the goal is explaining how a simple circuit works. Speed is not listed.

---

### IDEA *Ley IDEA*

A federal law requiring public schools to provide eligible students with disabilities a free appropriate public education.

The crew reads IDEA's evaluation rule: one measure cannot be the only basis for deciding eligibility.

---

### Evaluation *Evaluación*

A formal process that gathers varied information to decide if a student has a disability and needs services.

Dec's practice sheet is not an evaluation. It is one observation the crew can describe to a teacher.

---

### IEP *Programa de educación individualizado (IEP)*

A written plan for an eligible student listing current performance, measurable goals and the services the school will provide.

Mari stops the group from saying Dec "needs an IEP." That decision needs the school's evaluation and eligibility process.

---

### Section 504 *Sección 504*

A federal civil-rights law that bars disability discrimination in programs receiving federal money, including many schools.

If Dec is not IDEA-eligible, a 504 plan is a different route a school may consider. The crew can ask about both.

## Barrier **Barrera**

Something in how a task is set up that makes it harder to show what you know.

Six dense paragraphs and a tiny diagram get between Dec and the circuit he can explain out loud.



### PAUTA

§ IDEA's varied-measures rule covers formal evaluations, not every classroom quiz.



I can trace the circuit. The six paragraphs are what lose me. Ask me before you tell her what I need.

### THE EVIDENCE

## Handle the case file.

Every artifact comes with a question. The captions are the lesson.

#### PRACTICE BRIEF

#### EXHIBIT A

### The assignment

Goal: explain how a simple circuit works. The practice sheet has six dense paragraphs and one small diagram. Speed is not listed as a learning goal.

**SUPPORTS** It gives you a reason to question the format, not permission to change a teacher's assessment rules on your own.

#### STUDY-TABLE NOTES

#### EXHIBIT B

### Dec's explanation

Dec correctly traces the circuit aloud. On the written sheet, he skips a line and answers a different question. He says the layout is hard to follow.

**SUPPORTS** A second observation complicates the first score. It does not establish a diagnosis.

1 Which skill does the goal line name, and which does it leave out?

2 What did Dec get right out loud that the sheet didn't record?

FEDERAL SOURCE, IN  
PLAIN LANGUAGE

EXHIBIT  
C

### The evaluation rule

Under IDEA evaluation procedures, a public agency must gather information with varied tools and strategies. One measure cannot be the sole basis for disability eligibility or an appropriate educational program.

**SUPPORTS** This concerns IDEA evaluations. It does not mean every classroom quiz has to be replaced or every struggling student qualifies.

**3** Who does this rule apply to, and when?



**LUPA**

⦿ Dec traced the circuit aloud. That's a second observation the score doesn't show.

## THE WORKSHOP

**45 minutes, block by block.**

5 MIN

**Meet the task**

TEACHER

Read Dec's situation aloud. Set the norm: nobody shares their own grades or support plans.

STUDENTS

Name what the circuit activity is supposed to show.

CHECK

Students state the goal without mentioning speed.

10 MIN

**Sort the observations**

TEACHER

Hand out evidence A and B. Draw three columns on the board.

STUDENTS

Sort details into observed / possible explanation / not established.

CHECK

"Dec has a disability" lands in "not established."

10 MIN

**Read the rule**

TEACHER

Read the IDEA evaluation excerpt aloud. Explain evaluation, eligibility, IEP and 504 as separate steps.

STUDENTS

Paraphrase the rule in one sentence and name one thing it does not require.

CHECK

Paraphrase includes "more than one measure" and limits it to formal evaluation.

12 MIN

**Redesign and request**

TEACHER

Model a request using Dec's voice: goal, two observations, question.

STUDENTS

Sketch a clearer practice sheet OR draft a 60–100 word message Dec could approve.

CHECK

Draft includes a goal, two observations and a question, with no diagnosis.

5 MIN

**Peer check**

TEACHER

Give the check: would Dec be comfortable with this being sent?

STUDENTS

Swap drafts and mark any line that decides something for Dec.

CHECK

Each pair removes or rewrites one presumptuous line.

3 MIN

**Exit**

TEACHER

Post the frame: “This suggests \_\_\_. It does not prove \_\_\_.”

STUDENTS

Complete the frame.

CHECK

Response separates a format barrier from a disability label.

## DIFFERENTIATED ROUTES

**One case. Seven ways in.**

Each route changes what students read, make and prove, not only how long it takes.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Grades 6–8: Redesign Dec’s practice sheet so it still checks circuit understanding, then explain your changes to a partner.**

## SOURCES

The practice brief and Dec’s study-table notes; the legal rule is summarized by the teacher.

## PRODUCT

Annotated sketch plus 3–5 sentence explanation

## RAISES THE RIGOR

Explain why your version still tests the same goal and isn’t just easier.

**Supports**

- Large printed diagram to mark up
- Frames: “The goal is \_\_. I changed \_\_ so that \_\_.”
- Vocabulary cards: goal, barrier, format
- Talk first, write second

**Success looks like**

- ☐ States the learning goal
- ☐ Makes at least two format changes
- ☐ Explains why the goal stays the same
- ☐ Does not say what Dec’s diagnosis is

## HIGH SCHOOL

**Grades 9–10: Draft a message to the teacher in Dec’s voice, written with his permission, that describes the observations and asks about support options.**

## SOURCES

All three evidence cards, including the IDEA evaluation excerpt.

## PRODUCT

Email, 60–100 words, plus 2-sentence note on what you left out and why

## RAISES THE RIGOR

Add a sentence that shows you know a classroom support conversation is not a formal evaluation.

**Supports**

- Model message with blanks
- Checklist: goal, two observations, one unknown, one question
- Glossary: evaluation, eligibility, IEP, 504

**Success looks like**

- ☐ Names the learning goal
- ☐ Describes two observations without diagnosing
- ☐ Asks a specific question the teacher can answer
- ☐ Keeps private records out

## HIGH SCHOOL

**Grades 11–12: Write an explainer for students on the path from a classroom struggle to an IDEA evaluation, a 504 plan or neither.**

## SOURCES

The IDEA excerpt (34 CFR § 300.304), the IEP contents rule (§ 300.320) and the case evidence.

## PRODUCT

Illustrated explainer, 300–400 words

## RAISES THE RIGOR

Distinguish IDEA eligibility from Section 504 coverage accurately and flag where district procedures vary.

**Supports**

- Flowchart template with decision points
- Plain-language paraphrase of each regulation provided alongside

**Success looks like**

- ☐ Accurately separates evaluation, eligibility and plan
- ☐ Notes 504 as a separate civil-rights route
- ☐ Uses Dec's case as an example without overreaching
- ☐ Names who at school to ask

## HIGH SCHOOL

**Honors: Argue whether a teacher should change the practice format for everyone (universal design) or only for Dec.**

## SOURCES

Case evidence plus the CAST UDL Guidelines excerpt.

## PRODUCT

Argument essay, 500–600 words

## RAISES THE RIGOR

Weigh fairness, workload and the learning goal; address the objection that changing the format lowers rigor.

**Supports**

- Pro/con organizer
- Model counterargument paragraph

**Success looks like**

- ☐ Clear position tied to the learning goal
- ☐ Uses UDL and case evidence accurately
- ☐ Rebuts the rigor objection fairly
- ☐ Avoids diagnosing Dec

## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**AP Lang: Compare the three teacher messages in decision 2 as arguments: which one would a teacher most likely act on, and why?**

## SOURCES

The three draft messages from the case, with Dec's notes as context.

## PRODUCT

Comparative analysis, about 500 words

## RAISES THE RIGOR

Analyze how audience (a busy teacher) shapes which claims are persuasive; write a synthesis-style paragraph that concedes what the evidence can't show.

**Supports**

- Claim/evidence/reasoning chart for each message
- Stems for evaluating tone

**Success looks like**

- ☐ Defensible thesis about effectiveness
- ☐ Analyzes claims and evidence in each message
- ☐ Links choices to the teacher audience
- ☐ Concedes limits of the evidence

## MIDDLE YEARS

**IB MYP: Investigate the question “How do schools decide what a student knows?” and produce a short podcast script with a peer.**

## SOURCES

Case evidence plus one teacher-provided article on assessment design; global context: Identities and relationships.

## PRODUCT

Podcast script, 3–4 minutes, plus source list

## RAISES THE RIGOR

Include at least two perspectives: a teacher balancing a class, and a student like Dec.

**Supports**

- Inquiry statement frame
- Script template with host and guest parts
- Option to record rather than write

**Success looks like**

- ☐ Research question is clear and focused
- ☐ Uses accurate IDEA vocabulary
- ☐ Represents two perspectives fairly
- ☐ Reflects on the global context

## DIPLOMA

**IB DP: Write a TOK-style reflection: can a written test ever fully capture practical knowledge like tracing a circuit?**

## SOURCES

Dec's notes, the practice brief and the IDEA rule as an example of a legal response to measurement limits.

## PRODUCT

Reflection, 700–900 words

## RAISES THE RIGOR

Connect to one other area of knowledge (e.g., human sciences) and evaluate the legal rule as a partial answer.

**Supports**

- Knowledge question prompts
- Claim/counterclaim table

**Success looks like**

- ☐ Poses a precise knowledge question
- ☐ Develops claims and counterclaims
- ☐ Uses the case as a real-life situation
- ☐ Reaches a nuanced conclusion

**Access for every learner**

- Offer the enlarged diagram and a numbered version of the practice sheet
- Read legal text aloud with a plain-language paraphrase beside it
- Spanish vocabulary: evaluación, meta de aprendizaje, barrera
- Students may respond in writing instead of role-play
- Never ask students to disclose their own IEP or 504 status

**Extension**

- Research how your state describes the timeline for an initial evaluation after a parent consents
- Design a UDL version of a real quiz from another class



DUDA

Ⓢ Is the sheet checking circuits, reading speed or both? The brief lists only circuits.

## ANNOTATED STUDENT WORK

## What a draft shows us.

Write a message Dec could send his teacher, with his permission, about the circuit practice sheet.

## FIRST DRAFT

Hi Ms. R, <sup>1</sup> Dec failed the circuit sheet again and we think the test is unfair to him. <sup>2</sup> He obviously knows the material because he explained it to us perfectly. At the study table he went through the whole thing out loud with no mistakes. <sup>3</sup> We think he might have a learning disability and should get an IEP so he can get extra time. My cousin has one and it helped her a lot. <sup>4</sup> Can you give him an easier version? We really think this would help him pass. <sup>5</sup> Thanks, Anika and Mari.

<sup>1</sup> **GAP** This leads with the score. Start with what the sheet is supposed to measure.

<sup>2</sup> **EVIDENCE** Good evidence, but describe it precisely: he traced the circuit aloud.

<sup>3</sup> **GAP** Friends can't establish a disability or eligibility. That's the school's evaluation process.

<sup>4</sup> **GAP** Asks for easier content. The notes point to the format, not the difficulty.

<sup>5</sup> **AUDIENCE** Dec should write or approve this. It's his request.

## REVISED

Hi Ms. R, I'm working on the circuit practice sheet. The goal says we should explain how a simple circuit works. When I talked it through with a larger diagram, I could trace the whole route. On the written sheet, I lost my place in the paragraphs and answered a different question. Could we talk about how the sheet checks the goal and what support options might help me show my reasoning? I can bring both attempts. Anika and Mari helped me write this, and I asked them to. Thanks, Dec

## ASSESSMENT

# One-page rubric.

Mark the evidence you see. Leave room for a comment and a next step.

| CRITERION                     | BEGINNING                                                                       | DEVELOPING                                                                    | PROFICIENT                                                                        | ADVANCED                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Evidence</b>               | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentions only the score.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Describes Dec's explanation vaguely.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Cites the goal and two specific observations.            | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses observations and notes what they cannot show.               |
| <b>Reasoning</b>              | <input type="checkbox"/> Concludes Dec has a disability or the test is illegal. | <input type="checkbox"/> Suggests easier content without linking to the goal. | <input type="checkbox"/> Connects a possible format barrier to the learning goal. | <input type="checkbox"/> Distinguishes classroom support from IDEA evaluation accurately. |
| <b>Audience &amp; purpose</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Message speaks for Dec without his input.              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentions Dec but ignores his voice.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Written in Dec's voice with his permission.              | <input type="checkbox"/> Respects Dec's control and gives the teacher a clear next step.  |
| <b>Revision</b>               | <input type="checkbox"/> No change.                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Removes one problem line.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces the diagnosis with an observation.              | <input type="checkbox"/> Explains how each change protects Dec's privacy and agency.      |

**Evidence I saw**

**Next step**

## STANDARDS

# What this case teaches, by the book.

**CCSS 6–8**

4

**RI.6.1** Students cite the practice brief to show speed is not part of the goal.

**RI.8.8** Students evaluate whether one practice sheet is sufficient evidence for a conclusion about Dec.

**W.7.1** Students argue for a changed practice format using Dec’s spoken explanation as evidence.

**SL.6.1** Students discuss Dec’s situation respectfully, building on each other without diagnosing him.

**CCSS 9–10**

4

**RI.9-10.1** Students cite the IDEA evaluation rule precisely, including its limits.

**RI.9-10.4** Students determine the meaning of “sole basis,” “eligibility” and “evaluation” as used in the rule.

**W.9-10.1** Students argue whether the practice sheet measures the learning goal.

**RH.9-10.8** Students assess how far the evidence supports each teacher message in decision 2.

**CCSS 11–12**

3

**RI.11-12.4** Students analyze how “sole basis” limits what a single measure can decide.

**W.11-12.1** Students write an argument distinguishing classroom support from a legal evaluation.

**SL.11-12.1** Students lead a seminar on assessment validity while keeping personal records private.

**C3 Framework**

3

**D2.Civ.12.6–8** Students assess how the IDEA evaluation rule addresses the problem of one-score decisions.

**D2.Civ.13.9–12** Students evaluate the intended outcome of varied-measure rules and what can still go wrong in practice.

**D4.7.9–12** Students identify an appropriate school contact and a question as their action option.

## AP English Language

3

**Claims and Evidence (CLE)** Students evaluate which teacher message makes a claim the evidence supports.

**Reasoning and Organization (REO)** Students order a support request: goal, observation, question.

**Rhetorical Situation (RHS)** Students write in Dec's voice, with his permission, for a teacher audience.

## IB MYP

3

**Individuals and Societies A: Knowing and understanding**

**Individuals and Societies D: Thinking critically** Students evaluate what single score can and cannot show

**Language and Literature B: Organizing** Students structure a respectful request with a clear sequence.

## IB DP

2

**Theory of Knowledge — Knowledge and the knower (core theme)**

Students ask what a test measures and whose account of knowing counts.

**Global Politics — key concepts: equality and rights**

Students examine how disability-rights law turns equal access into specific procedures.

TAKE IT OFF THE PAGE

## Learn your school's route for asking about support.

1. Find your school's student handbook or website page on learning support
2. Write one question you'd want answered, without naming a classmate
3. Ask a counselor who handles support requests and how parents or students start one
4. If a friend is struggling, ask them what they want before doing anything

### WHO TO ASK

School counselor, special-education coordinator or a teacher you trust

### STAY SAFE

Don't share anyone's grades, diagnosis or support plan. A parent or guardian usually has to be part of a formal evaluation request for students under 18.

**VOZ**

➔ Dec approves the message before anyone sends it.