

**2018-19
Participation
Guidelines and
Definitions
for Alternate
Assessments
based on Alternate
Academic
Achievement
Standards**

NCEO Report 415



NCEO

National Center on
Educational Outcome:

**2018-19 Participation Guidelines and
Definitions for Alternate Assessments
based on Alternate Academic Achievement
Standards**

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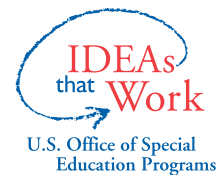
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Executive Summary

States continue to navigate the shift that came with the 1% threshold on participation in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). This shift, following the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, limited participation in the AA-AAAS to students with the “most significant cognitive disabilities.” Although states need to maintain the threshold on participation in AA-AAAS, they are not allowed to infringe on the decision making of individualized education program (IEP) teams. To assist IEP teams in their decision making, states have attempted to create clear definitions, guidelines, and decision-making tools.

This report provides an updated review of state criteria and guidelines for participation in AA-AAAS. We analyze state criteria for participation and factors not to use as the basis of decision making, as well as how states define students with the “most significant cognitive disabilities.” As the resources on state websites have increased, topics covered have expanded to include other information found in the criteria and guidelines: information for parents/guardians, English learner (EL) considerations, and exemptions from participation in the AA-AAAS.

This report also compares current findings to results from the previous review, conducted in 2017. There was an overall increase in information available for this review, including nearly twice as many states with an explicit definition of students with the “most significant cognitive disabilities” or “significant cognitive disabilities” (N=36, compared to N=17 in 2017). Although our findings showed that the top participation criteria states use and listed not to use, as well as the definition components of students taking AA-AAAS, did not substantially change from the previous report, there were additional criteria and factors found that reflected broader topics (e.g., consequences of the decision).

Across states in this analysis, the most frequently mentioned criteria for participation in AA-AAAS remained: (a) significantly affected cognitive and adaptive function (N=50), (b) extensive individualized instruction or supports (N=49), and (c) alternate or modified curriculum standards (N=49). The most common factors states required IEP teams not to use in participation decisions were: (a) disability label, placement, or service (N=45); (b) social, cultural, linguistic, or environmental factor (N=45); and (c) excessive absences (N=44). In the 36 states that met the criteria of having an explicit definition of “significant cognitive disabilities,” the most common components of their definitions were: (a) “significant cognitive deficits” (N=35) and (b) “poor adaptive skill level” (N=34).

Other information found in state materials addressed such topics as informed parent consent, considerations for ELs, and exemptions. We describe the extent to which states explicitly addressed parents in decision-making forms and procedures, and the information that states explicitly say needs to be shared with parents. In addition, some states had new mentions of EL

considerations in their materials, including a few that addressed criteria used for AA-AAAS in relation to alternate English language proficiency (ELP) assessments and vice versa. A few states also addressed whether to exempt students who have no current reliable response or to provide another tier of assessment for those students.

This report also addresses whether there are substantive differences between some states' definition of "most significant" cognitive disabilities and other states' definitions of simply "significant" cognitive disabilities. Finally, we summarize the growing body of training materials and tools provided by states to help local IEP teams make decisions for student participation in AA-AAAS.

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Overview

In response to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, states have worked to modify and clarify their policies on participation in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). Prior to ESSA, states were allowed to count 1% of students as proficient using AA-AAAS; after ESSA, states were allowed to have no more than 1.0% of students participate in AA-AAAS. This change to federal law increased the need for states to clearly communicate who the students with the “most significant cognitive disabilities” are and to offer decision-making tools that help individualized education program (IEP) teams avoid misidentifying students for the AA-AAAS.

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) analyzed state AA-AAAS participation policies in 2017 (Thurlow et al., 2017). After providing a history of AA-AAAS, starting with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, the 2017 NCEO report documented the concerns related to the students participating in AA-AAAS since that time (e.g., the possible inappropriate identification of students in certain disability categories, such as specific learning disabilities, for participation in AA-AAAS). That report also cited studies that examined learner characteristics and state assessment participation policies, with specific attention to AA-AAAS criteria (Albus & Thurlow, 2012; Musson et al., 2010; Towles-Reeves & Kearns, 2012; Thurlow, Scott, & Ysseldyke, 1995; Towles-Reeves, Kearns, Kleinert, & Kleinert, 2009).

NCEO’s 2017 report on AA-AAAS participation criteria found that all states, as well as the District of Columbia (hereafter referred to as a state), had participation guidelines at the start of the 2017-18 school year, and that the three most common participation criteria were: (a) significant cognitive disabilities or low intellectual and adaptive functioning; (b) extensive, intensive, individualized instruction and supports; and (c) use of an alternate or modified curriculum. The most common factors that states instructed IEP teams not to use as the basis for participation decisions were: (a) social, cultural, linguistic, or environmental factors, such as English learner (EL) status; (b) excessive absences; (c) poor performance or impact on the accountability system; and (d) disability label, placement, or services. Although all 51 states had participation guidelines, only 17 states had explicit definitions of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” in online materials.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on state participation criteria and guidelines for AA-AAAS. As the resources on state websites have increased, our coverage of topics they address has expanded. In this report, we analyze the same primary elements used in our previous report: criteria for participation, factors identified by states not to use as the basis for decisions, formats of resources provided, and the existence of explicit definitions of students with “signifi-

cant cognitive disabilities.” To these we add analyses of information covered in state documents about AA-AAAS participation: the type of information provided to parents, the extent to which ELs are addressed, and the inclusion of information about exemptions.

Method

In January and February 2019, NCEO staff searched the websites of state education agencies to collect AA-AAAS policy information in the following areas: (a) participation criteria for the AA-AAAS; (b) factors that should not be used in making decisions; (c) the format in which information was presented; (d) the definition of “student with a significant cognitive disability”; and (e) other notes. Items in (e) other notes included information provided to parents, information about ELs, and exemptions. The information was summarized and entered into verification forms that were sent to the states.

The collected documents included the most recently dated materials of the following types: test administration manuals, accessibility manuals, participation guideline documents, state home pages for the AA-AAAS, state materials for parents on the AA-AAAS (including Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ –pages online), and professional development materials for educators such as webinar or module transcripts.

For a state to count as having a definition of students with significant cognitive disabilities, one of its documents needed to explicitly provide a definition (e.g., “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are...”). Usually these definitions were found in companion text for tools, although a few were included in descriptive text within tools (e.g., a graphic showing participation criteria). Repeated participation criteria were not enough to be counted as a definition for this analysis.

In March 2019, verification emails were sent to the special education directors of the 51 states. These email requests were sent with tables summarizing policy on participation in AA-AAAS for state review (see Appendices A and B for examples). Twenty-one (41.2%) states responded to the verification request.

Results

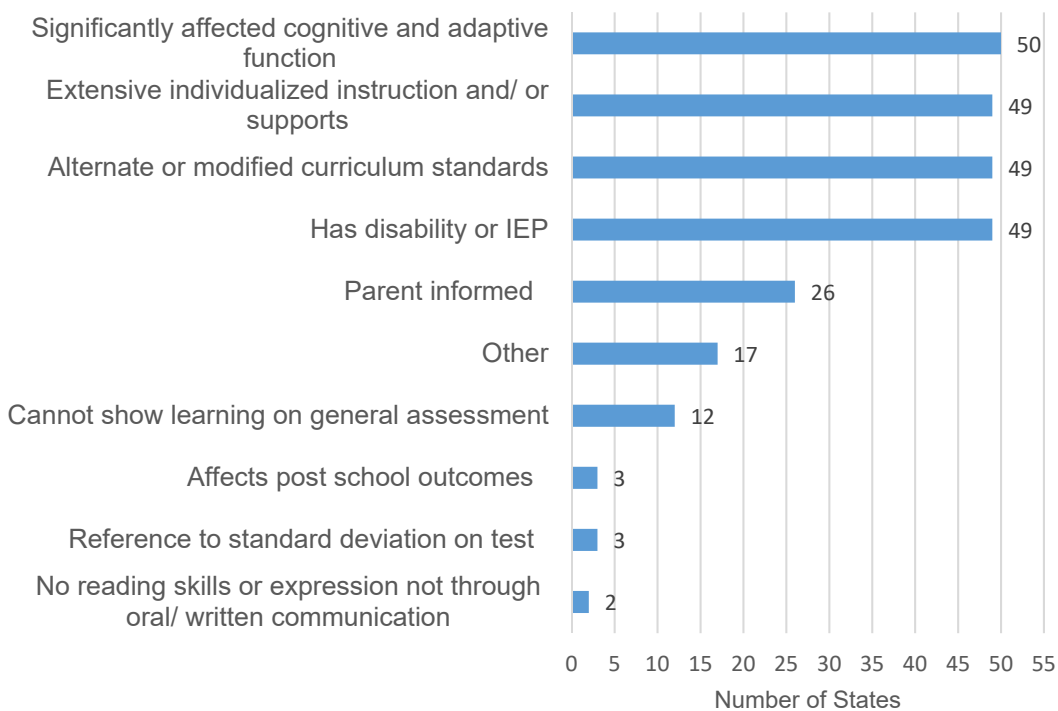
Participation Criteria for AA-AAAS

All 51 states had participation criteria for AA-AAAS online. Criteria were defined as elements that needed to be present for a student to participate in AA-AAAS. For example, if a state required that a parent or guardian be informed of the effects of the decision in order for a student

to participate, this was counted as a criterion for participation. Nine criteria were identified that were shared by at least two states; an “other” category encompassed all additional criteria. Figure 1 shows the most frequently mentioned criteria: significantly affected cognitive and adaptive function (N=50), extensive individualized instruction or supports (N=49), alternate or modified curriculum standards (N=49), has disability or IEP (N=49), and parent is informed (N=26). To view the details by state, and the specific notes for the “other” category, see Appendix C.

Criteria mentioned by 12 or fewer states included: cannot show learning on general assessment, affects post-school outcomes, reference to standard deviation on test (i.e., assessments of cognitive or adaptive functioning), and no reading skills or student expression not through oral or written communication.

Figure 1. AA-AAAS Participation Criteria (N=51)



States listed many sources of possible evidence in their state policies and forms to encourage multiple perspectives of a student’s abilities and skills for each of the criteria areas. Examples of some of these sources of evidence included (see Appendix C for details):

- Results of individual cognitive ability test
- Results of adaptive behavior skills assessment

- Results of individual and group administered achievement tests
- Results of informal assessment
- Results of individual reading assessments
- Results of district-wide alternate assessments
- Results of language assessments including English language proficiency (ELP) assessments, if applicable
- Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials, including work samples from both school and community-based instruction
- Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives from the IEP
- Data from scientific research-based interventions
- Progress monitoring data
- Teacher-collected data and checklists
- Transition plan for students age 16 and older unless state policy or the IEP team determines a younger age is appropriate

Factors Not to Use as Basis for AA-AAAS Decisions

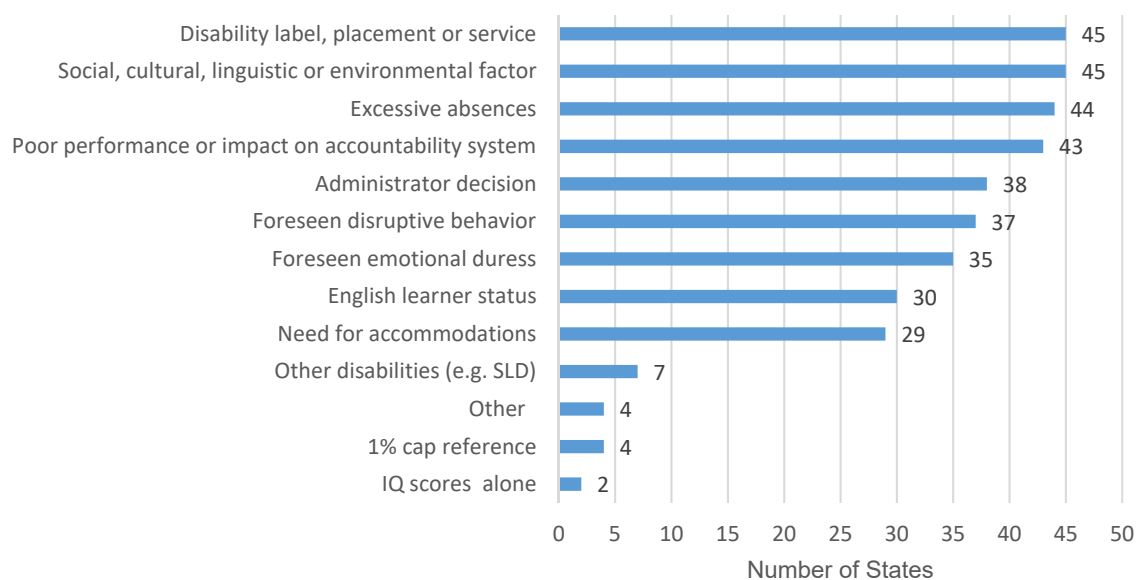
Forty-six states identified factors **not** to be used as the basis for decisions to participate in AA-AAAS. The factors most frequently mentioned in state materials are shown in Figure 2. Of the states that listed factors not to use, nearly all included the following: disability label, placement, or service (N=45); social, cultural, linguistic, or environmental factor (N=45); excessive absences (N=44); and poor performance or impact on accountability system (N=43). Other factors mentioned frequently in state policies were: administrator decision (N=38), foreseen disruptive behavior (N=37), foreseen emotional duress (N=35), EL status (N=30), and need for accommodations (N=29). Other factors, mentioned in fewer than 10 states' policies, were: certain disabilities (e.g., specific learning disabilities), reference to 1.0% cap, using IQ scores alone, and an "other" category. For more details on the data in Figure 2, see Appendix D.

Of the 45 states that listed "social, cultural, linguistic or environmental factors," among characteristics not to use, 29 of them made the additional distinction of listing "English learner status" separately. In one state, counted as having both criteria, the two criteria were found not in the

same document but in two different ones that appeared to be used concurrently. A few states that mentioned EL status also added text addressing the appropriate use of this factor in making decisions about participation in the state’s alternate ELP assessment, discussed later in this report. Seventeen states listed only one criterion: one state listed EL status only, and 16 states listed social, cultural, linguistic, or environmental factors only.

Another combination of closely related factors was states’ mention of “administrator decision” and the “1% cap.” Of the 38 states that listed administrator decision, three states also separately mentioned the 1% cap. One state referenced the 1% cap only.

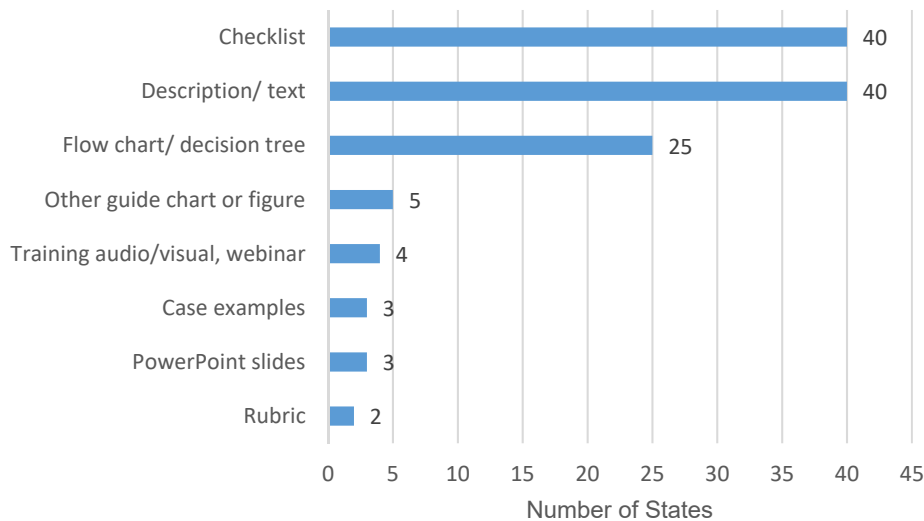
Figure 2. Factors Not to be Used as Basis of Decisions for AA-AAAS Participation (N=46)



Format of Participation Criteria for AA-AAAS

All 51 states communicated information about making participation decisions for AA-AAAS, but they did so using different formats, which are listed in Figure 3. Most states offered some type of descriptive text or checklist (N=40) for IEP teams to use during decision making. Often, states paired the descriptive text in a companion document, or within the same document as the checklist. About half of the states provided a decision tree or flow chart (N=25). A handful of states offered information in other formats, including guideline charts or factor lists, on-demand training with audio/visual components or webinars, student case examples, PowerPoint slides, or rubrics. See Appendix E for more details on Figure 3. For examples of state tools, see Appendix F.

Figure 3. Format of Criteria for Participation in AA-AAAS (N=51)



Several decision flow charts included information not typical in other states, such as brief mentions of language or communication skills, to direct decision-makers to choose alternate ELP assessments or to provide guidance on how to select the proper version of AA-AAAS for students (e.g., for those who have no reliable demonstration of communication).

Two states used rubrics that paired questions about decision criteria areas with a continuum of defining characteristics, along with instructions on how to interpret the results for participation. This differs from typical yes or no checklists, instead presenting shades of meaning for each criterion. The two states used nearly identical rubrics, but provided different guidance to interpret the answers to determine participation (see example below of one of the five sections of rubrics in a state tool).

3. Does the data review provide evidence of significant cognitive disability (a person's ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience)?			
<p>___ Presence of disability documented no evidence that a cognitive disability interferes with learning; goals and objectives that are designed to support learners in learning grade-level skills and concepts in the standards.</p>	<p>___ Documentation shows the learner may have benchmark and diagnostic data that show a wide skill gap in reading. Prescriptive, direct and systematic instruction is present in the IEP. (Note: Complex reading difficulties do not qualify the learner as having a significant cognitive disability.)</p>	<p>___ Evidence that a cognitive disability interferes with learning grade-level skills and concepts. Goals and objectives address grade level academic skills and concepts through extended standards and learning progressions.</p>	<p>___ Evidence that a cognitive disability significantly interferes with learning grade-level skills and concepts. Presence of goals and objectives to support acquisition of expressive and receptive language and communication skills and/or sensory/motor access for active participation and engagement aligned with grade-level concepts.</p>

Ohio Department of Education (2018, November). *Companion to Participation Guidelines and Decision-Making Flowchart*.

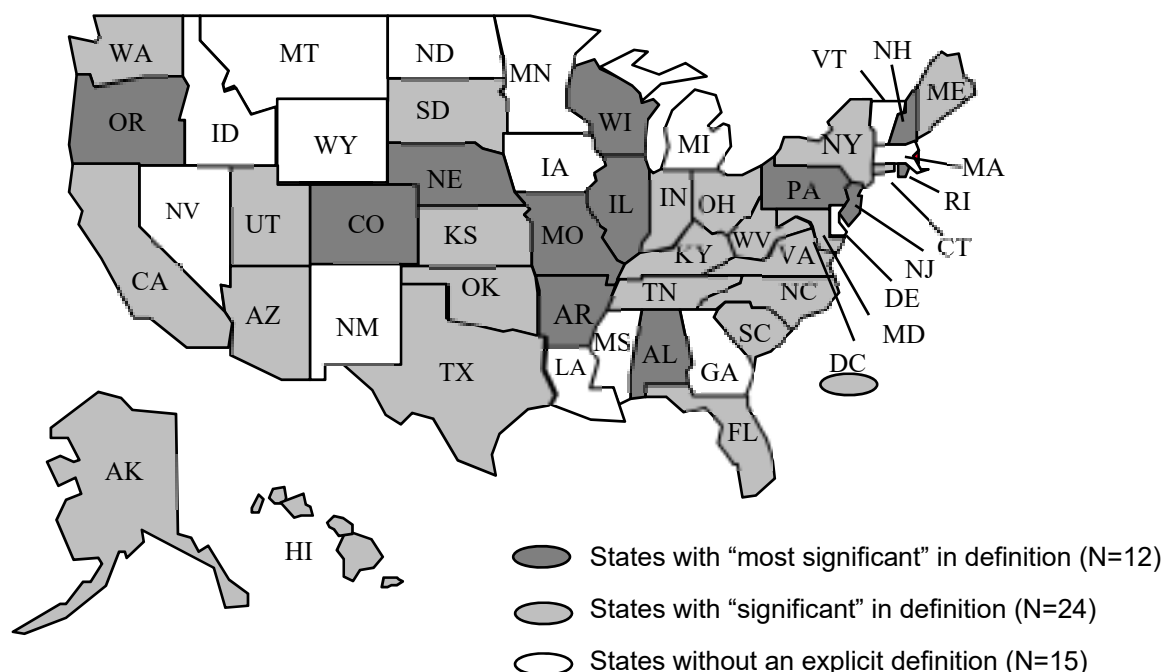
States varied in the amount of direction given to determine participation, with some indicating how many “yes” responses would indicate that the student should participate in the AA-AAAS. See Appendix G for a list of links to examples of state tools and professional development offerings.

Definitions of Significant Cognitive Disabilities

In this section, we present the number of states that had an explicit definition of the students who are eligible to take AA-AAAS. To be counted as having an explicit definition, states needed to use definitive phrasing, such as “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are...” or “significant cognitive disabilities are characterized by...” This included instances in which states used an explicit definition structure to convey variability. We counted definitions using this phrasing in any publicly available documents, regardless of whether they were guidelines or tools. We did not count lists of characteristics or textual descriptions if they did not use explicit phrasing.

Figure 4 shows the 36 states found to have explicit definitions. We distinguish between those states that used the term students with “significant cognitive disabilities” (N=12) or “most significant cognitive disabilities” (N=24) in their definitions.

Figure 4. States with Explicit Definitions of Students with Significant and Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities



The following are some examples of definitions found in state materials:

- “A student with a significant cognitive disability is one who has records that indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. *Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.*” (District of Columbia)
- “...the designation of ‘the most significant cognitive disability’ is left to the professional judgment of the school psychologist and other professionals contributing to the body of evidence gathered during the evaluation and considered by the IEP Team. Generally, such students can be characterized as having intellectual functioning well below average (typically associated with cognitive measures indicating an IQ below 55, / 3.0 standard deviations or more below the mean) that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive functioning. This reference is only offered to help distinguish between students who meet eligibility criteria to receive special education services as a student with an Intellectual Disability and students with the most significant cognitive disability. The words ‘typically associated with IQ below 55’ allow for some district/school flexibility; it is not intended to be an absolute requirement. For students with IQ measured in the 55-70 range, additional factors related to the severity and impact of the disability must be taken into account when considering the selection of alternate academic achievement standards and assessment.” (Colorado)
- “Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are typically characterized by significantly below average general cognitive functioning. This commonly includes a student with intelligence test scores two or more standard deviations below the mean on a standardized individually administered intelligence test, occurring with commensurate deficits in adaptive behavior that are frequently also evident in early childhood. Further, the cognitive disability must significantly impact the child’s educational performance and ability to generalize learning from one setting to another. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in general require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services to access an educational program. These students may also rely on adults for personal care and have medical conditions that require physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices. These intensive and on-going supports and services are typically provided directly by educators and are delivered across all educational settings.” (Oregon)
- “The term ‘significant cognitive disability’ is not a new separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of participation in the statewide student assessment program. This subgroup of students referred

to in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as having ‘significant cognitive disabilities’ constitutes less than one percent of the student population. The students are (1) within one or more of the existing categories of disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (e.g., intellectual disability, autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury); and (2) whose cognitive impairments affect adaptive function and may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with systematic instruction.” (Kansas)

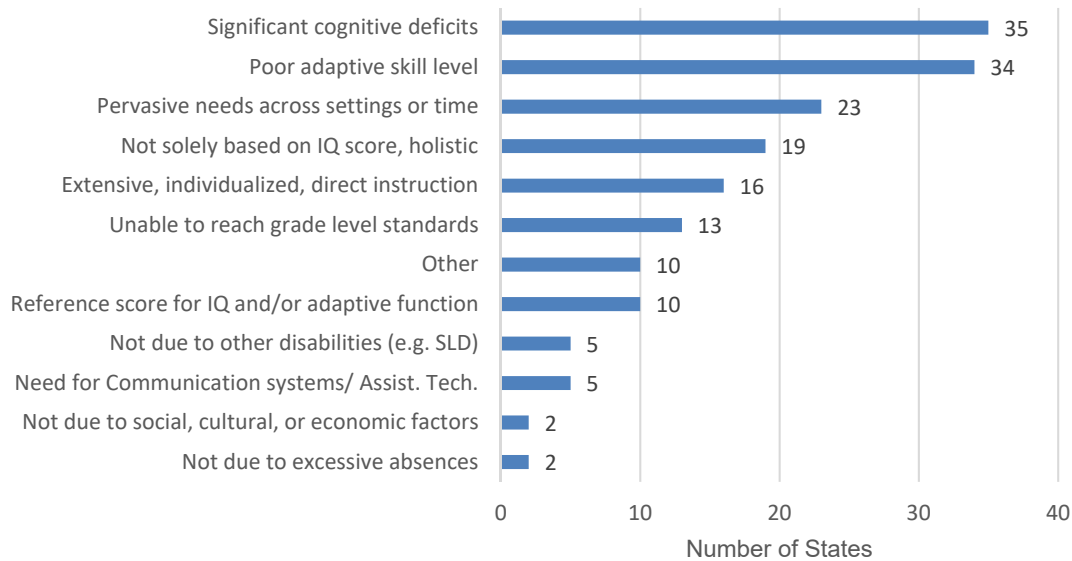
- “As presented in the participation criteria for the alternate assessment, a student has a significant cognitive disability if their records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. This is not to say that IQ score cannot be a consideration and one piece of evidence when determining eligibility, but it should never be used in isolation. And no specific IQ cut score should be inferred as defining eligibility.” (Ohio)

The list of all state definitions gathered for use in this analysis is included in Appendix H.

Components of State Definitions

The components that states used to define the population taking AA-AAAS are shown in Figure 5. (See Appendix I for additional detail.) Figure 5 includes only those 36 states that met our criteria of having an explicit definition. Nearly all state definitions included “significant cognitive deficits” (N=35) and “poor adaptive skill level” (N=34). Most of these states noted pervasive needs across settings or time (N=23), followed by not basing decisions solely on IQ scores (N=19) and the need for extensive, individualized, direct instruction (N=16). About a third of the definitions included students not being able to reach grade level standards (N=13), referencing an IQ or adaptive test score (N=10), or another component (N=10).

Figure 5. Components of State Definitions of Significant Cognitive Disabilities



Five states included in their definitions considerations of whether a student needed certain accommodations, such as communication devices or assistive technology. Five or fewer states included factors not to consider when determining whether a student has a “significant” or “most significant” cognitive disability: certain disabilities; excessive absences; and social, cultural, or economic factors.

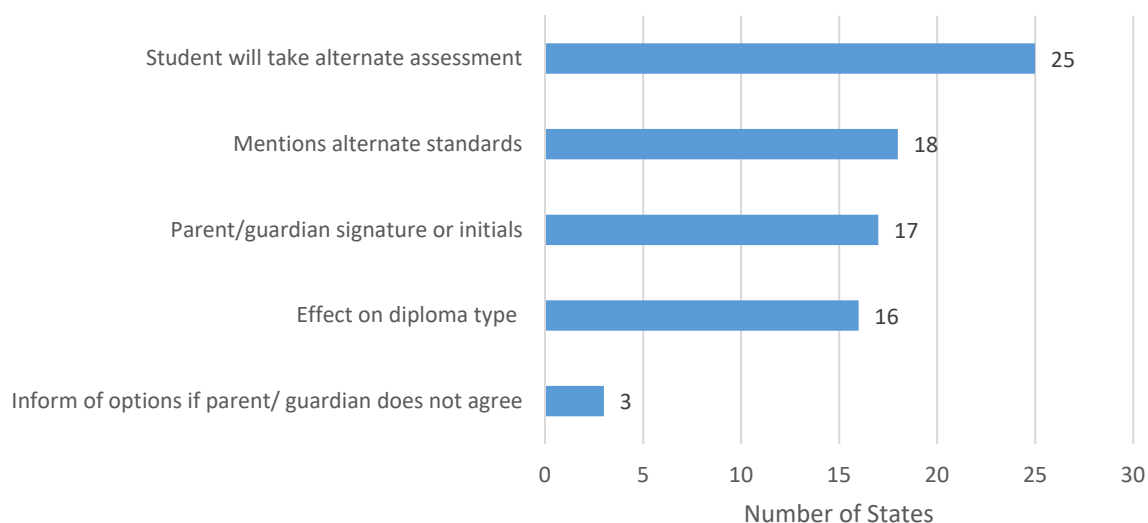
Of those states referencing IQ scores in their definitions, whether or not they were explicit about the holistic use of scores, eight used the “most significant cognitive disabilities” phrasing but cited very different IQs to be considered eligible for the AA-AAAS. The IQs ranged from 2 to 3 standard deviations below the mean. There were no clear differences in the definition components between the states that defined “significant cognitive disabilities” and “most significant cognitive disabilities.”

Parent Information in Alternate Assessment Materials

Twenty-six states had some level of information about informing parents or guardians about what student participation in AA-AAAS means in terms of the type of standards used and the impact on post-school outcomes, such as type of diplomas offered. This information was found in either state participation criteria forms or accompanying text. The information varied in whether or not parent permission had to be documented. Although some states required parent signatures for students to take AA-AAAS, others required only members of the IEP team to sign.

Figure 6 shows the number of states that included various elements of information for parents. Almost all states that had information for parents clearly identified on the form that the student would take the alternate assessment (N=25), and most were explicit about parents understanding that the AA-AAAS measures student performance on alternate achievement standards (N=18). Parent signatures or initials were required by most states (N=17). Although states often have parents sign IEP forms separate from AA-AAAS decision forms (e.g., practices of using signatures “on file” over time), the inclusion of these signatures were distinct for the purpose of participation in the AA-AAAS. The potential impact on post-school outcomes, often specifying diploma options available to students, was included in a majority of state forms (N=16). A small number of states provided information for parents on what they could do if they disagreed with an IEP team decision (N=3).

Figure 6. Parent Information (N=26)



Although most states had requirements to “inform” parents, some expected a higher level of interaction, using the term “understanding.” For example, one state specified a process of providing parents with an information booklet and ensuring that they were able to ask questions about anything not understood. Although one state mentioned providing parents with information about AA-AAAS reports in a language that they understand, no states mentioned linguistic considerations for parents when making participation decisions. See Appendices J (how parent is informed) and K (text of parent information) for further details.

One state included a requirement not only to inform parents but also to inform the student. In this state, the only state to include such a requirement in the materials we reviewed, the student is to be informed about what the decision to participate in the AA-AAAS would mean for the student.

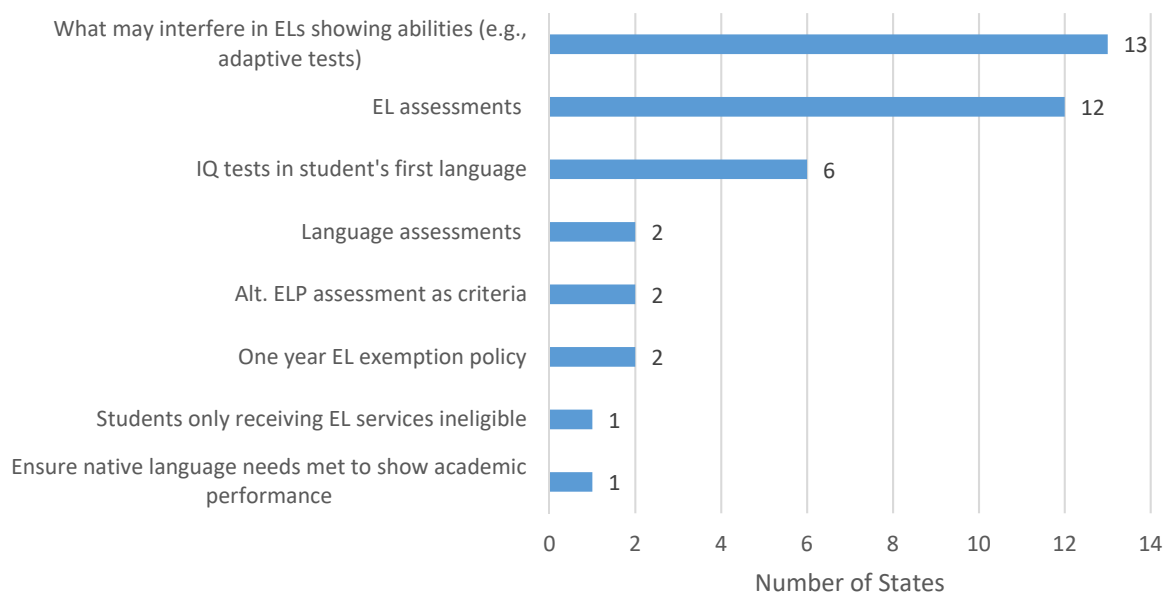
English Learner Mentions in AA-AAAS Materials

Twenty-six states had some mention of ELs or language considerations in their documents about alternate assessment participation. Of these, 24 states had EL information focused on decisions for the AA-AAAS; two states commented in these materials only about alternate ELP assessment decisions. Of the 24 states, 22 states referenced ELs in their information on what type of evidence to consider in meeting criteria for participation and two addressed the one-year EL testing exemption for English language arts (ELA).

Figure 7 shows the factors mentioned by the 24 states with EL information on decisions. The highest number of states noted what may interfere with ELs being able to show their abilities, including their adaptive skills (N=13) and English language proficiency (N=12). The latter category included states that generally referred to performance on ELP assessments and one state that specifically mentioned performance on alternate ELP assessments. A smaller number of states (N=6) noted that ELs should be assessed for cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior in their first language and with linguistic and sociocultural factors taken into account. The following is an example of such a requirement:

An English Learner should be considered for the alternate assessment if (a) his/her intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in his/her home language as appropriate, and (b) he/she meets the alternate participation guidelines. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments. (IDEA Section 300.304(3)(c)(1) as cited in Maine, 2018, p. 6)

Figure 7. Mentions of EL or Language in AA-AAAS Criteria (N=24)



Two states mentioned language assessments as potential evidence; because they did not specify whether English or other languages were intended, we listed this as a component separate from ELP assessments. Two states mentioned using alternate ELP assessment scores as criteria. Two states mentioned the newly arrived ELs' one year exemption from taking ELA content assessments. One state mentioned that if a student only received EL services they were ineligible, and another state mentioned ensuring that all students have a personalized communication system that includes native languages to demonstrate academic performance. For more details on data in Figure 7, see Appendix L.

Four of the 24 states addressed criteria to use when making decisions about the participation of ELs in the alternate ELP tests as well as AA-AAAS. Two of these states said the decision made for a student to participate in the AA-AAAS would apply to alternate ELP assessments. Likewise, one of those two states said if there was a decision for an EL to take the alternate ELP assessment, the decision would apply to participation in the AA-AAAS. Another state indicated that it had separate criteria for deciding whether ELs take the alternate ELP assessment and whether they take an alternate content assessment. The fourth state asked in its decision chart for the AA-AAAS whether the student was an EL and whether the student had a significant cognitive disability. If the answer to both questions was yes, the student became eligible for the alternate ELP assessment, but further details were not provided. See Appendices L (mentions of EL or language) and M (nature of mentions) for details.

Other mentions of ELs in alternate ELP tests, with one state each, included the following requirements: (a) medical and "no reliable communication response" exemptions apply to AA-AAAS and ELP assessments, (b) decision makers collaborate with EL staff in decision making, (c) social/linguistic factors not be the sole exclusionary criteria for an alternate ELP test, and (d) any findings of disproportionality must address language status.

Exemption and Non-Exemption Information for AA-AAAS

This section describes the information made available in, or in close proximity to, the AA-AAAS information that addressed exemptions (e.g., in an AA-AAAS document or linked from an AA-AAAS web page). Six states had some type of information about exemptions that fell into one or more categories. Four states had a medical circumstance category, and three states included extraordinary circumstances that ranged from the severity of a communication or emotional disability to events such as a death in family. Two states mentioned the one-year EL exemption for ELA assessments. In addition, two states had exemptions based on a student not having a reliable form of communication, although one of these states added a new tier of AA-AAAS designed for these students. One state had an exemption for parents to opt a student out of testing, but did not reference extraordinary or medical circumstances.

Three states had information about either having no opt-out from testing option, or requiring students to participate in the AA-AAAS even if they did not have a reliable form of communication. Five states had language indicating that a student who qualified for the AA-AAAS would take the AA-AAAS for all content areas. One state had an option for students to take an AA-AAAS in one content area and a general assessment in another content area, with or without accommodations, but the state indicated that this was rare. See Appendix N for details.

Discussion

This analysis of AA-AAAS participation policies follows previous reviews (Albus & Thurlow, 2012; Musson et al., 2010; Thurlow et al., 1995; Thurlow et al., 2017). Its findings reflect many of the previous results, with some additional observations. States continue to refine their AA-AAAS participation criteria and guidelines to address the federal 1.0% participation threshold and to avoid possible unintended consequences of misidentifying students for the AA-AAAS.

The most often identified criteria for participating in AA-AAAS in 2017 (*significantly affected cognitive and adaptive function, extensive individualized instruction and/or supports, and alternative or modified curriculum standards*) became even more frequent in 2019; each of these criteria was shared by 49 or 50 states. Some states also required informing parents (N=26), which often entailed providing information on possible consequences for diplomas and post-school outcomes. For a few states, expectations that a student's disability would affect post-school outcomes was also introduced as a criterion in decision making.

The four most frequent factors identified as those not to use as the basis for participation decisions stayed the same from 2017 to 2019: (a) *disability label, placement, or service*; (b) *social, cultural, linguistic, or environmental factors*; (c) *excessive absences*; and (d) *poor performance or impact on accountability system*. A handful of additional states subscribed to those criteria in 2019 compared to 2017, and new factors were added to the list. For example, although the previous factor of *social, cultural, linguistic, or environmental factors* increased from 41 to 45 states, 30 states also made *EL status* a separate factor. The number of states listing *administrator decision* rose from 29 to 38, and the number of states listing a student's *need for accommodations* rose from 24 to 29. Four states listed a new factor of *not letting the state 1.0% threshold affect local decisions*.

In the 2017 review, 17 states were found to have an explicit definition of students with “significant cognitive disabilities.” In 2019, an explicit definition was found for more than twice as many states (N=36). One limitation of this study is that slightly less than half of the states verified their information (N=21), which made it difficult to pinpoint official definitions in cases where states used definition-like language in multiple places. Still, we did not find any essential

differences in definition components between the states that defined “significant cognitive disabilities” and those that defined “most significant cognitive disabilities.” The increase in states with explicit definitions did not change the top four components used in definitions: *significant cognitive deficits*, *poor adaptive skill level*, *pervasive needs across settings or time*, and *not solely based on IQ score*. However, while *accommodations use* was listed by many states as a factor not to consider during participation decisions, five states referred to types of accommodations students use (i.e., communication systems and assistive technology) when defining students with “significant” or the “most significant” cognitive disabilities.

New analyses in this 2019 review included information on communicating with parents, making decisions for ELs, and granting exemptions from participation. Parent consent was mentioned by some states as a criterion for participation in AA-AAAS; often school staff were required to communicate potential effects of participation on post-secondary outcomes, specifically diploma options. The information on parent consent rarely established a process to ensure parent understanding (e.g., giving the parent opportunities for questions or providing information in a language used by the parent).

The number of states including information for ELs potentially eligible to participate in AA-AAAS increased between 2017 and 2019. Twenty-four states mentioned ELs in their sources of evidence to consider (e.g., ELP assessment performance) when making decisions about AA-AAAS participation, while 30 states included EL status as a factor not to use as the basis for a participation decision. Several states started to blend decision making for AA-AAAS and alternate ELP assessments, likely due to ELP assessments being administered at earlier grades than general assessments. Still, one state was explicit in maintaining separate criteria for alternate ELP assessments. In addition, because the validity of tests used to help make AA-AAAS participation decisions (e.g., adaptive functioning) is crucial, some states (N=6) described offering these tests in the language of the student as an ideal “as feasible.”

The one-year EL exemption from ELA testing was not the only type of exemption mentioned in materials addressing AA-AAAS participation. A handful of states had information on granting students exemptions because of extraordinary or medical circumstances or because they did not have a reliable form of communication. Of the two states that addressed a lack of reliable communication as a basis for exemption, one had recently made an AA-AAAS tier available for these students.

States disseminated information on AA-AAAS criteria and definitions in much the same formats as noted in the 2017 report (e.g., checklists, decision-trees, etc.). The exception was that a few more states used “other formats” such as case studies, rubrics, or on-demand multimedia training materials.

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Appendix A

Email Requesting Verification

The National Center on Educational Outcomes is examining the ways in which states address who participates in alternate assessment. Our goal is to examine:

- a) Definitions of “significant cognitive disabilities” (SCD) (Note: Only states with documents
- b) that contain explicit phrases defining/explaining SCD, such as “students with SCD are...”, “SCD are defined as...” etc., are identified as “defines SCD”);
- c) Participation criteria for alternate assessment;
- d) Format of participation criteria for alternate assessment

To address this goal, we reviewed your state website for assessment participation guidelines and forms to document decision making during January and February 2019 and summarized them into tables, attached to this email, for your review.

Please verify all included information. Specifically, please return the tables that we have attached, noting your changes to them and the website source for these changes. Address your responses to Deb Albus via email [email address removed].

If you have any other questions about our request, please email Martha Thurlow or call at [phone number removed]. Please respond by Friday, March 22, 2019. Thank you for taking the time to provide this information.

Martha Thurlow, Director, NCEO

Appendix B

Sample State Profile Sent for Verification

Wisconsin

A. Definition of “significant cognitive disabilities”:

Wisconsin defines “significant cognitive disabilities” as follows:

GUIDE TO DETERMINING STUDENTS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES p. 5

Significant cognitive disability is characterized by scores on verbal or nonverbal assessments of cognition that are at least 2½–3 standard deviations below the mean. Academic deficits or difficulties alone do not indicate that a student has a significant cognitive disability. Further, a significant cognitive disability will be pervasive, affecting student learning across content areas and in social and community settings. Not all students with intellectual disabilities have the most significant cognitive disability. **Students should be carefully considered for the alternate academic achievement standards, the Wisconsin Essential Elements, and they should not automatically be assigned to the alternate assessment based on their identified disability category.** Many students eligible to receive special education services under these categorical labels are able to participate in general curriculum, when provided with specially designed instruction, as well as any needed related services, supplementary aids and services (e.g. instructional accommodations), and program modifications and supports for school staff. For technical assistance on obtaining a level of cognition for students who may be difficult to assess, please review the *Guidance and Worksheet on Obtaining a Valid Cognitive Abilities Assessment* found on the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Intellectual Disabilities webpage.

Adaptive behavior relates to independence in everyday living skills, including interpersonal and social interactions across multiple settings. To be considered a student with a most significant cognitive disability, students should demonstrate deficits in adaptive behavior with scores that are at least 2½–3 standard deviations below the mean in at least two adaptive skill domains below.

- **Conceptual skills:** receptive and expressive language, reading and writing, money concepts, self-direction.
- **Social skills:** interpersonal, responsibility, self-esteem, follows rules, obeys laws, is not gullible, and avoids victimization.
- **Practical skills:** personal activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, mobility and toileting; instrumental activities of daily living such as preparing meals, taking medication, using the telephone, managing money, using transportation and doing house-keeping activities; occupational skills; maintaining a safe environment

Source: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/spe/pdf/mscd-guide-to-determining-students-with-mscd.pdf>

Based on the above, the following criteria are identified as definitive of “significant cognitive disabilities”;

State	Significant cognitive/intellectual deficits	Poor adaptive skill level	Unable to reach grade level standards	Extensive, individualized, direct instruction	Pervasive needs across settings or time	Reference score for IQ and/or adaptive function	Not solely based on IQ score, holistic	Not due to excessive absences	Not due to other disabilities (e.g., SLD)	Not due to social, cultural, or economic factors
WI	X	X			X	X				

B. Participation criteria for alternate assessment

State	Has disability or IEP	SCD, or significantly affected cognitive and adaptive function	Alternate or modified curriculum standards	Extensive individualized instruction and/or supports	Cannot show learning on general assessment	Other
WI	X	X	X	X		X

Other: Parent informed about diploma

Under 300.160, IEP teams must inform parents on the difference between assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards and those based on alternate academic achievement standards and how participating in alternate assessments may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma. ESSA also states that a student participating in the alternate assessment cannot be precluded from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma. Sample IEP Form I-7A included in Appendices A, includes parent notification as part of the participation guidelines for participating in the alternate assessment.

Factors not to be used for alternate assessment participation

	Social, cultural, language or environment factors	Disability label, placement or services	Excessive absences	Need for accommodations	Foreseen emotional duress	Foreseen disruptive behavior	Poor performance or impact on accountability system	Administrator decision	Other disabilities (e.g., SLD)	Other
State	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
WI										X

Source:

Other: English Learner (EL) status

C. Format of participation criteria for alternate assessment

	Description /text	Flow-chart/ decision tree	Checklist	Other
WI	X	X	X	
				Alternate Assessment
				Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

Source:

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/mscd-guide-to-determining-students-with-mscd.pdf>

Appendix C

Participation Criteria for AA-AAAS

State	Has disability or IEP	Significantly affected cognitive and adaptive function	Alternate or modified curriculum standards	Extensive individualized instruction and/or supports	Cannot show learning on general assessment
AL	X	X*	X		
AK	X	X	X	X	
AZ	X	X	X	X	
AR	X	X	X	X	
CA	X	X	X	X	
CO	X	X	X	X	
CT	X	X	X	X	
DE	X	X	X	X	
DC	X	X	X	X	
FL	X	X	X	X	X
GA	X	X	X	X	
HI	X	X	X	X	
ID		X	X*	X	X
IL	X	X	X	X	
IN	X	X	X	X	
IA	X	X	X	X	
KS	X	X	X	X	
KY	X	X	X	X	
LA	X	X	X	X	
ME	X	X	X	X	
MD	X	X	X	X	X
MA	X	X	X	X	X
MI	X	X	X	X	
MN	X	X	X*	X	X
MS		X	X	X	
MO	X	X	X*	X	
MT	X	X	X*	X	
NE	X	X	X	X	
NV	X	X			

State	Has disability or IEP	Significantly affected cognitive and adaptive function	Alternate or modified curriculum standards	Extensive individualized instruction and/or supports	Cannot show learning on general assessment
NH	X	X	X	X	X
NJ	X	X	X	X	
NM	X	X	X	X	X
NY	X	X		X	
NC	X	X	X	X	
ND	X		X	X	
OH	X*	X	X	X	
OK	X	X	X	X	
OR	X	X	X	X	
PA	X	X	X	X	
RI	X	X	X	X	
SC	X	X	X	X	
SD	X	X	X	X	
TN	X	X	X	X	
TX	X	X*	X	X*	
UT	X	X	X*	X	
VT	X	X	X	X	
VA	X	X	X	X	X*
WA	X	X	X	X	X*
WV	X	X	X	X	X*
WI	X	X	X	X	
WY	X	X	X	X	X
Total	49	50	49	49	11

*See notes below.

AL: Significantly cognitively disabled: In Alabama, the definition of a student with significant cognitive disabilities includes the following “a student with an intelligent quotient (IQ) of three standard deviations below the mean, which is an IQ of 55 or below.”

ID Alternate or modified curriculum standards: The student’s course of study is primarily functional-skill and living-skill oriented (typically not measured by State or district assessments).

MN Alternate curriculum standards: The IEP team reviewed the student’s instructional program to ensure that the student is receiving instruction linked to the general education curriculum to the extent appropriate. If instruction is not linked to the general education curriculum, then the IEP team must review the student’s goals and determine how access to the general curriculum will be provided....

AND regarding general assessment:

The IEP team documented, in the IEP, reasons the MCA would not be an appropriate measure of the student’s academic progress and how the student would participate in statewide testing.

MO Alternate standards: Does the student’s most significant cognitive disability impact the student’s access to the curriculum and requires specialized instruction? The student requires a highly specialized

educational program with intensive supports and modification/accommodations AND daily instruction on a substantially different grade level from peers, AND intensive instructional strategies AND information through other methods than reading, AND alternate methods to express ideas/info

MT Alternate or modified curriculum standards: Do the student's learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application of skills, as illustrated in the student's IEP annual goals and short-term objectives?

TX Significantly cognitively disabled: STAAR Alternate 2 may only be considered if the student's disability includes intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior deficits that primarily and significantly affect the student's ability to plan, comprehend, reason, and apply social and practical skills in everyday life.

Extensive instruction and supports: A student with a significant cognitive disability demonstrates adaptive behaviors that are significantly impaired. This most likely will impact the student's ability to live independently and will require specialized supports for the student to function safely in daily life across all life domains, not just the school environment.

UT Alternate standards: Requires instruction through the Utah alternate achievement standards (Essential Elements and Extended Core) The student's course of study includes functional and life skills instruction and may be eligible to participate in alternate assessments (DLM, UAA, KEEP Alternate, DIBELS Alternate, etc.). AND Student is learning content linked to the Utah Core Standards through the Alternate Achievement Standards, the Essential Elements and the Extended Core Standards for all content areas.

VA General assessment: If the IEP Team determines that the student will participate in the VAAP instead of taking SOL tests with or without accommodations, a statement that addresses each of the following must be included in the IEP: why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment.

WA General assessment: Finally, when an IEP team determines that the student should take an alternate assessment, the team must document in the IEP: 1) why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment, and 2) why the alternate assessment selected (i.e., WA-AIM and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) is appropriate to assess the student's academic, or language if eligible, performance.

WV General assessment: For students designated to take the *WVASA*, the IEP must specify that the student meets criteria for an alternate assessment, explaining why the student cannot participate in the *WVGSA Grades 3-8* and *CBA* or *SAT School Day*, and document any accommodations used in accordance with WVS.326 procedures.

Appendix C - continued

Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessment

State	Parent Informed	Reference to standard deviation on test	No reading and expression not through oral/written communication	Effects post school outcomes	Other
AL	X				X*
AK	X				
AZ	X				
AR	X				
CA	X				
CO					
CT					
DE	X				X*
DC	X				
FL	X				X*
GA					
HI	X				
ID					
IL					
IN					
IA					
KS					
KY	X				X*
LA	X				
ME	X				
MD	X				X*
MA	X				
MI	X				
MN					X*
MS		X*			X*
MO			X	X*	
MT					
NE					
NV	X				
NH					
NJ					

State	Parent Informed	Reference to standard deviation on test	No reading and expression not through oral/written communication	Effects post school outcomes	Other
NM	X				X*
NY					X*
NC	X				X*
ND			X	X*	
OH	X				X*
OK					X*
OR				X	
PA		X*			X*
RI	X				
SC	X				X*
SD					
TN	X				
TX	X				
UT					
VT					
VA	X				X*
WA		X*			
WV	X				X*
WI	X				
WY					X*
Total	26	1	2	3	17

*See notes below.

AL: **Other** The IEP Team decision ...may be based on the review of the student's evaluation results, progress monitoring data, work samples, etc.

DE **Other**: Student has reliable communication. If student does not- they instead participate in another type of alternate Delaware Communication Portfolio.

FL **Other**: The student typically does not have a formal mode of communication and is working at pre-academic levels (to determine FSAA Datafolio instead of FSAA Performance Task.

KY **Other**: The parent was provided a copy of the Alternate Assessment Parent Guide with an opportunity to ask questions.

MD **Other**: The IEP team must annually consider the following information to determine whether the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for an individual student: Description of the student's instruction, including data on progress, Classroom work samples and data, Examples of performance on assessment tasks to compare with classroom work, Results of district-wide assessments, Results of individualized English/ language arts, Mathematics, and Science assessments, IEP information including:: Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, goals, and short-term objectives, Considerations for students with individualized and substantial communication needs or modes (from multiple data sources), Consideration for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (e.g., English Learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive skills.

MN **Other**: State defines significantly below grade expectations in glossary to explain definition in decision-making as "Significantly below the average cognitive functioning of typically developing peers; determined by:

At least “two standard deviations below the mean, plus or minus one standard error of measurement” (Minn R. 3525.1333) on a standardized norm-referenced measure of cognitive functioning; OR When formal cognitive assessments are inappropriate or invalid, other data-based measures may be used to document functioning significantly below age expectations consistent with IDEA Sec 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VI)(bb) “

MS Standard deviation reference: The student has an IQ score or developmental level two or more standard deviations below the mean.

Other: Also, with accommodations/modifications in place, the student is not able to participate in and make progress in the standard academic curriculum.

MO Post School Outcomes: The student’s post-secondary outcomes for independent living will likely require supported or assisted living. The student may have a guardian when he/she turns age 18. The student would require moderate to significant supervision in order to access the community for recreation, employment, training and daily living. The student’s post-secondary outcomes for education/training will likely include on-the-job training for sheltered or supported employment, as well as skill acquisition for social, communication and/or behavior. The student’s post-secondary outcomes for employment will likely result in sheltered or supported employment, part-time employment, participation in day activity centers or home.

NM Other: Also, multiple evidence need to be provided to answer questions in participation criteria.

NY Other: “Students with severe disabilities” refers to students who have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self- fulfillment. Students with severe disabilities may experience severe speech, language, and/or perceptual-cognitive impairments and challenging behaviors that interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. These students may also have extremely fragile physiological conditions and may require personal care, physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices.

NC Other: The student is enrolled in grades 3–8, 10, or 11, according to PowerSchool. AND separate criteria for alternate preACT and ACT for college and career readiness tests:

CCRAA at Grades 10 and 11:

- The student must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- The student does not have a current Section 504 Plan only. Students with only Section 504 Plans (i.e., students who do not have a current IEP that designates participation in an alternate assessment) are not eligible for participation in any of North Carolina’s alternate assessments. These students may participate in the standard test administration with or without accommodations as documented in their individual Section 504 Plans.
- The student exhibits severe and pervasive delays in all areas of conceptual, linguistic, and academic development and in adaptive behaviors, including communication, daily living skills, and self-care.
- The student is following a course of study that, upon completion of high school, may not lead to admission into a college level course of study resulting in a college degree (i.e., the Occupational Course of Study).
- The student is not receiving instruction in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards. Students receiving instruction in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards may be eligible for the NCEX-TEND1 Alternate Assessments at Grades 10 and 11.

The student meets the criteria above and has a written parental request for the administration of an alternate assessment (i.e., CCRAA or NCEXTEND1). Note: Decisions regarding which assessments a student with disabilities will participate in must be made annually by the IEP team. Therefore, if students’ current IEPs designate participation in an alternate assessment, they can serve as documentation of the written parental request.

ND Post School Outcomes: The student’s post-secondary outcomes likely require supported or assisted living.

OH Other: “6. Does the learner require individualized accommodations, access features and materials beyond those provided through Universal Tools, Designated Supports and Accommodations as outlined in Ohio’s Accessibility Manual? 7. Does the student require the use of assistive technologies to actively engage and participate meaningfully and productively in daily instructional activities in school, home, community and work environments? Note: The assistive technology box on the IEP should be a quick reference before taking a deeper look into the supports, services and testing accommodations section of the IEP. There are more than 10 domains of assistive technology IEP teams should consider.

OK Other: Does the IEP team feel extensive family/community support will be a lifelong requirement, regardless of modifications, accommodations or adaptations implemented in the student’s program?

PA Standard deviation reference: Generally, a student with a significant cognitive disability may be characterized as having intellectual functioning below average – cognitive measures of intelligence 2.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean.

Other: The student is in grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8. AND The student's course of study includes functional skills.

SC Other: Note: Districts must administer a transition assessment listed on the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) approved list, or one that has been approved by SCDE through the review approval process in order to meet the testing requirement for an alternate career readiness assessment. The approved assessment must be given any time during the 2018-2019 school year and must be completed by May 31, 2019. Students who are eligible to take an alternate career readiness assessment are those students who meet the criteria for participation in the state alternate assessments and are in grade 11.

VA Other: 5) Is the student working toward educational goals other than those prescribed for a Modified Standard Diploma, Standard Diploma, or Advanced Studies Diploma? (Students must be enrolled in grades 3-8 or high school)

AND: A student recommended for the VAAP may exhibit some or all of the following learning characteristics: communication difficulties; uneven learning patterns in all domains; multiple disabling conditions along with an intellectual disability; motor impairments; difficulty learning new tasks and maintaining skills; and individualized methods of accessing information

AND If the IEP Team determines that the student will participate in the VAAP instead of taking SOL tests with or without accommodations, a statement that addresses each of the following must be included in the IEP: why the VAAP is appropriate for the student, including how the child meets the criteria for the alternate assessment; and how the child's participation in the VAAP will impact the child's promotion and/or graduation.

WA Standard deviation: The student score at least two (2) standard deviations below the mean on standardized, norm-referenced assessments for adaptive behavior and intellectual functioning

WV Other: Practical skills: personal activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, mobility and toileting; instrumental activities of daily living such as preparing meals, taking medication, using the telephone, managing money, using transportation and doing housekeeping activities, occupational skills; maintaining a safe environment.

AND

Does the learner require individualized accommodations, access features and materials beyond those provided by Universal Accommodations as outlined in most recent Guidelines for Participation in WV State Assessments? (Only consider if student is currently in an assessed grade.)

WY Other: Proficiency determined by Alternate Wy-CPS does not under challenge the student or limit the educational opportunity of the student: The student's IEP goals and objectives are based on grade-level extended standards. These are reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity and define appropriate challenge given the students level of performance, historical data, and rate of progress.

Appendix D

Factors Not to Be Used as Participation Criteria for AA-AAAS

State	Social, Cultural, Linguistic or Environmental Factors	Disability Label, Placement or Services	Excessive Absences	Need for Accommodations	Foreseen Emotional Duress	Foreseen Disruptive Behavior
AL	X	X	X	X	X	X
AK	X	X	X	X	X	X
AZ	X	X	X	X	X	X
AR	X	X	X	X	X	X
CA	X	X	X	X	X	X
CO	X	X	X	X	X	X
CT	X	X	X	X	X	X
DE	X	X	X			X
DC	X	X	X	X	X	X
FL						
GA	X	X	X			
HI	X	X	X	X	X	X
ID						
IL	X	X	X			
IN	X	X	X	X	X	X
IA	X	X	X	X	X	X
KS	X	X	X	X	X	X
KY	X	X	X		X	X

State	Social, Cultural, Linguistic or Environmental Factors	Disability Label, Placement or Services	Excessive Absences	Need for Accommodations	Foreseen Emotional Duress	Foreseen Disruptive Behavior
LA	X	X	X		X	X
ME	X	X	X	X	X	X
MD	X	X	X	X	X	X
MA	X	X	X	X		
MI	X	X		X	X	X
MN	X	X				
MS	X	X	X			
MO	X	X	X			
MT	X	X	X			
NE	X	X	X	X	X	X
NH	X	X	X	X	X	X
NJ	X	X	X	X	X	X
NM						
NY	X	X	X			
NV						
NC	X	X	X	X	X	X
ND	X	X	X	X	X	X
OH	X	X	X	X	X	X
OK	X		X		X	X
OR	X	X	X	X	X	X
PA		X	X		X	X
RI	X	X	X		X	X
SC	X	X	X			
SD	X	X	X		X	X

State	Social, Cultural, Linguistic or Environmental Factors	Disability Label, Placement or Services	Excessive Absences	Need for Accommodations	Foreseen Emotional Duress	Foreseen Disruptive Behavior
TN	X	X	X			X
TX	X	X	X	X	X	X
UT	X	X	X	X	X	X
VT	X	X	X	X	X	X
VA						
WA	X*	X	X		X	X
WV	X	X	X	X	X	X
WI	X	X	X	X	X	X
WY	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	45	45	44	29	35	37

*See notes below.

WA Social, Cultural, Linguistic Difference: ...social, cultural, linguistic, or economic differences for the WA-AIM; however cultural and linguistic differences should not be used as sole exclusionary factors for eligibility to participate in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS NOTE phrasing of social and linguistic factors include WIDA consideration: social, cultural, linguistic, or economic differences for the WA-AIM; however cultural and linguistic differences should not be used as sole exclusionary factors for eligibility to participate in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Appendix D - continued

Factors Not to Be Used as Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessment

State	Poor Performance or Impact on Accountability System	Administrator Decision	Other Disabilities (e.g., SLD)	English Learner Status	IQ Scores Alone	1% Cap Reference	Other
AL	X	X	X	X			
AK	X	X		X			X*
AZ	X	X	X	X			
AR	X	X					
CA	X	X	X	X			
CO	X	X		X			
CT	X	X		X			
DE	X						
DC	X	X					
FL							
GA	X	X				X*	
HI	X	X				X	
ID							
IL	X			X			X*
IN	X	X		X			
IA	X	X		X			
KS	X	X	X	X			
KY	X	X	X	X			
LA	X	X		X			
ME	X	X					

State	Poor Performance or Impact on Accountability System	Administrator Decision	Other Disabilities (e.g., SLD)	English Learner Status	IQ Scores Alone	1% Cap Reference	Other
MD	X	X		X			
MA	X	X		X			X*
MI	X	X					
MN	X						
MS							
MO							
MT	X						
NE	X	X		X			
NH	X	X		X			
NJ	X	X		X			
NM						X*	
NY							
NV							
NC	X	X		X			
ND	X	X		X			
OH	X	X		X	X*		
OK	X						
OR	X	X		X			
PA	X	X	X*	X	X*		
RI	X	X		X			
SC	X	X					
SD	X	X		X*			
TN	X	X					
TX	X	X		X		X*	

State	Poor Performance or Impact on Accountability System	Administrator Decision	Other Disabilities (e.g., SLD)	English Learner Status	IQ Scores Alone	1% Cap Reference	Other
UT	X	X		X			
VT	X	X		X			
VA							
WA	X	X	X				X*
WV	X	X		X			
WI	X	X		X			
WY	X	X		X			
Total	43	38	7	30	2	4	4

*See notes below.

AK Other: Low reading level

GA 1% cap: The decision to administer GAA is made by the IEP team, not administratively based on federal accountability requirements which limit the number of students taking an alternate assessment who can be counted as proficient in CCRPI performance calculations. Although GAA is intended for a small number of students, the proficiency cap does not limit the number of students receiving special education services who may take the alternate assessment.

IL Other: Student has an IEP

MA Other: Student was not provided grade-level standards-based instruction, or took the alternate assessment previously, or previously failed the MCAS, is a child in foster care, has had interrupted formal education, or in a program where all other students take alternate assessments

NM 1% cap: Eligibility decisions should be made on an individualized basis according to the eligibility criteria and should not be based on statistics related to the tested population of the school or district. Keep in mind that the 1.0 Percent Rule is a district- and state-level reporting rule and should not be applied in other contexts. For instance, the administration in a school that has a population of 200 students in the grades tested cannot advise its teachers or IEP teams that they can determine that only two students school wide are eligible to participate in the alternate assessment.

OH IQ: Intelligence quotient (IQ) scores are not a reliable measure to determining eligibility as many of the assessment tools used to determine IQ are not fully accessible for learners with significant motor, communication and sensory complexities. Educators should never use IQ scores in isolation to determine eligibility.

PA Other disabilities: Typically students with a primary disability category of Specific Learning Disability or Speech Language Impairment DO NOT meet the definition of a significant cognitive disability. Generally, a student with a significant cognitive disability may be characterized as having intellectual functioning below average – cognitive measures of intelligence 2.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean. **IQ:** IQ score or disability category alone (i.e., All students with an intellectual disability do not automatically qualify for the alternate assessment.)

SD ELL status: In one document (August 2017) the “Not to use” factor list is missing Social, Cultural, Language or Environment factors and has only EL status. Whereas a second document includes the social, cultural, language or environmental category.

TX 1% cap: The decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 is made by the ARD committee based solely on the student’s educational need, not administratively based on federal accountability requirements, which limit the number of students assessed with an alternate assessment to no more than 1.0% of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in a subject.

WA Other: Lack of access to quality instruction in core standards

Appendix E

Format of Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessment

State	Description/ Text	Flow Chart/ Decision Tree	Checklist	Other	Name of Alternate Assessment
AL	X	X		PowerPoint slides	Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA)
AK			X		Alaska Alternate Assessment (AK-AA)
AZ	X	X	X		Multi-state alternate assessment(MSAA)
AR	X	X	X		Multi-state alternate assessment(MSAA)
CA	X				California Alternate Assessments (CAA)
CO	X	X	X		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
CT	X	X	X		Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA)
DE		X	X		<i>Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA)</i>
DC	X	X	X		Multi-state alternate assessment(MSAA)
FL	X	X	X		<i>Florida Alternate Assessment</i>
GA			X		<i>Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)</i>
HI	X	X	X	Case studies	Hawaii State Alternate Assessments (HSA-Alt)
ID	X				<i>ID-NCSC Alternate Assessment</i>

State	Description/ Text	Flow Chart/ Decision Tree	Checklist	Other	Name of Alternate Assessment
IL	X		X		Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA)
IN	X	X	X		Indiana's Alternate Assessment (ISTAR)
IA			X		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
KS		X	X		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
KY	X	X	X		Alternate K-Prep
LA	X		X		Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA1) and Level 2 (LAA2)
ME	X	X	X		Multi-state alternate assessment(MSAA)
MD	X	X	X		Maryland Alternate Assessments
MA	X	X		PowerPoint training slides	Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)
MI		X		Factor list sheet, online training tools (e.g., audio, case studies)	Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program (MI-Access)
MN	X	X			Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)
MS			X	Link to training video was not working at time	Mississippi Academic Assessment Program-Alternate (MAAP-A)
MO	X	X	X		Missouri Alternate Assessment
MT			X		MontCAS Alternate Assessments

State	Description/ Text	Flow Chart/ Decision Tree	Checklist	Other	Name of Alternate Assessment
NE	X	X	X	Guidelines graphic	Nebraska State Accountability Tests Alternate Assessment (NeSA Alternate)
NV	X				Nevada Alternate Assessment (NAA)
NH	X		X		New Hampshire's Alternate Assessment Programs (NH ALPs) - Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
NJ			X		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
NM	X		X		New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment
NY	X				Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
NC	X	X			North Carolina alternate assessments (NEXTEND 1)
ND			X		North Dakota's Alternate Assessments-NDAA (Dynamic Learning Map; DLM)
OH	X	X	X	Webinar, rubric	Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD)
OK	X		X	PowerPoint, professional dev. module	OAAP and DLM
OR	X	X	X		Oregon Extended Assessments
PA	X			Companion tool	Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA)
RI	X		X		DLM
SC	X		X		South Carolina Alternate Assessments
SD	X		X	Case studies	Multi-state alternate assessment(MSAA)
TN	X		X		Multi-state alternate assessment(MSAA)

State	Description/ Text	Flow Chart/ Decision Tree	Checklist	Other	Name of Alternate Assessment
TX	X		X		STAAR Alternate 2
UT	X		X		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) and UAA for Science
VT			X		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
VA	X	X	X	Decision chart	Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)
WA	X	X		Guidelines figure	Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM)
WV	X		X	Rubric	Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
WI	X	X	X		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
WY	X		X		Wyoming Alternate Assessment (Wy-ALT)
Total	40	25	40	13	

Appendix F

Examples of Participation Criteria Formats

(Ohio)

Companion to Participation Guidelines and Decision-Making Flowchart

Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD)

Student: _____

This document is a companion to the [Participation Guidelines for Ohio's Alternate Assessment](#) and [Decision Making Flowchart](#) that will assist individualized education program (IEP) teams in making appropriate decisions regarding student participation in Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD).

Individualized education program (IEP) teams must use various data sets in review of a student's eligibility to take AASCD that could include, but are not limited to:

[Deleted list of possible sources]

Directions: Review a student's IEP and related documents to answer each question. Mark the column that best answers the question.

1. Does the student have a current IEP?			
NO. Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessment		YES. Continue evaluation.	
2. Review the student's IDEA category definition. (Located in the glossary)			
___ IDEA category description does not include intellectual or cognitive impairment as a characteristic.		___ IDEA category description does include intellectual or cognitive impairment as a characteristic	
3. Does the data review provide evidence of significant cognitive disability (a person's ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience)?			
___ Presence of disability documented no evidence that a cognitive disability interferes with learning; goals and objectives that are designed to support learners in learning grade-level skills and concepts in the standards.	___ Documentation shows the learner may have benchmark and diagnostic data that show a wide skill gap in reading. Prescriptive, direct and systematic instruction is present in the IEP. (Note: Complex reading difficulties do not qualify the learner as having a significant cognitive disability.)	___ Evidence that a cognitive disability interferes with learning grade-level skills and concepts. Goals and objectives address grade level academic skills and concepts through extended standards and learning progressions.	___ Evidence that a cognitive disability significantly interferes with learning grade-level skills and concepts. Presence of goals and objectives to support acquisition of expressive and receptive language and communication skills and/or sensory/motor access for active participation and engagement aligned with grade-level concepts.

4. Does the learner data document a significant deficit across all domains of adaptive behavior? Does the student require systematic, direct instruction of adaptive behavior skills to be embedded within Tier I: Core standards-based instruction? Adaptive behavior refers to an individual's ability to apply conceptual, social and practical skills in everyday life.

- Conceptual skills: receptive and expressive language, reading and writing, money concepts, self-direction.
- Social skills: interpersonal, responsibility, self-esteem, follows rules, obeys laws, is not gullible, avoids victimization.
- Practical skills: personal activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, mobility and toileting; instrumental activities of daily living such as preparing meals, taking medication, using the telephone, managing money, using transportation and doing housekeeping activities; occupational skills; maintaining a safe environment.

<p>____ NO instruction needed in any of the adaptive skills</p>	<p>____ General instruction needed in one or more domains of adaptive skills, which are covered in district Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) and core instruction initiatives</p>	<p>____ Systematic, direct instruction needed within two or more domains of adaptive skills</p>	<p>____ Prescriptive, systematic, direct instruction needed across many or all adaptive skills within each domain</p>
---	---	---	---

5. Does the learner participate in grade-level academic instruction (Tier I: Core Instruction) with learning targets aligned to the Ohio's Learning Standards – Extended (OLS-E) with integrated supports and services as outlined in the IEP?

<p>____ Present levels of performance on the IEP indicates that the learner's skills are closely aligned with grade-level standard concepts and skills.</p>	<p>____ Student IEP goals and objectives link goals and learning targets to grade-level standard concepts and skills in prescriptive area(s) of data determined need.</p>	<p>____ Student IEP goal(s) are aligned to grade-level targets through most complex extended standards and objectives. These include extended standard skills and concepts or learning progression steps that lead to grade-aligned performance target(s).</p>	<p>____ Student IEP includes present level of performance statements that link learner data with grade-level peers through extended standards. Goals and objectives are based on data-determined needs within standards-based learning progressions. Goals and objectives are linked to grade-level standards through extended standard (modified) concept and skill targets on the least complex side of the range.</p>
---	---	--	--

6. Does the learner require individualized accommodations, access features and materials beyond those provided through Universal Tools, Designated Supports and Accommodations as outlined in Ohio's Accessibility Manual?			
<p>____ Student's IEP does not define the specific accommodations, supports, scaffolds, services, materials required for access.</p>	<p>____ Student's IEP outlines some accommodations, supports and scaffolds that are presently presented in the Accessibility Manual under Universal Tools, Designated Supports and Accommodations. (Note: Complex reading, writing or math difficulties alone do not qualify the learner as having a significant cognitive disability nor does it mean that they should take the alternate assessment).</p>	<p>____ In addition to the accommodations, supports and scaffolds that are presently presented in the Accessibility Manual, the student requires additional individualized accommodations not allowed on Ohio's State Tests. For example, test administered over more than one-day, verbal delivery mode supported by concrete objects, picture symbols, all text on the test read aloud, etc. to both access and respond to the test.</p>	<p>____ Student's IEP outlines individualized accommodations, access features and materials beyond those provided through universal tools, designated supports and accommodations as outlined in Ohio's Accessibility Manual to meet the communication, motor and/or sensory needs of the learner and provide them with the opportunity to show what they know.</p>

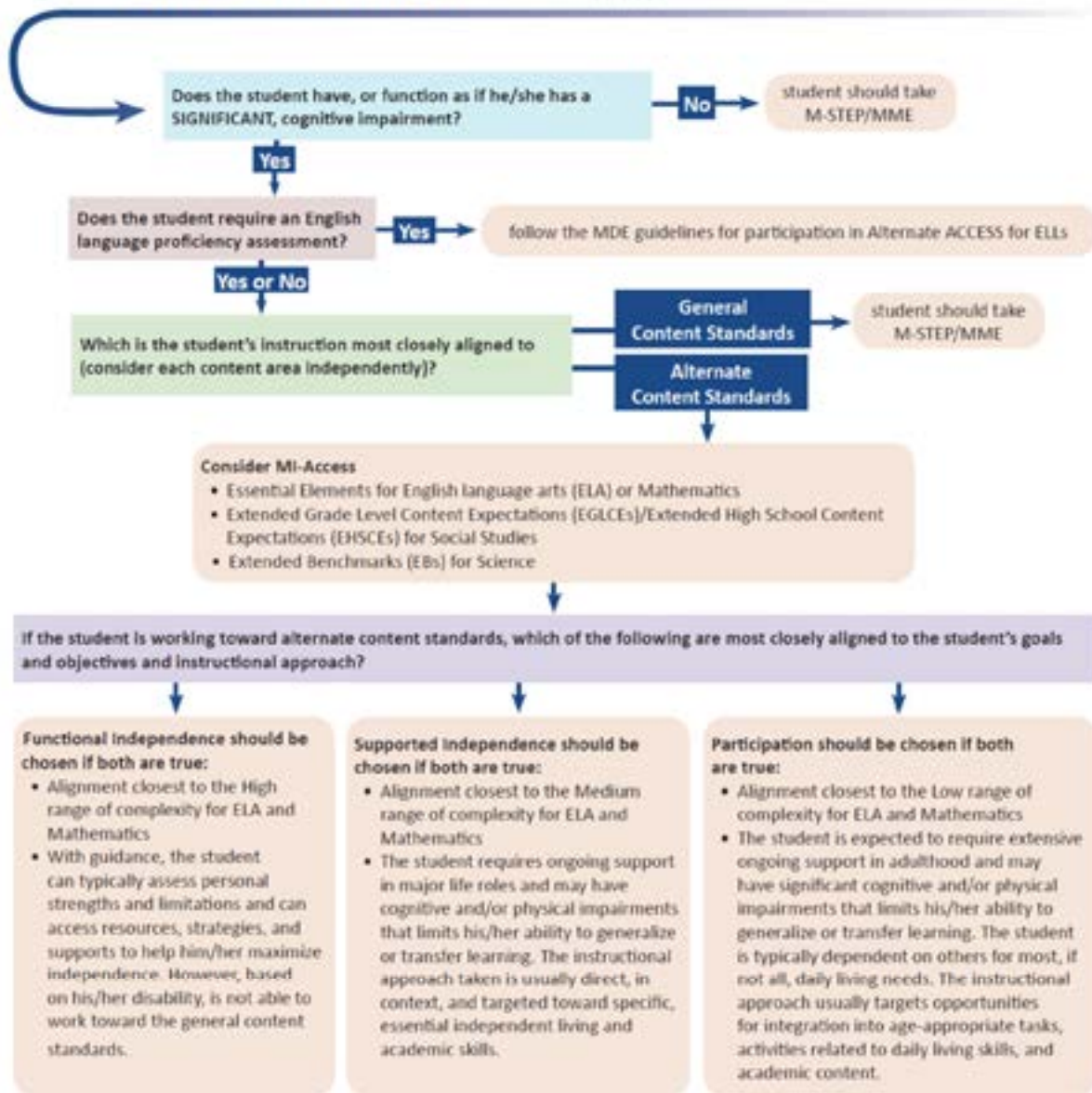
7. Does the student require the use of assistive technologies to actively engage and participate meaningfully and productively in daily instructional activities in school, home, community and work environments?			
<p>Note: The assistive technology box on the IEP should be a quick reference before taking a deeper look into the supports, services and testing accommodations section of the IEP. There are more than 10 domains of assistive technology IEP teams should consider.</p>			
<p>____ Student requires no assistive technology as indicated in the check box on the IEP.</p>	<p>____ Student requires assistive technology supports and services as indicated in the check box on the IEP but assistive technology is not evident within the IEP</p> <p>OR</p> <p>the AT described within the IEP (accommodations, supports, services and scaffolds) are outlined in the Accessibility Manual under Universal Tools, Designated Supports and Accommodations.</p>	<p>____ Student requires assistive technology supports and services as indicated in the check box on the IEP.</p> <p>The learner had been feature-matched with individualized assistive technology to support instruction, communication, sensory or motor access needs and is currently learning to use or is independently using assistive technology as a scaffold to access learning and his or her environment.</p>	<p>____ Student requires multiple assistive technology supports and services as indicated in the check box on the IEP.</p> <p>The learner is in process of an assistive technology evaluation for needs in instructional learning and instructional communication, sensory or motor access and is currently being supported with person-dependent scaffolds to access learning and their environment.</p>

Considering AASCD participation: To be eligible for participation in the AASCD, at least one response should be in the far-right column and all or almost all responses should be in the third and fourth columns to the right. Only a small number of learners will meet the requirements for participation in the AASCD. Statewide, approximately 1% of students should qualify.

Should My Student Take the Alternate Assessment?

MI-Access is currently Michigan's alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. The following guidance is helpful in considering if a student should be taking the alternate assessment or the general assessment.

It is the role of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to determine which assessment a student should take. The following guiding questions are provided for the IEP team to consider:



If the IEP team determines that MI-Access is the most appropriate state level assessment for any given student, the school must provide information to that student's parents regarding any implication this decision may have on the student completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma.

(Hawaii)

Contributing Factors or “Red Flags” on the Road to HSA-Alt Student Identification¹

Contributing Factors: *Part of Hawaii State Participation Guidelines	Red Flags: Do NOT use as contributing factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP Team decision* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual/Administrator decision • Concern about meeting 1% Cap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student with most significant cognitive disability* <i>Def. “A student with a most significant cognitive disability is one who has records that indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. This is NOT determined by an IQ test score, but rather by a holistic understanding of a student.”¹</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, cultural, environmental factors* • Low expectations for performance* • Excessive absences* • Socio-economic status • Poor academic preparation • Language/English Learner (EL) status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited adaptive behavior* <i>Def. “Adaptive behavior is the essential actions required by an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life.”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated disruptive behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for modified curriculum* <i>Range Performance Level Descriptors</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated emotional duress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for extensive, repeated, individualized instruction* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for accommodations or specialized services • Augmentative assistive communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range Performance Level Descriptors are at an appropriate instructional level for student • HSA-Alt is an appropriate test for student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional setting; e.g., FSC setting • Poor academic preparation; three or more grade levels below peers • Low reading level • General assessment is “too hard” • Impact of test scores on accountability system

Characteristics of students with the most significant cognitive disability:

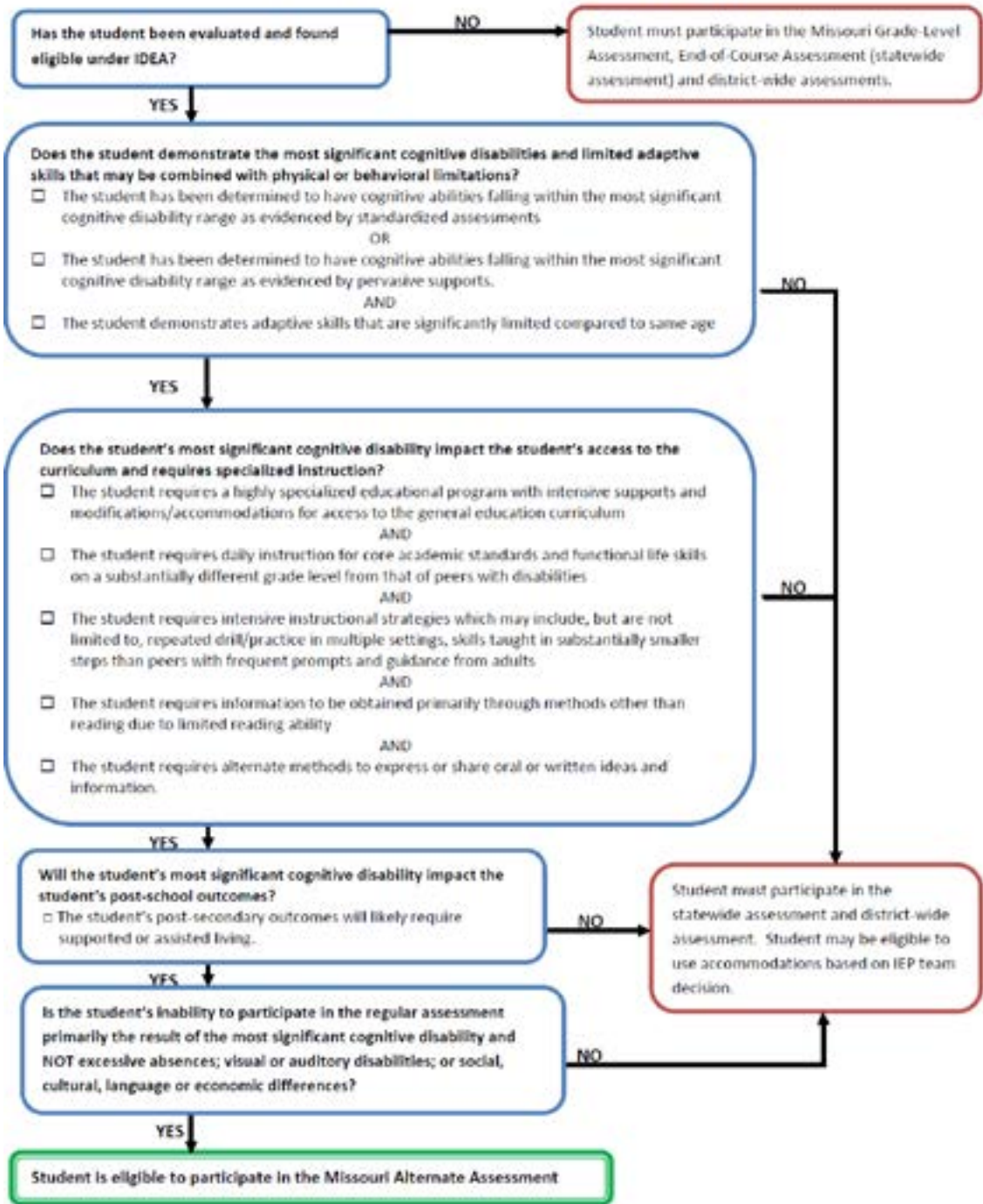
Students who take the HSA-Alt generally belong to one of three disability categories: intellectual disability (ID), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or multiple disabilities (MD). They are typically identified early (pre-K or K) and have received extensive, intensive services since early childhood. Limited expressive and receptive communication capacities are common.

¹ Adapted from [Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Multi-State Alternate Assessment](#), August 2016

(Missouri)

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Special Education – Compliance
February 2013

Missouri Alternate Assessment Decision Making Flow Chart



(New Jersey)

Participation Guidelines for Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

Participation in the NJ DLM alternate assessment requires a yes answer to Question 1 **and** to Questions 2 & 3 for each of the applicable content areas. Based on the guideline questions below, a student may participate in the DLM in a content area and the general assessment in another content area, although this is rare. An administrator must ensure the guidelines are used appropriately during the IEP meeting, and sign below to approve the designated student assessment(s). The signature must be from a district administrator that oversees the IEP process and instruction.

Participation Criterion	Participation Criterion Descriptors	Agree (Yes) or Disagree (No)? Provide documentation for each		
1. The student has a significant cognitive disability	Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.	Yes / No		
2. The student is primarily being instructed (or taught) using the DLM Essential Elements as content standards	Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are related to the enrolled grade level CCSS and DLM Essential Elements, as well as address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.	ELA: Yes / No	Math: Yes / No	Science: Yes / No
3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measureable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum.	The student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and b. uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across multiple settings. 	ELA: Yes / No	Math: Yes / No	Science: Yes / No

You may not use the following factors when determining participation in NJ DLM alternate assessment:

- o A student's disability category or label
- o Percent of time student receives special education
- o Academic and other services student receives
- o Educational environment or instructional setting
- o English Language Learner (ELL) status
- o Low reading level/achievement level
- o Anticipated student's disruptive behavior or emotional distress
- o Poor attendance or extended absences
- o Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- o Impact of student scores on accountability system
- o Need for accommodations (e.g. assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process
- o Administrator decision

English Language Arts Check One Only: Student will participate in the DLM ____ or PARCC ____
Mathematics Check One Only: Student will participate in the DLM ____ or PARCC ____
Science Check One Only: Student will participate in the DLM ____ or NJSLA-S ____

Student Name _____ Grade Level 3 4 5 6 7 8 11 (Circle Applicable Grade)

Administrator Name _____ Date _____

Administrator Signature _____

New Jersey DLM Participation Guidelines for 2018-2019

(North Carolina, slightly different from criteria below HS grades)

Grades 10 and 11 Eligibility Criteria

To determine student participation in the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA) at grade 10 and grade 11, the following eligibility requirements must be considered:

CCRAA at GRADE 10 Only: The student is enrolled in grade 10 according to PowerSchool. Only eligible students enrolled in tenth grade for the first time are required to take the CCRAA at Grade 10.

CCRAA at GRADE 11 Only: The student is enrolled in grade 11 according to PowerSchool. Eligible students who take the CCRAA will be included in participation of the ACT administration for accountability reporting but not for performance. Eligible students who are repeating the eleventh grade and have no record of a previous CCRAA score must take the CCRAA. If they do not, it will count against participation.

CCRAA at Grades 10 and 11:

- The student must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- The student does not have a current Section 504 Plan only. Students with only Section 504 Plans (i.e., students who do not have a current IEP that designates participation in an alternate assessment) are not eligible for participation in any of North Carolina's alternate assessments. These students may participate in the standard test administration with or without accommodations as documented in their individual Section 504 Plans.
- The student exhibits severe and pervasive delays in all areas of conceptual, linguistic, and academic development and in adaptive behaviors, including communication, daily living skills, and self-care.
- The student is following a course of study that, upon completion of high school, may not lead to admission into a college-level course of study resulting in a college degree (i.e., the Occupational Course of Study).
- The student is not receiving instruction in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards. Students receiving instruction in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards may be eligible for the NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessments at Grades 10 and 11.
- The student meets the criteria above and has a written parental request for the administration of an alternate assessment (i.e., CCRAA or NCEXTEND1). Note: Decisions regarding which assessments a student with disabilities will participate in must be made annually by the IEP team. Therefore, if students' current IEPs designate participation in an alternate assessment, they can serve as documentation of the written parental request.

(Florida)

**Appendix B:
Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation**

Student: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____
Teacher: _____ School: _____

Individual educational plan (IEP) teams are responsible for determining whether students with disabilities will be assessed through administration of the general statewide standardized assessment or the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment based on criteria outlined in Rule 6A-1.0943(5), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). The IEP team should consider the student's present level of educational performance in reference to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and Florida Standards. The IEP team should also be knowledgeable of guidelines and the use of appropriate testing accommodations.

In order to facilitate informed and equitable decision making, IEP teams should answer each of the following questions when determining the appropriate assessment. Check all that apply.

Questions to Guide the Decision-Making Process to Determine How a Student With Disabilities Will be Instructed and Participate in the Statewide Standardized Assessment Program	YES	NO
1. Does the student have a significant cognitive disability?		
2. Even with appropriate and allowable instructional accommodations, assistive technology or accessible instructional materials, does the student require modifications, as defined in Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(z), F.A.C., to the grade-level general state content standards pursuant to Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.?		
3. Does the student require direct instruction in academic areas of English language arts, math, social studies and science based on access points in order to acquire, generalize and transfer skills across settings?		

If the IEP team determines that all three of the questions accurately characterize a student's current educational situation, the student should be enrolled in access courses, and the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment should be used to provide meaningful evaluation of the student's current academic achievement. If "yes" is not checked in all three areas, then the student should be instructed in the general education courses and participate in the general statewide standardized assessment with accommodations, as appropriate.

In accordance with Rule 6A-6.03331(10)(b), F.A.C., if the decision of the IEP team is that the student will participate in access courses and be assessed through the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment, the parents of the student must give signed consent to have their child instructed in access points and their achievement measured based on alternate academic achievement standards. This decision must be documented on a consent form available at <https://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-04779>. If the parent fails to respond after reasonable efforts by the school district to obtain consent, the school district may provide instruction in the state standards access points, and administer the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment. The IEP should include a statement of why the student cannot participate in the general assessment and why the alternate assessment is appropriate.

Appendix G

State Alternate Assessment Resources for “Other” Format Category

State	“Other” Resource Links
AL	PowerPoint training slides: https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Assessment/AAA%20Participation%20Determination.pptx
HI	Case Studies: https://hsa-alt.alohahsap.org/core/fileparse.php/3344/lurl/HSA_Alt_Participation_Guidelines_Examples_2018-2019.pdf
MA	PowerPoint training slides: http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/essa/OnePercent.pptx
MI	Factor list sheet (page 2): https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Should_My_Student_Take_the_Alternate_Assessment_556705_7.pdf Online interactive training tools (e.g., audio, case studies): https://mdoe.state.mi.us/IMDEDocuments/InteractiveDecision-Making-Tool/index.html https://mdoe.state.mi.us/mdedocuments/AssessmentSelectionGuidelinesTraining/index.html ,
MS	Video (beginning about who participates): https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=RLM1fgZxi0mZgAUQoTK3d-tDYSoz-JZBugq6zX4gikZUNzcYkVHU0FCNEtLTUVJSIU3MUZMSFFVTI4u
NE	Guidelines Graphic: https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IEPTeam_Decision_Making_Guidelines_for_Statewide_Assessments.pdf
OH	Webinar: http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Testing/Ohio-English-Language-Proficiency-Assessment-OELPA/Ohios-Alternate-Assessment-for-Students-with-Sign/AASCD-Participation-Webinar-Scripted-Notes.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US Companion Rubric: http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Testing/Ohio-English-Language-Proficiency-Assessment-OELPA/Ohios-Alternate-Assessment-for-Students-with-Sign/Companion-Documents-to-Participation-Guidelines-2019.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US

State	“Other” Resource Links
OK	PowerPoint: https://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Alternate%20Assessments.ppt Professional Development Module: https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Alternate%20Assessments%20PD%20Module.pdf
PA	Companion tool: https://www.pattan.net/publications/pasa-eligibility-criteria-decision-making-companio
SD	Case studies (Appendix A): https://doe.sd.gov/assessment/documents/Alt-Guidelines.pdf
VA	Decision chart (Appendix C): http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/participation/guidelines-for-assessment-participation.pdf
WA	Guidelines figure (p. 14): http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/ResourceLibrary/pubdocs/IEP-Team-Guidelines-Assess.pdf
WV	Rubric (p.207): https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-2019-Guidelines-for-Participation-in-West-Virginia-Assessments.pdf

Appendix H

Definitions of Significant Cognitive Disabilities

State	Definition and Source
Alabama	<p>In Alabama, the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability is a student with an intelligence quotient (IQ) of three standard deviations below the mean, which is an IQ score of 55 or below, that significantly impacts intellectual functioning and that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive functioning (defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life). As a rule, a student having a significant cognitive disability is not solely determined by an IQ test score, but rather by a holistic understanding of a student. IEP Teams should use this definition as part of the determination for a student to participate in the alternate assessment program. As determined by the student's IEP, a student receiving instruction on the alternate achievement standards, an extension of the grade-level state content standards, meets one part of the eligibility to participate in the alternate assessment program.</p> <p>Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alabama Alternate Assessment Program (p. 4) Source: https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Assessment/Alabama%20Alternate%20Assessment%20Program%20Participation%20Decision%20Documentation%20Form.pdf</p>
Alaska	<p>Students with significant cognitive disabilities have a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behaviors are essential to live independently and to function safely in daily life. When adaptive behaviors are significantly impacted it means that the individual is unlikely to develop the skills necessary to live independently and function safely in daily life. In other words, significant cognitive disabilities impact students both in and out of the classroom and across life domains, not just in academic domains.</p> <p>Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments (p. 20) Source: https://education.alaska.gov/TLS/Assessments/accommodations/ParticipationGuidelines.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Arizona	<p>A student with a significant cognitive disability is one who has records that indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.</p> <p>Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (p. 5) Source: https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=585019d1aadebe050c5743c1</p>
Arkansas	<p>Definition of Significant Cognitive Disability</p> <p>(1) The term “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” means a child with a disability or disabilities that are “not temporary in nature and that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are students who require repeated, extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains across all content areas and settings.</p> <p>(2) The term “adaptive behavior” is defined as those skills that are essential for someone to live and function independently and safely in daily life.</p> <p>Additionally, (i) The specific category of eligibility, as defined in IDEA, shall not be the sole determining factor of whether or not a student is a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>3 (ii) Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities must not be identified based solely on the student’s previous low academic achievement or the student’s previous need for accommodations to participate in general state or districtwide assessments. Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.</p> <p>Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program 2018-2019 (p. 4) Source: http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/Learning_Services/Student20Assessment/DLM/Guidance_for_IEP_Teams_on_Alternate_Assessment_2018-2019.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
California	<p>A student with a significant cognitive disability is one whose school records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. <i>Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score; rather, a holistic understanding of the student is required.</i> IEP teams should be careful to consider....</p> <p>CAA Guidance for IEP Teams California Alternate Assessments for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science: Participation Decisions p.3 Source: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tq/ca/caaiepteamrev.asp</p>
Colorado	<p>... the designation of “the most significant cognitive disability” is left to the professional judgment of the school psychologist and other professionals contributing to the body of evidence gathered during the evaluation and considered by the IEP Team. Generally, such students can be characterized as having intellectual functioning well below average (typically associated with cognitive measures indicating an IQ below 55, / 3.0 standard deviations or more below the mean) that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive functioning. This reference is only offered to help distinguish between students who meet eligibility criteria to receive special education services as a student with an Intellectual Disability and students with the most significant cognitive disability. The words “typically associated with IQ below 55” allow for some district/school flexibility; it is not intended to be an absolute requirement. For students with IQ measured in the 55-70 range, additional factors related to the severity and impact of the disability must be taken into account when considering the selection of alternate academic achievement standards and assessment.</p> <p>Participation Guidelines: Alternate Academic Achievement Standards for Instruction and Alternate Assessment (pp. 1-2) Source: https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/accommodationsmanual_participationguidelinesbooklet.pdf</p>
Connecticut	<p>What does “significant cognitive disabilities” mean? Answer: Students with significant cognitive disabilities are a relatively small population who: (1) are identified with one or more of the existing categories of disability under the IDEA (for example: intellectually disabled, autism, multiple disabilities, and traumatic brain injury, which are the most common); and (2) have cognitive impairments that may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with systematic instruction and accommodations. Additionally, student records indicate a pervasive disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior defined as <i>essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i></p> <p>Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System (p. 1) Source: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Student-Assessment/Special-Populations/Alternate-FAQ.pdf?la=en</p>

State	Definition and Source
District of Columbia	<p>A student with a significant cognitive disability is one who has records that indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. <i>Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.</i></p> <p>Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the DC Alternate Assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics (p. 3) Source: https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/service_content/attachments/DC%20NCSC%20Participation%20Guidance%20(9.28.15).pdf</p>
Florida	<p>In the IEP team’s discussion of the question, “Does the student have significant cognitive disabilities?” all of the information should be considered collectively. The student’s IQ score is but one piece of the data puzzle. The focal point for discussion should be on the impact of the student’s cognitive disability; to qualify as a student with “significant cognitive disabilities,” that impact should affect all aspects of the student’s academic, independent functioning, community living, leisure, and vocational activities</p> <p>GUIDANCE DOCUMENT: SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES (p. 1) Source: http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7571/urlt/guidancesignificantcognitivedisabilitiesatt.pdf</p>
Hawaii	<p>Does this student demonstrate significant cognitive disability? What are the student’s physical, behavioral, and adaptive skill limitations? Students who are properly identified for the HSA-Alt are expected to have severe limitations in cognitive capacity and functioning. While an IQ score is not an acceptable criterion to determine if a student should participate in the HSA-Alt, students who take the Alt would be expected to score significantly lower than their peers without disabilities on standardized tests of knowledge and cognition (or would possibly not even achieve a valid score at all). Student limitations are generally evidenced in how the student communicates and responds to the environment. These limitations are evidenced by the need for significantly accommodated receptive and expressive communication systems (e.g., supplementation with pictures/symbols, assistive technology devices, etc.)</p> <p>HSA-Alt Participation Guidelines Decision-making Questions and Case Study Examples (p. 1) Source: https://hsa-alt.alohahsap.org/core/fileparse.php/3344/urlt/HSA_Alt_Participation_Guidelines_Examples_2017-2018.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Illinois	<p>The alternate assessment is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These students have intellectual functioning well below average (typically associated with an IQ below 55) that exists concurrently with impairments or deficits in adaptive functioning (i.e. communications, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-directions, functional academic skills, work leisure, health and safety). The reference to “typically associated with an IQ of below 55” is to help distinguish between students with cognitive disabilities and significant cognitive disabilities from students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This means that many students with cognitive disabilities will not qualify for the DLM Alternate Assessment. By default, they must take our regular state assessment with or without accommodations. The inclusion of the words “typically associated with” allows for some district/school flexibility. It is by no means an absolute requirement.</p> <p>ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment Participation Guidance (p. 1) Source: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IAA_Particip_Gdlines.pdf</p>
Indiana	<p><i>How do we know that a student has a “significant cognitive disability”?</i> Most students with significant cognitive disabilities have intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, or autism, but not all do. And, not all students with these disabilities are considered to have a “significant cognitive disability.” Students demonstrating academic deficits or difficulties due to learning disabilities, speech-language impairments, and emotional-behavioral disabilities do not qualify for participation in the Indiana Alternate Assessment. Performing 3-4 grade levels below peers without disabilities is not, by itself, evidence of a significant cognitive disability. Academic deficits or difficulties alone do not indicate that a student has a significant cognitive disability. Further, a significant cognitive disability will be far reaching and involving most academic and student learning across content areas and in social and community settings.</p> <p>Students with autism or intellectual disabilities should be carefully considered for the Indiana Alternate Assessment, but they should not automatically be assigned to the alternate assessment based on their identified disability category from their IEP. Not all students with autism or intellectual disabilities have a significant cognitive disability. Many students eligible to receive special education and related services under these categorical labels are able to participate in general assessments, with accommodations.</p> <p>Students receiving special education services who are identified as having orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, or traumatic brain injuries, do not necessarily have a significant cognitive disability. Determinations for student participation in statewide assessments must be evidence-centered and made individually for each student by the CCC. Students demonstrating mild to moderate cognitive disabilities may be more appropriately placed in the general assessment system with accommodations. Anticipated or past low achievement on the general assessment does not mean the student should be taking the Indiana Alternate Assessment.</p> <p>Participation Decision for Indiana’s Alternate Assessment Frequently Asked Questions (p. 1) Source: https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/default/files/assessment-indiana-alternate-assessment-participation-guidance-faq-final-10-05-16.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Kansas	<p>The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a new separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of participation in the statewide student assessment program. This subgroup of students referred to in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as having “significant cognitive disabilities” constitutes less than one percent of the student population. The students are (1) within one or more of the existing categories of disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (e.g., intellectual disability, autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury); and (2) whose cognitive impairments affect adaptive function and may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with systematic instruction.</p> <p>What is a Significant Cognitive Disability? Source: https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/StateBonusItems/DLM_Participation_Guidelines_KS_20181115.pdf</p>
Kentucky	<p>1. Kentucky definition of a student with a significant cognitive disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets eligibility criterion in one or more of the existing categories of disabilities under IDEA (e.g., intellectual disabilities, autism, traumatic, multiple disabilities), • Have cognitive and adaptive behavior functioning preventing them from attaining grade level achievement standards, even with program modifications, adaptations, and accommodations, • Require extensive individualized instruction across multiple settings to access and make progress in the Kentucky Academic Standards, and to maintain, generalize and demonstrate learning, • Have a significant cognitive disability that is not primarily the result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excessive or extended absences • disability related to visual or auditory disabilities, emotional-behavioral disabilities, specific learning disabilities, speech and language impairment • native language, social, cultural, and economic differences, • those identified as English Learners (EL) • pre-determined poor performance on the grade-level assessment • displays disruptive behaviors or experiences emotional duress during testing • administrator decision • educational environment or instructional setting <p>Guidance for Admissions and Release Committees (ARCs) on Participation Decisions for the Kentucky Alternate Assessment (p. 1) Source: https://education.ky.gov/specialized/except/instrresources/Documents/KY_Alternate_Assessment_Participation_Guidelines_Documentation_Form.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Maine	<p>A student with a significant cognitive disability is one who has documentation that indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. <i>Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.</i></p> <p>Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Maine's Alternate Assessments (p. 4) Source: https://www.maine.gov/doi/sites/maine.gov/doi/files/inline-files/Maine%20Participation%20Guidance_Rev%2012-28-18_0.pdf</p>
Maryland	<p>Maryland does not define "significant cognitive disability" in terms of a "cut off" IQ score. Most students with significant cognitive disabilities have intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, or autism, but not all do. Furthermore, not all students with these disabilities are considered to have a "significant cognitive disability." Many students eligible to receive special education and related services under these categorical labels may be able to participate in general assessments, with or without accommodations. A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student learning across all content areas and in social and community settings. Students demonstrating academic deficits or difficulties solely due to specific learning disabilities, speech-language impairments, other health impairments and emotional-behavioral disabilities do not qualify for participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments. Students, however, may be from any of the disability categories listed in the IDEA. 34 CFR 200.1(f)(2). Performing three to four grade levels below peers without disabilities is not, by itself, evidence of a significant cognitive disability. Academic deficits or difficulties alone do not indicate that a student has a significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>Maryland Guidance for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments (p. 5) Source: http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Ed/TAB/AlternateAssessmentParticipationGuide.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Missouri	<p>While there is no one method of determining if a student demonstrates the most significant cognitive disability, it is clear that this decision must be made by comparing the student to the entire population of other students of the same age – not just other students within the district or school building. The most significant cognitive disability range can be evidenced by standardized assessments or pervasive supports. In addition to demonstrating the most significant cognitive disabilities, the student must also demonstrate adaptive skills that are significantly limited as compared to same age peers.</p> <p>While IDEA does not provide any guidance on determining the most significant cognitive disabilities, it does state, under Section 300.304(3)(c)(1) “Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this part— (i) are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; (ii) are provided and administered in the child’s native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer; (iii) are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable; (iv) are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and (v) are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.”</p> <p>Intelligence tests including, but not limited to, the Wechsler Scales, the Leiter International Performance Scale, and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales all yield standard scores and provide a system of classification to assist trained personnel in determining a level of cognitive functioning. The following ranges, based on standard scores of standardized intelligence tests, reflect the categories of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and the International Classification of Diseases. These ranges include four (4) levels of support: § IQ 50-55 to 70; children require mild support; § IQ 35-40 to 50-55; children require moderate supervision and assistance; § IQ 20-25 to 35-40; can be taught basic life skills and simple tasks with supervision; § IQ below 20-25; usually caused by a neurological condition; require constant care. While an IQ score is not the sole criterion to determine if a student should participate in the Missouri Alternate Assessment, it would be expected that students taking the alternate assessment would score significantly lower than their peers with or without disabilities on standardized tests of knowledge and cognition, or that these students may not achieve a valid score on the standardized test. IEP teams will need to refer to the standardized test manual for guidance on what would be considered the most significant cognitive disability for that particular test.</p>

State	Definition and Source
Missouri (continued)	<p>If a standardized cognitive assessment instrument cannot be utilized with the student, information must be provided to show the pervasive level of support required by the student. This information must come from multiple sources of information (not just an adaptive behavior assessment) and include both skills the student is capable of performing as well as those areas in which he/she has difficulty. A comprehensive review would be expected to include each of the following areas: communication; self-care; daily living; social skills; access to community; self-direction; health and safety; functional academics; leisure; and work.</p> <p>In addition to the above, adaptive skills as measured by tests of adaptive functioning MUST be commensurate with the scores from the cognitive evaluation and must also indicate that the student is functioning in the most significant classification ranges.</p> <p>Missouri Alternate Assessment Decision Making Guidance Document (pp. 1-2) Source: https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Guidance%20Document%20FINAL.pdf</p>
Nebraska	<p>The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of their participation in the statewide student alternate assessment program who are (1) within one or more of the existing categories of disability under the IDEA and (2) whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with systematic instruction. For a student to be determined as having a most significant cognitive disability for the purpose of participation in the alternate assessment system, the IEP team must consider all of the following guidelines when determining the appropriateness of a curriculum based on Nebraska College and Career Ready Academic Standards with Extended Indicators and the use of the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System -Alternate Assessment. (NSCAS –AA):</p> <p>The student requires extensive, pervasive, and frequent supports in order to acquire, maintain, and demonstrate performance of knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The student’s cognitive functioning is significantly below age expectations and has an impact on his/her ability to function in multiple environments (school, home and community). □ The student’s demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive functioning prevent completion of the general academic curriculum, even with appropriately designed and implemented modifications and accommodations. (*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.) □ The student’s curriculum and instruction is aligned to the Nebraska College and Career Ready Academic Standards with Extended Indicators. □ The student may have accompanying communication, motor, sensory, or other impairments. <p>Most Significant Cognitive Disability Definition (p. 1) Source: https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Most-Significant-Cognitive-Disability-Definition.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
<p>New Hampshire</p>	<p>In order to define a student as having a most significant cognitive disability, the IEP team must review student records and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student is typically characterized as functioning at least two and a half to three standard deviations below the mean in both adaptive behavior and cognitive functioning; and • The student performs substantially below grade level expectations (this does NOT include students working 1-2 grade levels below their designated grade) on the academic content standards for the grade in which they are enrolled, even with the use of adaptations and accommodations; and • There is documented evidence that the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains, across all content areas and settings. <p>2nd Definition provided in DLM administrative manual is slightly different (no mention of IQ and includes reference to not being able to take general assessments, and needing reduced depth/breadth of standards.</p> <p>As defined by the U.S. Department of Education, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities have one or more disabilities that especially affect intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors. When adaptive behaviors are significantly affected, the individual is unlikely to develop the skills needed to live independently and to function safely in daily life. The DLM alternate assessment is designed for students for whom general education assessments are not appropriate, even with accessibility supports.</p> <p>Students taking the DLM alternate assessment require extensive, direct instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains. These students learn academic content aligned to grade-level content standards but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity.</p> <p>Seek guidance from your assessment coordinator about your state’s participation guidelines and eligibility requirements.</p> <p>S2018-2019 DECISION MAKING WORKSHEET Participation of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Assessment (p. 1) Source: https://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/assessment/alt_assess/documents/decision_making_worksheet_2018-2019.docx or https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/Manuals_Blueprints/Test_Administration_Manual_YE.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
New Jersey	<p>As defined by the U.S. Department of Education, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities have one or more disabilities that especially affect intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors. When adaptive behaviors are significantly affected, the individual is unlikely to develop the skills needed to live independently and to function safely in daily life. The DLM alternate assessment is designed for students for whom general education assessments are not appropriate, even with accessibility supports.</p> <p>Students taking the DLM alternate assessment require extensive, direct instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains. These students learn academic content aligned to grade-level content standards but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity.</p> <p>DLM Test Administration Manual 2018-2019 Source: https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/Manuals_Blueprints/Test_Administration_Manual_YE.pdf</p>
New York	<p>“Students with severe disabilities” refers to students who have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self- fulfillment. Students with severe disabilities may experience severe speech, language, and/or perceptual-cognitive impairments and challenging behaviors that interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. These students may also have extremely fragile physiological conditions and may require personal care, physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices.</p> <p>Eligibility and Participation Criteria – NYSAA (p. 1) Source: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/nysaa/2017-18/nysaa-eligibilityb.pdf</p> <p>Note: a second definition is included in the DLM test administration manual that is different in detail from the one above. https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/Manuals_Blueprints/Test_Administration_Manual_NY.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
North Carolina	<p>Used in report as found in material: The student has a significant cognitive disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student's disability significantly impacts 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. <p>NCEXTEND1 Eligibility Criteria (p. 1) Source: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/alternate/x1criteria18.pdf</p> <p>New definition sent during verification not found in public materials: North Carolina defines “significant cognitive disabilities” as follows: Students with significant cognitive disabilities have cognitive and adaptive behavior functioning deficits that may prevent them from attaining grade level achievement standards, even with substantial program modifications and accommodations. They may require extensive individualized instruction across multiple settings to access and make progress in the learning environment. The significant cognitive disabilities cannot be the primary results of: excessive or extended absences, social, cultural, and economic differences, identification as an English Learner (EL), pre-determined poor performance on grade level assessments, administrator decision or educational environment or instruction setting.</p>

State	Definition and Source
Ohio	<p>We would like to take the opportunity of this webinar to make some comments about determining eligibility for participation in the alternate assessment. Occasionally we hear people say that according to the operating standards for the education of students with disabilities, a significant cognitive disability refers to an intelligence quotient of seventy or below. This is not true. Educators should never use IQ scores in isolation to determine eligibility.</p> <p>The term Significant Cognitive Disability that is used in the participation guidelines does not refer to a disability category under IDEA and was never meant to. The term significant cognitive disability was introduced when alternate assessment became required under NCLB. At the time NCLB was released, the term mental retardation” was the disability category which later came to be called “cognitive disability”, which is what we currently refer to today as “intellectual disability”. Because of this overlap in terms, significant cognitive disability in the participation guidelines and cognitive disability as it has been used in Ohio, are often thought to be the same, but they are not. Significant cognitive disability is a broad term that could encompass multiple IDEA disability categories including intellectual disability.</p> <p>As presented in the participation criteria for the alternate assessment, a student has a significant cognitive disability if their records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. This is not to say that IQ score cannot be a consideration and one piece of evidence when determining eligibility, but it should never be used in isolation. And no specific IQ cut score should be inferred as defining eligibility. To assist teams in understanding the criteria in the participation guidelines, the department developed a companion document to the participation guidelines. This document helps IEP teams analyze the participation criteria in more detail.</p> <p>Slide 13. Source: http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Testing/Ohio-English-Language-Proficiency-Assessment-OELPA/Ohios-Alternate-Assessment-for-Students-with-Sign/AASCD-Participation-Webinar-Scripted-Notes.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US</p>

State	Definition and Source
Oklahoma	<p>The first question is whether the student has significant intellectual disabilities and significant adaptive behavior deficits. Although not all students participating in the alternate assessment will be eligible for special services under the category of Intellectual Disability (ID), the definition of ID brings some clarity in terms of who the assessment is intended for. <i>Text Appears:</i> Under the IDEA, ID means significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.</p> <p>Intellectual disabilities are diagnosed by looking at two main things. These are:</p> <p><i>Text Appears:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the ability of a person's brain to learn, think, solve problems, and make sense of the world (called IQ or intellectual functioning); and 2) whether the person has the skills he or she needs to live independently (called adaptive behavior or adaptive functioning). <p>Intellectual functioning encompasses limitations in reasoning, learning and problem solving. For alternate assessment purposes, there is no IQ score to define this term. However, these students are significantly cognitively disabled. The assessment is not intended for students in the mild or moderate range of intellectual disability.</p> <p>Adaptive behavior refers to the domains and skills that people need to function independently at home, at school, and in the community. A limitation in adaptive skills must be assessed to be sure that it is a result of an adaptive behavior rather than the result of sensory, health or physical limitations. A comprehensive adaptive skills assessment is based on a body of evidence that reflects the child's social, linguistic, and cultural background.</p> <p>To measure adaptive behavior, professionals look at what a child can do in comparison to other children of his or her age. The skills listed here are important to adaptive behavior.</p> <p>Power Point Presentation, slide 30-34 Source: https://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Alternate%20Assessments.ppt</p>
Oregon	<p>Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are typically characterized by significantly below average general cognitive functioning. This commonly includes a student with intelligence test scores two or more standard deviations below the mean on a standardized individually administered intelligence test, occurring with commensurate deficits in adaptive behavior that are frequently also evident in early childhood. Further, the cognitive disability must significantly impact the child's educational performance and ability to generalize learning from one setting to another. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in general, require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services to access an educational program. These students may also rely on adults for personal care and have medical conditions that require physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices. These intensive and on-going supports and services are typically provided directly by educators and are delivered across all educational settings.</p> <p>Oregon Extended Assessment Decision Making Guidance (p. 1) Source: http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/testing/admin/alt/ea/orextassessguidance.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Pennsylvania	<p>Pennsylvania defines significant cognitive disabilities as pervasive and global in nature, affecting student learning in all academic content areas, as well as adaptive behaviors and functional skills across life domains. A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student functioning across all academic, social, and community settings. The student is expected to require intensive and ongoing supports after graduation. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities likely require objectives, materials, prompting hierarchies, and teaching modalities different from the general education curriculum. The student's goals and objectives typically reflect the Alternate Eligible Content.</p> <p>„, A significant cognitive disability is not directly defined by a Chapter 14 disability category. Typically students with a primary disability category of Specific Learning Disability or Speech Language Impairment DO NOT meet the definition of a significant cognitive disability. Generally, a student with a significant cognitive disability may be characterized as having intellectual functioning below average – cognitive measures of intelligence 2.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean.</p> <p>Source: https://www.pattan.net/publications/pasa-eligibility-criteria-decision-making-companio</p>
Rhode Island	<p>As defined by the U.S. Department of Education, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities have one or more disabilities that especially affect intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors. When adaptive behaviors are significantly affected, the individual is unlikely to develop the skills needed to live independently and to function safely in daily life. The DLM alternate assessment is designed for students for whom general education assessments are not appropriate, even with accessibility supports.</p> <p>Students taking the DLM alternate assessment require extensive, direct instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains. These students learn academic content aligned to grade-level content standards but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity.</p> <p>DLM Test Administration Manual 2018-2019 Source: http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Assessment/DLM_Test_Administration_Manual_2018-19.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
South Carolina	<p>Significant cognitive disability is characterized by ability scores on both verbal and nonverbal scales that are at least 2½–3 Standard deviations Below the mean. Students with ability scores in the average range are NOT considered to be students with significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>Adaptive skills relate to independence in everyday living skills, including interpersonal and social interactions across multiple settings. To be eligible to participate in an alternate assessment, Students should demonstrate deficits in adaptive behavior skills with scores that are at least 2½–3 standard deviations below the mean in at least two adaptive skill domains.</p> <p>A student with a significant cognitive disability requires substantial modifications, adaptations, or supports to meaningfully access the subject area content and requires intensive individualized instruction in order to acquire and generalize knowledge. The student's instruction should be based on the Prioritized Standards, which provide access to the general education curriculum at emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational, and less complex skill levels. Students with abilities below grade level should not be considered for alternate assessment if their ability and adaptive scores are in the average range, abilities that are below grade level do not mean a student should take an alternate assessment.</p> <p>Students Who meet the eligibility criteria for alternate assessment may be classified in any of the disability categories listed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As long as there is documentation that the student has a significant cognitive disability or severe intellectual disability and significant adaptive skills deficits. Some Disability categories, as defined By the State Board of Education Criteria for Entry into Programs of Special Education for Students with Disabilities (43–243)1, may not meet the necessary criteria for participation in an alternate assessment.</p> <p>For example, a student who is evaluated and determined to qualify for special education services as a child with a Specific Learning Disability or Emotional Disability would not exhibit an intellectual disability according to the State Board of Education criteria. Also, while some students determined eligible under the categories of Other Health Impaired (OHI), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), and Autism may Have concomitant cognitive impairment, often times they do not. Such Students would not meet the necessary criteria for participation in an alternate assessment.</p> <p>Source: https://sc-alt.portal.airrast.org/core/fileparse.php/3982/unit/Participation-Guidance-for-IEP-Teams.pdf</p>
South Dakota	<p>The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of their participation in the state assessment program. For a student to be determined as having a significant cognitive disability for purposes of participation in the alternate assessments, each of the three criteria must be true as determined by the student's IEP team</p> <p>The student has a significant cognitive disability. Does student have a disability, or disabilities, that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior? Review of student records and other evidence indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that prevent the student from meaningful participation in the standard academic core curriculum or achievement of the standards at their enrolled grade level. Additionally, the student's disability causes dependence on others for many, and sometimes all, daily living needs, and the student is expected to require extensive ongoing support in adulthood.</p> <p>Source: https://doe.sd.gov/assessment/documents/Alt-Guidelines.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Tennessee	<p>The student's records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that most significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily living. Items to consider include: anecdotal parent input, individual cognitive ability tests, adaptive behavior skills assessments, individual/group administered achievement tests, informal assessments, teacher collected data and checklists, etc.</p> <p>Considerations for Participation in the Alternate Assessment Criterion 1: Significant Cognitive Disability. The alternate assessment is an option for student with the most significant cognitive disabilities. In making decisions regarding assessment eligibility, teams must determine if a student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability. Below are some considerations teams may address to make sure decisions are based on a holistic view of the student and do not focus purely on an IQ score as there are many factors that can impact assessment performance. 1. Did the team complete all the evaluation procedures to help determine the presence of a cognitive disability? 2. Is there reason to believe that the IQ score is lower than the student's true ability? For example: – Communication or behaviors impact testing performance. – Other areas of functioning indicate higher ability (e.g., improved language or academic achievement, a history of higher ability). 3. Does the best estimate of the student's cognitive ability represent a significant* cognitive disability? Does the best estimate of the student's cognitive ability take into consideration other factors that may have impacted performance on the cognitive assessment? * "Significant" indicates that there is a high level of severity associated with the cognitive disability. 4. Were the adaptive behavior scores consistently significantly low compared to same-aged peers for both parent and teacher raters? If the adaptive behavior scores were inconsistent, did the assessment specialist's documented systemic observation indicate which scores were most consistent with the student's adaptive behavior?</p> <p>Tennessee Department of Education ESSA State Plan's Appendix H: Alternate Assessments Participation Decision Flowchart (p. 355) Source: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/documents/TN_ESSA_State_Plan_Approved.pdf</p>
Texas	<p>Texas definition of a student with a significant cognitive disability is a student who: exhibits significant intellectual and adaptive behavior deficits in their ability to plan, comprehend, and reason, and ALSO indicates adaptive behavior deficits that limit their ability to apply social and practical skills such as personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing, eating, using money, and other functional skills across life domains; is NOT identified based on English learner designation or solely on the basis of previous low academic achievement or the need for accommodations; and requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction, as well as a need for substantial supports that are neither temporary nor specific to a particular content area.</p> <p>Texas Staaralt page (cited below) Source: https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/special-ed/staaralt/</p>

State	Definition and Source
Utah	<p>The term significant cognitive disability does not in itself denote a specific IDEA disability category or categories but rather a set of educational considerations based upon individual student needs as determined through the IEP process. A significant cognitive disability is not determined by a specific cognitive assessment score, but by a comprehensive understanding of the whole student, which indicates the disability significantly affects intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.</p> <p>Significant cognitive disabilities refers to a small number of students who are within one or more existing categories of disability under the IDEA (e.g. autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and intellectual disability). ...</p> <p>The Utah State Board of Education (USB E) defines a student with a significant cognitive disability (SWSCD) as a student who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has documentation that indicates the disability significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior (the definition of adaptive behavior is the actions essential for an individual to live independently and function safely in daily life). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student's cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior demonstrated in the home, school, and community environments are significantly below age expectations, even with program modifications, adaptations and accommodations. • Requires intensive, repeated, modified, and direct individualized instruction that requires substantial supports to learn, maintain, and generalize skills in the grade-and-age-appropriate curriculum and transfer of skills across multiple settings.

State	Definition and Source
Utah (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student's severe and complex disabilities limit the student from meaningful participation in the standard academic core curriculum or achievement of the academic content standards established at grade level, without substantial support, modifications, adaptations and accommodations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires instruction through the Utah alternate achievement standards (Essential Elements and Extended Core) ○ The student's course of study includes functional and life skills instruction and, ○ May be eligible to participate in alternate assessments (DLM, UAA, KEEP Alternate, DIBELS Alternate, etc.). • The student's disability increases the need for dependence on others for many, if not all, daily living needs, and the student is expected to require extensive ongoing support through adulthood. <p>34 C.F.R. §200.6(d); Utah Admin. Code R277-705-2(8)</p> <p>Who is a student with a significant cognitive disability? (p. 1) Source: https://schools.utah.gov/file/2a529d92-71e4-4712-83b2-62a960838496</p>
Virginia	<p>Extensive document with descriptors of Learner Characteristics, Adaptive Behavior and Intellectual Functioning. Highlights are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with significant cognitive disabilities probably have difficulty both learning most or all of these skills and using or transferring the skills across different settings and/or • Performance on standardized adaptive behavior scales that is at least three standard deviations below the mean. • Performance on standardized intelligence tests that represent at least three standard deviations from the mean IQ score. These scores may indicate that a student has significant cognitive disabilities <p>GUIDANCE DOCUMENT: VAAP Participation Criteria and the Determination of Significant Cognitive Disabilities Source: http://www.pen.k12.va.us/special_ed/disabilities/intellectual_disability/guidance_significant_cognitive_disabilities.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Washington	<p>Students with significant cognitive disabilities means those students who require intensive or extensive levels of direct support that is not of a temporary or transient nature. Students with significant cognitive disabilities also require specially designed instruction to acquire, maintain or generalize skills in multiple settings in order to successfully transfer skills to natural settings including the home, school, workplace, and community. In addition, these students score at least two (2) standard deviations below the mean on standardized, norm-referenced assessments for adaptive behavior and intellectual functioning.</p> <p>GUIDANCE FOR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) TEAMS: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE-WIDE ASSESSMENTS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND GRADUATION November, 2018 (p. 10) Source: http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/ResourceLibrary/pubdocs/IEP-Team-Guidelines-Assess.pdf</p>
West Virginia	<p>Students with significant cognitive disabilities have a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behaviors are essential to live independently and to function safely in daily life. When adaptive behaviors are significantly impacted it means that the individual is unlikely to develop the skills necessary to live independently and function safely in daily life. In other words, significant cognitive disabilities impact students both in and out of the classroom and across life domains, not just in academic domains. Eligibility for participation requires that the student has a current IEP, a multidisciplinary evaluation, and educational performance data that supports the decision for an alternate assessment.</p> <p>GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN WEST VIRGINIA STATE ASSESSMENTS 2018-2019, (p. 69) Source: http://wvde.state.wv.us/assessment/GUIDELINESFORPARTICIPATION/DOCUMENTS/ParticipationGuidelines.pdf</p>

State	Definition and Source
Wisconsin	<p>Significant cognitive disability is characterized by scores on verbal or nonverbal assessments of cognition that are at least 2½–3 standard deviations below the mean. Academic deficits or difficulties alone do not indicate that a student has a significant cognitive disability. Further, a significant cognitive disability will be pervasive, affecting student learning across content areas and in social and community settings. Not all students with intellectual disabilities have the most significant cognitive disability. Students should be carefully considered for the alternate academic achievement standards, the Wisconsin Essential Elements, and they should not automatically be assigned to the alternate assessment based on their identified disability category. Many students eligible to receive special education services under these categorical labels are able to participate in general curriculum, when provided with specially designed instruction, as well as any needed related services, supplementary aids and services (e.g. instructional accommodations), and program modifications and supports for school staff. For technical assistance on obtaining a level of cognition for students who may be difficult to assess, please review the Guidance and Worksheet on Obtaining a Valid Cognitive Abilities Assessment found on the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Intellectual Disabilities webpage.</p> <p>Adaptive behavior relates to independence in everyday living skills, including interpersonal and social interactions across multiple settings. To be considered a student with a most significant cognitive disability, students should demonstrate deficits in adaptive behavior with scores that are at least 2½–3 standard deviations below the mean in at least two adaptive skill domains below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual skills: receptive and expressive language, reading and writing, money concepts, self-direction. • Social skills: interpersonal, responsibility, self-esteem, follows rules, obeys laws, is not gullible, and avoids victimization. • Practical skills: personal activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, mobility and toileting; instrumental activities of daily living such as preparing meals, taking medication, using the telephone, managing money, using transportation and doing housekeeping activities; occupational skills; maintaining a safe environment <p>GUIDE TO DETERMINING STUDENTS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES (p. 5) Source: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/mscd-guide-to-determining-students-with-mscd.pdf</p>

Appendix I

Criteria Included in Definitions of Significant Cognitive Disabilities

State	Significant Cognitive Deficits	Poor Adaptive Skill Level	Unable to Reach Grade Level Standards	Extensive, Individualized, Direct Instruction	Pervasive Needs Across Settings or Time	Reference Score for IQ and/or Adaptive Function
AL	X	X	X			X
AK	X	X			X	
AZ	X	X				
AR	X	X		X	X	
CA	X	X				
CO	X	X				X
CT	X	X	X			
DC	X	X				
FL	X	X			X	
HI	X	X	X			
IL	X	X		X		X
IN					X	
KS	X	X	X			
KY	X	X	X	X		
ME	X	X				
MD	X	X	X		X	
MO	X	X			X	X
NE	X	X	X	X	X	
NH	X	X		X	X	
NJ	X	X	X	X	X	

State	Significant Cognitive Deficits	Poor Adaptive Skill Level	Unable to Reach Grade Level Standards	Extensive, Individualized, Direct Instruction	Pervasive Needs Across Settings or Time	Reference Score for IQ and/or Adaptive Function
NY	X				X	
NC	X	X		X		
OH	X	X				
OK	X	X			X	
OR	X	X		X	X	X
PA	X	X	X	X	X	X
RI	X	X	X	X	X	
SC	X	X	X	X	X	X
SD	X	X	X	X	X	
TN	X	X	X	X	X	
TX	X	X		X	X	
UT	X*	X		X	X	
VA	X	X			X	X
WA	X	X		X	X	X
WV	X	X			X	
WI	X	X			X	X
Total						

UT **Significant cognitive disability:** Significant cognitive disabilities refers to a small number of students who are within one or more existing categories of disability under the IDEA (e.g., autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and intellectual disability).

Appendix I - Continued

Criteria Included in Definitions of Significant Cognitive Disabilities

State	Not Solely Based on IQ Score, Holistic	Not Due to Excessive Absences	Not Due to Certain Disabilities (e.g., SLD)	Not Due to Social, Cultural, or Economic Factors	Need for Communication/Assistive Technology Systems	Other
AL	X					
AK						
AZ	X					
AR	X					X*
CA	X					
CO	X					
CT						
DC	X					
FL	X					
HI	X				X*	
IL						
IN			X			
KS						
KY		X	X	X		X*
ME	X					
MD	X		X			
MO	X					X*
NE					X	X*
NH	X				X	X*

State	Not Solely Based on IQ Score, Holistic	Not Due to Excessive Absences	Not Due to Certain Disabilities (e.g., SLD)	Not Due to Social, Cultural, or Economic Factors	Need for Communication/Assistive Technology Systems	Other
NJ						
NY					X	X*
NC						
OH	X					
OK	X					
OR	X				X	X*
PA	X					
RI						
SC			X			
SD						
TN	X	X	X	X		
TX						X*
UT	X					X*
VA	X					
WA						
WV						X*
WI						
Total	19	2	5	2	5	10

*See notes below.

AR **Other:** Not due to previous academic performance or need for accommodation, or disability label.

HI **Need for communication systems:** These limitations are evidenced by the need for significantly accommodated receptive and expressive communication systems (e.g., supplementation with pictures/symbols, assistive technology devices, etc.).

KY **Other:**

Require extensive individualized instruction across multiple settings to access and make progress in the Kentucky Academic Standards, and to maintain, generalize and demonstrate learning.

Have a significant cognitive disability that is not primarily the result of:

- those identified as English Learners (EL)
- pre-determined poor performance on the grade-level assessment
- displays disruptive behaviors or experiences emotional duress during testing
- administrator decision
- educational environment or instructional setting

MO Other: While IDEA does not provide any guidance on determining the most significant cognitive disabilities, it does state, under Section 300.304(3)(c)(1) “Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this part— (i) are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; (ii) are provided and administered in the child’s native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer; (iii) are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable; (iv) are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and (v) are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.”

NE Other: The student may have accompanying communication, motor, sensory, or other impairments.

NH Other: Limited Communication: The student may have very limited vocabulary and language skills, or may be non-verbal. The student may use simple language structures to communicate and seldom acquires new communication skills through incidental learning. This does not include any student with “limited communication” who has no effective communication system in place or under active development; **AND** Very Low Levels of Academic Achievement: Performance in the subject matters of Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science is significantly below that of same-aged peers. This does not include students working just 1 or 2 grade levels below grade-level, or any student who has not had full opportunity to benefit from empirically sound instructional intervention. This also does not include any student who has, as documented in IEP team meeting notes, had a significant cognitive disability “ruled out” in order to identify the student as a child having a specific learning disability.

NY Other: “Students with severe disabilities” refers to students who have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment. Students with severe disabilities may experience severe speech, language, and/or perceptual-cognitive impairments and challenging behaviors that interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. These students may also have extremely fragile physiological conditions and may require personal care, physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices.

OR Other: These students may also rely on adults for personal care and have medical conditions that require physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices

TX Other: is NOT identified based on English learner designation or solely on the basis of previous low academic achievement or the need for accommodations;

UT Other: The student’s disability increases the need for dependence on others for many, if not all, daily living needs, and the student is expected to require extensive ongoing support through adulthood.

WV Other: Eligibility for participation requires that the student has a current IEP, a multidisciplinary evaluation, educational performance data that supports the decision for an alternate assessment, an IEP that specifies that the student meets criteria for an alternate assessment, explaining why the student cannot participate in the *WVGSA Grades 3-8* and *CBA* or *SAT School Day*, and document any accommodations used in accordance with *WVS 326* procedures. Also, the parent and student must be involved and informed, including having explained that the student will graduate with a modified or alternate diploma.

Appendix J

How Parent/Guardian is Informed in Materials for AA-AAAS

State	Student Will Take AA-AAAS	Mentions Alternate Standards	Effect on Diploma Type or Post-secondary Options	Inform Student Also	Parent/Guardian Signature or Initials	Inform of Options if Parent/Guardian Does Not Agree
AL	X	X	X		X	
AK	X				X	
AZ	X	X			X	
AR	X	X	X		X	
CA	X	X	X			
DE	X	X	X		X	
DC	X	X			X	
FL	X	X			X	X
HI	X	X	X			
KY	X					X
LA	X	X			X	
ME	X	X			X	
MD	X				X	X

State	Student Will Take AA-AAAS	Mentions Alternate Standards	Effect on Diploma Type or Post-secondary Options	Inform Student Also	Parent/Guardian Signature or Initials	Inform of Options if Parent/Guardian Does Not Agree
MA	X	X	X		X	
MI	X		X			
NV	X	X	X			
NM	X	X	X			
NC	X				X	
OH					X	
RI	X	X	X			
SC	X	X	X		X	
TN	X	X	X		X	
TX	X		X			
VA	X		X		X	
WV	X	X	X	X	X	
WI	X	X	X			
Total	25	18	16	1	17	3

Appendix K

Parent Information Texts

State	Parent Text
Alabama	<p>ESSA also requires LEAs to ensure that as part of the IEP the parent of students who will participate in an alternate assessment are clearly informed that their child's academic achievement will be measured based on instruction from alternate standards and that participation in alternate assessments prepares students for supported/competitive employment.</p> <p>This form must be signed by the parent(s) after the IEP Team has determined that the general assessment, even with accommodations, would not be an accurate measurement of academic achievement, and therefore, the student will participate in the alternate assessment. This document will become part of the student's IEP and filed with the student's school IEP record. I understand that my child's achievement will be measured by participation in the alternate assessment.</p>
Alaska	<p>Documenting the Decision in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) The following information must be documented and filed in the student's special education file....An acknowledgement, signed by the parent/guardian, stating that he or she has been notified that the student is taking the Alternate Assessment for the current school year. If a parent/guardian does not attend the IEP meeting, a letter of notification must be sent by the district.</p>
Arizona	<p>Parent informed with signature IEP Team Statement of Assurance: <i>Our decision was based on multiple pieces of evidence that, when taken together, demonstrated that the Alternate Assessment is the most appropriate assessment for this student; that his/her academic instruction will be based on the CCCs linked to state content standards; that the Additional Considerations listed above were not used to make this decision; and that any additional implications of this decision were discussed thoroughly.</i> Each of us agrees with the participation decision in MSAA:</p>

State	Parent Text
Arkansas	<p>IEP Team Statement of Assurance: Our decision was based on multiple pieces of evidence that, when taken together, demonstrated that the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program is the most appropriate assessment for this student; that his/her academic instruction will be based on the Essential Elements linked to the Arkansas Academic Standards; that the Additional Considerations listed above were not used to make this decision; and that any additional implications of this decision were discussed thoroughly.</p> <p>Each of us agrees with the participation decision in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program: [signature]</p>
California	<p>Additionally, as part of the IEP process, parents must be clearly informed that their child's achievement is being measured against alternate achievement standards, and of "how participation in such assessments may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma." "While many of the students taking the CAAs are not on a "diploma track," this "does not preclude a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities who takes an alternate assessment from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma."</p>
Delaware	<p>Parent/Guardian: My initials below signifies that I understand that continued participation in the DeSSA-Alternate assessment will lead to a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards. The standards assessed in the DeSSA-Alt are less complex than the Delaware Content Standards assessed in the DeSSA general assessments, therefore this diploma may or not be accepted by colleges and technical/trade schools. [initials] AND [below on same form] IEP team members: My signature below indicates that I agree with the decision to participate in the DESSA-Alt, which is based on alternate achievement standards, because ALL four criteria listed have been met. [initials]</p>
District of Columbia	<p>Parent informed with signature IEP Team Statement of Assurance: <i>Our decision was based on multiple pieces of evidence that, when taken together, demonstrated that the Alternate Assessment is the most appropriate assessment for this student; that his/her academic instruction will be based on the NCSC CCCs linked to the CCSS; that the Additional Considerations listed above were not used to make this decision; and that any additional implications of this decision were discussed thoroughly.</i> Each of us participated in the decision regarding the DC Alternate Assessment:</p>

State	Parent Text
Florida	<p>A student participating in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment must have this participation determined by the student's individual educational plan (IEP) team and with parental consent.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The parent must sign consent in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(10), F.A.C.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Parental Consent Form In accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(10)(b), F.A.C., if the decision of the IEP team is that the student will participate in Access courses and be assessed through the FSAA, the parents of the student must give signed consent to have their child instructed in Access Points and the student's achievement measured based on alternate academic achievement standards. This decision must be documented on the Parental Consent Form—Instruction in the State Standards Access Points Curriculum and FSAA administration, available at https://www.firules.org/gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-04779. If the parents fail to respond after reasonable efforts by the school district to obtain consent, the school district may provide instruction in the state standards Access Points curriculum and administer the FSAA. The IEP should include a statement of why the student cannot participate in the general assessment and why the alternate assessment is appropriate.</p>
Hawaii	<p>ESSA also requires that parents be informed of the potential consequences, such as potential limitations on postsecondary opportunities, for their child if he or she is being assessed against alternate achievement standards.</p>
Kentucky	<p>Parents given guide and opportunity to ask questions. If parent or other ARC member does not agree with ARC decision, there is a process.</p> <p>The parent was provided a copy of the Alternate Assessment Parent Guide with an opportunity to ask questions. If yes, indicate below when the Guide was provided to the parents. If no, provide a copy of the Alternate Assessment Parent Guide and an opportunity to ask questions.... If the ARC has exhausted all available options for consensus and still is not able to come to an agreement, the district makes the final determination and MUST provide the parent with prior written notice of the decision. ... Should the dispute continue after the district has provided the parent with prior written notice, the parent may dispute the decision via any of the dispute resolution options.</p>
Louisiana	<p>Parental Understanding: If my child is eligible for and participates in the alternate assessment, my initials indicate I understand the statements below:</p> <p>_ Testing in alternate assessments means my child has an instructional program aligned with the Louisiana Connectors Standards.</p> <p>_ My child may be taught functional skills as needed, but these skills are not assessed on alternate assessments.</p> <p>_ The decision for my child to participate in alternate assessments must be made annually.... [Parent signature]</p>

State	Parent Text
Maine	<p>Parent informed with signature IEP Team Statement of Assurance: <i>Our decision was based on multiple pieces of evidence that, when taken together, demonstrated that the Alternate Assessment is the most appropriate assessment for this student; that his/her academic instruction will be based on the CCCs linked to state content standards; that the Additional Considerations listed above were not used to make this decision; and that any additional implications of this decision were discussed thoroughly.</i> Each of us agrees that the student will participate in an alternate assessment appropriate to MEA assessments.</p>
Maryland	<p>8. What process should be followed if the parent disagrees with the IEP team's decision for the student to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments? Effective July 1, 2017, Maryland law requires that the IEP team must obtain the written consent of a parent if the team proposes to identify a child for the Maryland Alternate Assessments (Md. Code Ann., Educ. §8-405(f)). If the parent does not provide written consent to identify their child for the Maryland Alternate Assessments, the IEP team must send the parent written notice of their consent rights no later than five (5) business days after the IEP team meeting informing them that: 1) the parent has the right to either consent to or refuse to consent to the action proposed; and 2) if the parent does not provide written consent or a written refusal within fifteen (15) business days of the IEP team meeting, the IEP team may implement the proposed action (Md. Code Ann., Educ. §8-405(f)(2)). If the parent provides a written refusal, the IEP team may not identify the child for the Maryland Alternate Assessments. If the IEP team disagrees with the parent's decision and/or determines that the failure to provide consent results in a failure to provide the child with a free appropriate public education (FAPE), the IEP team may use the dispute resolution options listed in Education Article §8-413 (mediation or due process) to resolve the matter (Md. Code Ann., Educ. §8-405(f)(3)). For further information on the recent Parental Consent legislation, please refer to the Technical Assistance Bulletin, "Parental Consent Under Maryland Law." Beginning July 1, 2017, parents must provide written consent for their child to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments (Md. Code Ann., Educ. §8-405(f))</p>
Massachusetts	<p>ESSA also requires that parents/guardians of students with disabilities who take alternate assessments be clearly informed as part of the IEP process that their child's academic achievement will be measured based on "alternate achievement standards," and participation in an alternate assessment may delay or otherwise affect their child's completion of the requirements for a diploma. AND The signed IEP signifies consent by the parent to have the student participate in the MCAS-Alt.</p>
Michigan	<p>If the IEP team determines that MI-Access is the most appropriate state level assessment for any given student, the school must provide information to that student's parents regarding any implication this decision may have on the student completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma.</p>

State	Parent Text
Nevada	Has the IEP team informed the parent/guardian of the consequences of the student participating in the Nevada Alternate Assessment (e.g., modified diploma vs. standard diploma) and of being judged against alternate achievement standards?
New Mexico	Parents have been informed of the potential consequences of having their student assessed against alternate achievement standards (such as potential limitations to postsecondary opportunities). Also, multiple evidence need to be provided to answer questions in participation criteria.
North Carolina	The student meets the criteria above and has a written parental request for the administration of an alternate assessment (i.e., CCRAA or NCEXTEND1). Note: Decisions regarding which assessments a student with disabilities will participate in must be made annually by the IEP team. Therefore, if a student's current IEP designate participation in an alternate assessment, the IEP can serve as documentation of the written parental request.
Ohio	Has place for parent signature on form.
Rhode Island	<p>IEP Team Assurance: The IEP team has thoroughly discussed the evidence gathered to determine eligibility, how that evidence aligns to the three criteria, it has used only the three participation criteria above, and no others, to reach that decision (Lists 1 and 2 on pages 10 and 11). The IEP team has informed the parent(s) of the implications of their child's participation in the alternate assessments, namely that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Their child's academic progress towards achievement of the content standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science will be measured using the Essential Elements. · They understand the graduation options for their child. <p>NOTE: LEAs may choose to award diplomas to students who qualify for the alternate assessment if the student demonstrates proficiency through their coursework using modified proficiency expectations for state-adopted standards (CCSS, NGSS, etc.). LEAs also have the authority to award a certificate of alternate recognition of high school accomplishment, in accordance with LEA-defined policies and criteria (see page 13 of this manual for more information).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · They have been informed of any other implications, including any effects of local policies on the students education, resulting from taking an alternate assessment.

State	Parent Text
South Carolina	<p>Alternate Assessment and Diploma Requirements The IEP team should be aware that participation in alternate assessment on alternate achievement standards means that the student is participating in a curriculum that does not lead to a high school diploma. The achievement expectations for the alternate assessment are not the same as the expectations for the general assessment. Students must earn units in the core content as a requirement for a high school diploma. IEP teams should also be aware that if a student without a significant cognitive disability participates in the alternate assessment, the results will not reflect what the student knows and can do. The assessment results may not be valid and the student may be considered as not participating in assessment for state and federal accountability purposes. AND Understand that participation in alternate assessment means that my child is participating in a curriculum that will NOT lead to a high school diploma. [Signature and date]</p>
Tennessee	<p>Parent Informed on Diploma with signature: I understand that participation in the alternate assessment means my student is participating in a curriculum that may hinder his/her ability to obtain a regular diploma. I understand that my child may instead receive an alternate academic diploma, occupational diploma, and/or special education diploma. Parent(s)/Guardian</p>
Texas	<p>For a student whom the ARD committee deems eligible to take STAAR Alternate 2, the committee understands that instructional and assessment decisions made may impact a student's graduation plan in high school, as described in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §89.1070. According to 19 (TAC) §101.27(b), school districts are required to follow the procedures specified in the applicable test administration materials. If the ARD committee determines that the student will take STAAR Alternate 2, justification that is based on the information in this form and the student's individual allowable accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP.</p>
Virginia	<p>[on alternate assessment form with place for parent signature following criteria] Is the student working toward educational goals other than those prescribed for a Modified Standard Diploma, Standard Diploma, or Advanced Studies Diploma?</p>

State	Parent Text
West Virginia	<p>Parent(s) or guardian(s) must be involved in and informed of all decisions regarding the use of the <i>WVASA</i> and made aware that performance measures are based on the <i>West Virginia Alternate Achievement Standards</i>. All implications of assessment decisions must be carefully explained to the parent and the student, including that the student will graduate with a modified, or alternate, diploma. ...</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The IEP Committee used the above evaluation data analysis and discussion to determine:</p> <p>The student DOES meet the criteria to participate in the WV Alternate Assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>The student DOES NOT meet the criteria to participate in the WV Alternate Assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. [Parent/Guardian signature]</p>
Wisconsin	<p>Under 300.160, IEP teams must inform parents on the difference between assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards and those based on alternate academic achievement standards and how participating in alternate assessment may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma. ESSA also states that a student participating in the alternate assessment cannot be precluded from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma. Sample IEP Form I-7A included in Appendices A, includes parent notification as part of the participation guidelines for participating in the alternate assessment.</p>

Appendix L

Mentions of English Learners or Language in Criteria Evidence for Alternate Assessment

State	EL Assessments Evidence for Criteria	EL Considerations that May Interfere in Showing Abilities (e.g., adaptive tests)	Language Assessments Evidence for Criteria	Use IQ tests in Student's First Language	Other
AL	X				
AR	X	X			
CA		X			
DE					X*
DC	X	X			
FL			X		
GA	X		X		
IN	X			X	
KY		X		X	
LA	X				
MD		X		X	
ME		X		X	
MI					X*
MO		X		X	
NY					X*

State	EL Assessments Evidence for Criteria	EL Considerations that May Interfere in Showing Abilities (e.g., adaptive tests)	Language Assessments Evidence for Criteria	Use IQ tests in Student's First Language	Other
RI	X	X			
SC	X	X			X*
SD	X	X		X	
TN	X	X			
WI	X	X			
Total	11	12	2	6	4

*See notes below.

DE **Other**: Mentions one year exemptions from taking ELA content assessments for new ELs.

MI **Other**: Students receiving only EL services are ineligible.

NY **Other**: Ensures each student has personal communication system, including native language, needed to show present levels of performance.

SC **Other**: May use student participation in alternate ELP assessment as evidence.

Appendix M

Nature of English Learner Mentions

State	English Learner Text
Alabama	<p>Criterion 1 (significant cognitive disability) areas to consider:</p> <p>Results of language assessments including English language learners (ELL) language assessments, if applicable.</p>
Arizona	<p>In sources to consider: IEP information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAPF), goals, and short-term objectives. • Considerations for students with individualized and substantial communication needs or modes (from multiple data sources) • Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive abilities. <p>AND, In list to consider for Criterion 1: Results of language assessments including English Learner (EL) language assessments if applicable.</p>

State	English Learner Text
Arkansas	<p>In sources of information for decision-making: IEP information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive abilities <p>In FAQ:</p> <p>3. How do I know if the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program is appropriate for an EL student with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills? An EL student should be considered for the alternate assessment if (a) his/her intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability, and (b) he/she meets the other participation guidelines for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments, alongside the information on goals and instruction in the student's IEP used to determine what may or may not be a significant cognitive disability. If an EL student with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment, he/she should take the general assessment with accommodations as appropriate.</p> <p>And, listed consideration for criterion 1- whether student with significant cognitive disability:</p> <p>Results of language assessments including English learner (EL) language assessments if applicable.</p>
California	<p>In sources of information to consider: EP information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances of a student who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., an English learner), which may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive abilities

State	English Learner Text
Delaware	<p>Criteria for Receiving an Exemption from the DeSSA ELA/Literacy, SAT Reading or DeSSA-Alt ELA If an EL student receives an exemption, he or she is not required to take the DeSSA ELA/Literacy Assessment, SAT reading, or the DeSSA-Alt ELA assessment. Students receiving an exemption should have the EL exemption for ELA entered into DeSSA TIDE student settings. SAT Exemptions are entered through the District Test Coordinators. The following are the criteria for receiving an exemption from these language arts tests:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student has not been transitioned or exited; 2. It is the student's first year of enrollment in U.S. schools.
District of Columbia	<p>In list of sources to consider: IEP information including:</p> <p>Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive abilities. AND In list for to consider for criterion 1: Results of language assessments including English learner (EL) language assessments if applicable.</p>
Florida	<p>In list to consider for determining if student has a significant cognitive disability: language assessments</p>
Georgia	<p>In list of considerations for criterion 1: Results of language assessments including English Learner (EL) assessments, if applicable</p>
Hawaii	<p>Hawaii State Assessment- Alternate(HSA-Alt) Participation Guidelines Four criteria form the basis for alternate test participation in Hawaii. A student with an IEP must meet all four criteria in order to be considered for the HSA-Alt or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. This evidence-based checklist should be used by IEP teams when making an alternate test student identification decision for either the HSA-Alt or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.</p>

State	English Learner Text
Indiana	<p>3. How do I know if the Indiana Alternate Assessment is appropriate for an ELL with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills?</p> <p>An ELL should be considered for the alternate assessment if (a) his/her intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in his/her home language as appropriate, and (b) he/she meets the other participation guidelines for the Indiana Alternate Assessment. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments, alongside the information on goals and instruction in the student's IEP used to determine what may or may not be a significant cognitive disability. If an ELL with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment, he/she should take the general assessment with accommodations as appropriate.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>In flow chart list of sources to consider: Consider These: Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test, Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment, individual/group-administered achievement tests, and district-wide alternate assessments, and English language learner (ELL) language assessments, if applicable</p>
Kentucky	<p>In list of sources to consider: IEP information including: - Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English Learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive abilities.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>3. How do I know if the alternate assessment is appropriate for an English Learner (EL) with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills? An EL student should be considered for the alternate assessment if (a) his/her intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in his/her home language as appropriate, and (b) he/she meets the other participation guidelines for the alternate assessment. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments, alongside the information on goals and instruction in the student's IEP used to determine what may or may not be a significant cognitive disability. If an EL student with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment, he/she should take the general assessment with accommodations as appropriate.</p>
Louisiana	<p>In list to consider for Criterion 1: Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</p>

State	English Learner Text
Maine	<p>In list to consider: IEP information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive abilities. <p>AND</p> <p><i>How do I know if an alternate assessment is appropriate for an English Learner with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills?</i></p> <p>An English Learner should be considered for the alternate assessment if (a) his/her intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in his/her home language as appropriate, and (b) he/she meets the alternate participation guidelines. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and socio-cultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments. Information regarding goals and instruction in the student's IEP may be used to determine what may or may not be a significant cognitive disability. If an ELL with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment, he/she should take the general assessment with accommodations as appropriate.</p>
Maryland	<p>The IEP team must annually consider the following information to determine whether the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for an individual student: ...</p> <p>Consideration for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (e.g., English Learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive skills.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>3. <i>How do I know if the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for an English Learner (EL) with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills?</i></p> <p>An English Learner should be considered for the alternate assessment if his/her intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in his/her spoken language as appropriate and he/she meets the other participation criteria for the Maryland Alternate Assessments. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments, alongside progress on goals and objectives in the student's IEP used to determine what may or may not be a significant cognitive disability. If an EL with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessments, he/she should take the general assessments with or without accommodations as appropriate. EL status alone is not appropriate to consider as criteria for participation in the alternate assessments.</p>

State	English Learner Text
Michigan	<p>Top of alternate content flow chart: Does the student have, or function as if he/she has a SIGNIFICANT, cognitive impairment? No: student should take M-STEP/MME Yes: Does the student require an English language proficiency assessment? Yes: follow the MDE guidelines for participation in Alternate ACCESS for ELLs AND</p> <p>Are There Students Who Should NOT Take MI-Access? (continued)</p> <p>Students who only receive English Learner services or are not yet found eligible for special education services, such as students participating in a tier II intervention in a multi-tiered system of support</p>
Minnesota	<p>English language proficiency accountability assessments: For English learners with significant cognitive disabilities, it is recommended that the IEP team collaborates with EL staff to determine if the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment in place of the ACCESS. Access information on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs participation criteria (WIDA > Assess > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs).</p>
Missouri	<p>While IDEA does not provide any guidance on determining the most significant cognitive disabilities, it does state, under Section 300.304(3)(c)(1) "Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this part— (i) are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; (ii) are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer; (iii) are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable; (iv) are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and (v) are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments."</p>
New Hampshire	<p>5, Exemption from the ELA (and writing) portion ONLY of the statewide assessment system for ELL students who have been in the country 12 months or less.</p>
New York	<p>The CSE ensures that each student has a personalized system of communication that addresses his/her needs regarding disability, culture, and native language so the student can demonstrate his/her present level of performance.</p>

State	English Learner Text
Rhode Island	<p>Assessment data and evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ... · language assessments like ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs <p>AND</p> <p>IEP information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners). <p>AND</p> <p>English Language Learner (EL) status. It is important to understand that a student's ability to learn and their knowledge of English are not connected. How well a student understands and speaks English has an impact on his/her ability to learn; however it does not indicate a learning disability. Alternative methods of understanding what a student knows and can do may need to be investigated depending on the student's English proficiency level. Please contact your district EL Director for options</p>

State	English Learner Text
South Carolina	<p>Information the IEP Team can use to determine if alternate assessment is appropriate for an individual student. The IEP team should review and discuss multiple sources of information. Some sources that the team may consider reviewing include: psychological evaluation reports, results of individual cognitive ability tests, adaptive behavior skills data, results of individual or group administered achievement assessments, district-wide alternate assessments, individual reading assessments, findings of communication or language proficiency assessments, teacher collected data from classroom observations, progress monitoring data, and IEPs.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>IEP information including The team should consider: & special considerations related to communication or English language learners</p> <p>AND</p> <p>... teacher collected data and work samples from classroom and community-based instruction, if applicable. Although there should be evidence that a student who participates in an alternate assessment receives extensive instruction in functional curriculum and daily living skills, only academic instruction or English language proficiency is assessed with alternate assessment.</p> <p>... results of English language proficiency assessments if the student is also classified as an English language learner (ELL).</p> <p>... Appendix C Review of <i>Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Checklist for Students who are English Language Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities</i> may be used with students who are ELL with significant cognitive disabilities, ages 6 and 7.</p> <p>... Note: Students who are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) with cognitive disabilities participate in an English language Proficiency Alternate Assessment beginning in first grade or age six and continue until exited.</p>

State	English Learner Text
South Dakota	<p>Assessment data and evidence: o Past state assessments to compare to classroom work ... Language assessments like ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs</p> <p>IEP information including: o Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, goals, and short-term objectives or post-school outcomes from the IEP ... o Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners)</p> <p>English Language Learner (ELL) status: It is important to understand that a student's ability and their knowledge of English are not connected. How well a student understands and speaks English has an impact on their ability to learn; however it does not indicate a learning disability. Alternate methods of understanding what a student knows and can do may need to be investigated depending on the student's English proficiency level. Please contact your district ELL Director for options. ... results of English language proficiency assessments if the student is also classified as an English language learner (ELL).</p> <p>3. <i>How do I know if the alternate assessment is appropriate for an ELL with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills?</i> An ELL should be considered for the alternate assessment if (a) their intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in their home language as appropriate, and (b) they meet the other participation guidelines for the alternate assessment. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments, alongside the information on goals and instruction in the student's IEP used to determine what may or may not be a significant cognitive disability. If an ELL with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment, he/she should take the general assessment with accommodations as appropriate.</p>
Tennessee	<p>[in list for Criterion 3 considerations for teams]</p> <p>Does the IEP contain sufficient evidence and data that a student requires <i>substantial</i> accommodations, modifications, services, and supports? ...- <i>Communication needs or fluent use of an augmentative, assistive communication system (Primary language fluency and skill level (English learner) and the impact of learning a second language on the student's performance.)</i> AND In list of sources of evidence Results of language assessments including English language learners (EL) language assessments, if applicable</p>

State	English Learner Text
Texas	<p style="text-align: center;">ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</p> <p>If the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee has previously determined that a student meets the eligibility criteria for STAAR Alternate 2 and TLPAS Alternate and the student is being considered for a No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR) designation, the ARD committee must discuss the eligibility criteria below. The answer to at least one of the two NAAR Eligibility Criteria questions listed below must be YES. Additionally the ARD committee must discuss the two assurances. Both assurances must be initialed by district personnel in order for the student to receive a NAAR designation. Students qualifying for NAAR will not be required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 and TLPAS Alternate for any course, subject, or domain. A score code of 'N' must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</p> <p>If the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee has previously determined that a student meets the eligibility criteria for STAAR Alternate 2 and TLPAS Alternate and the student is being considered for a medical exception designation, the ARD committee, in conjunction with LPAC as necessary, must discuss the eligibility criteria below. At least one of the specific medical conditions listed below should describe the medical condition of the student. Additionally the ARD committee must discuss the three assurances. All of these assurances must be initialed by district personnel in order for the student to receive a medical exception. Students qualifying for a medical exception will not be required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 and TLPAS Alternate for any course, subject, or domain for which they are enrolled in the current year. A score code of 'M' must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken. Assessment decisions must be communicated to necessary personnel.</p>

State	English Learner Text
Washington	<p>Finally, when an IEP team determines that the student should take an alternate assessment, the team must document in the IEP: 1) why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment, and 2) why the alternate assessment selected (i.e., WA-AIM and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) is appropriate to assess the student's academic, or language if eligible, performance.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>lack of access to quality instruction in core standards social, cultural, linguistic, or economic differences for the WA-AIM; however cultural and linguistic differences should not be used as sole exclusionary factors for eligibility to participate in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS NOTE phrasing of Social and linguistic factors include WIDA consideration: social, cultural, linguistic, or economic differences for the WA-AIM; however cultural and linguistic differences should not be used as sole exclusionary factors for eligibility to participate in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS</p> <p>AND</p> <p>If a student meets the guidelines to receive instruction on alternate academic or language achievement standards and takes alternate assessments based upon those alternate achievement standards, then all tested academic content, language, or other state-mandated assessments areas required for the student's enrolled grade level, should be alternate assessments.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Figure 1 and Figure 2 on the following pages outline the participation criteria and decision-making process for the WA-AIM and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. There is a difference in terms of participation criteria between Figure 1 (WA-AIM) and Figure 2 (WIDA). The difference is in the list of exclusionary factors in the boxes at the bottom of page for both charts. The main purposes for these lists of exclusionary criteria are to: (1) raise the probability that a student truly has a significant cognitive disability and (2) ensure that students are not inappropriately included or excluded from receiving an appropriate education and/or participating in the appropriate statewide assessment.</p> <p>Figure 1 for the WA-AIM shows that "linguistic" and "culture" are two factors an IEP team may not use as the primary basis for a student participating in the WA-AIM, but Figure 2 for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS does not include either of these as exclusionary factors. "Culture" and "linguistic" factors include, but are not limited to, recent immigration from another country; education disrupted during an immigration experience; acculturation experiences in the United States; cultural values which are distinctly different from those of the majority culture; bilingual/bicultural background of the family; and the influence of language and dialect on school performance.</p> <p>Students with significant cognitive disabilities often have one or both of these factors that may <i>contribute</i> to academic and learning difficulties; however, the IEP team must rule out these factors as the <i>primary</i> cause of a student's academic and learning difficulties to determine whether the student is eligible to participate in the WA-AIM. The fundamental principle underlying this rule is that a student should not be regarded as having a significant cognitive disability if (1) he or she has not been given sufficient and appropriate learning opportunities or (2) the student's academic struggles are primarily due to factors other than a disability such as language or culture. This same "rule" does not apply to the WIDA Alternate ACCESS because:</p> <p>in order to participate in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student must first be a student with a significant cognitive disability and eligible to participate in the WA-AIM (IEP team will need to use professional judgment for students in grades K–2), and the WIDA Alternate ACCESS is a test to assess the language proficiency of an EL with a significant cognitive disability; consequently, the student's native language or culture should not exclude the student from participation in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.</p>

State	English Learner Text
Washington (continued)	<p>Figure 3 shows the sequence of decisions made by IEP teams when determining whether a student should participate in alternate assessment. If a student meets the guidelines to receive instruction on alternate academic or language achievement standards and takes alternate assessments based upon those alternate achievement standards, then all tested academic content, language, or other state-mandated assessments areas required for the student's enrolled grade level, should be alternate assessments.</p> <p>Finally, when an IEP team determines that the student should take an alternate assessment, the team must document in the IEP:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment, and 2) why the alternate assessment selected (i.e., WA-AIM and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) is appropriate to assess the student's academic, or language if eligible,
Wisconsin	<p>In list of sources to consider:</p> <p>Results of English language proficiency assessments if the student is also classified as an English Learner (EL).</p> <p>...</p> <p>Special considerations related to communication or English language learners.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Disproportionality-</p> <p>Address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment. 200.6(c)(4)(iii)(B). Districts need to assure that they have reviewed their student participation data for the alternate assessment and have disaggregated the data by race, economically disadvantaged as well as language status as required under section 1111(c) (2) (A), (B), or (D).</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Footnote on form: Students who are English Learners are required to participate in an annual English language proficiency assessment.</p>

Appendix N

Exemption and Non-Exemption Texts

State	Types of Exemption and Non-Exemptions
Delaware	<p>EL One Year Exemption: Criteria for Receiving an Exemption from the DeSSA ELA/Literacy, SAT Reading or DeSSA-Alt ELA If an EL student receives an exemption, he or she is not required to take the DeSSA ELA/Literacy Assessment, SAT reading, or the DeSSA-Alt ELA assessment. Students receiving an exemption should have the EL exemption for ELA entered into DeSSA TIDE student settings. SAT Exemptions are entered through the District Test Coordinators. The following are the criteria for receiving an exemption from these language arts tests: 1. The student has not been transitioned or exited; 2. It is the student's first year of enrollment in U.S. schools.</p>
Florida	<p>Extraordinary Exemption and Medical Exemption: Who may be eligible for an extraordinary exemption from participation in the statewide standardized assessment because of circumstances or conditions? Section 1008.212, F.S., establishes two determinations that guide the IEP team in determining whether a student with a disability needs an extraordinary exemption from statewide standardized assessments. A student with a disability who has a circumstance, defined according to s. 1008.212, F.S., may be eligible for an extraordinary exemption from participation in the statewide assessment. Circumstance is defined as a situation in which accommodations allowable on a statewide standardized assessment are not offered to a student during the current year's assessment administration because of technological limitations in the testing administration program that lead to results that reflect the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills rather than the student's achievement of the benchmarks assessed by a statewide standardized assessment. A student with a disability who has a condition may be eligible for an extraordinary exemption from participation in the statewide standardized assessment. A condition is defined according to s. 1008.212, F.S., to mean an impairment, whether recently acquired or longstanding, that affects a student's ability to communicate in modes deemed acceptable for statewide standardized assessments, even if appropriate accommodations are provided. The impairment creates a situation in which the results of administration of a statewide standardized assessment would reflect the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills rather than the student's achievement of the benchmarks assessed by the statewide standardized assessment. A learning, emotional, behavioral or significant cognitive disability, or the receipt of services through the homebound or hospitalized program in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03020, F.A.C., is not, in and of itself, an adequate criterion for granting an extraordinary exemption.</p>

State	Types of Exemption and Non-Exemptions
Florida (continued)	<p>C-2. Who determines whether a student with a disability may be eligible for an extraordinary exemption from participation in the statewide standardized assessment because of circumstances or conditions? The IEP team, which must include the parent, may determine if the student is eligible for an extraordinary exemption. The IEP team must then submit all documents required to the district school superintendent.</p> <p>C-3. What is the process for submission of an extraordinary exemption from participation in a statewide standardized assessment to the commissioner of education? The IEP team, which includes the parent, may submit a written request for an extraordinary exemption to the district school superintendent at any time during the school year, but no later than 60 days before the first day of the administration window of the statewide standardized assessment for which the request is made. The request must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written description of the student's disabilities, including a specific description of the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills; • Written documentation of the most recent evaluation data; • Written documentation, if available, of the most recent administration of statewide standardized assessments; • Written description of the effect of the circumstance or condition, as defined in section. 1008.212, F.S., on the student's participation in statewide standardized assessments and on the student's achievement; • Written evidence that the student had the opportunity to learn the skills being tested; • Written evidence that the student had been provided appropriate instructional accommodations; • Written evidence as to whether the student has had the opportunity to be assessed using the instructional accommodations on the student's IEP that are allowable in the administration of a statewide standardized assessment; • Written evidence of the circumstance or condition as defined in subsection (1) of Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C.; and • The name, address and phone number of the student's parent. <p>Based on the IEP team's recommendation, the school district superintendent shall recommend to the commissioner of education whether an extraordinary exemption for a given assessment administration window should be granted or denied. The school district's recommendation and accompanying documentation must be sent to the Florida Department of Education, Office of the Commissioner, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-0400.</p> <p>Within 30 calendar days of receiving the request, the commissioner of education shall verify the information documented, make a determination and notify the parent and the district school superintendent in writing whether the exemption has been granted or denied.</p> <p>Exemption for Students with Medical Complexity D-1. Who may be eligible for an exemption from participation in the statewide standardized assessment because of medical complexity?</p>

State	Types of Exemption and Non-Exemptions
Florida (continued)	<p>Section 1008.22(10), F.S., establishes criteria to guide the IEP team in making a determination about a student with a disability who has the need for an exemption from participation on statewide standardized assessments because of the student's medical complexity.</p> <p>Medical complexity is defined to mean a child who, based upon medical documentation from a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, F.S., is medically fragile and needs intensive care because of a condition such as a congenital or acquired multisystem disease; has a severe neurological or cognitive disorder with marked functional impairment; or is technology dependent for activities of daily living and lacks the capacity to perform on an assessment.</p>
Iowa	<p>No Opt-Out: There is no opt out option for assessment participation. The only decision an IEP team can make is which type of assessment the student will participate - either the general assessment or the alternate assessment.</p>
Maryland	<p>No Exemption for Student Without Communication System: 4. <i>What if it is impossible to assess a student because the student does not appear to communicate?</i> All attempts should be made to find a mode of communication with the student as soon as he or she is enrolled in school. If various approaches and technologies do not appear to demonstrate a consistent mode of communication, then consider that all behavior that the student exhibits is a form of communication, and use this as a starting point. A critical element in assessing all students is a focus on communicative competence as the base for student access to the MCCRS. Best practice is that students have a communication system in place that allows them to demonstrate an understanding of academic concepts prior to participation in statewide accountability assessments. However, students must still participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments with or without a communication system. Each IEP team should continue to provide the necessary supports in order to develop a communication system for a student.</p>

State	Types of Exemption and Non-Exemptions
Mississippi	<p>Medical Emergency Exemption: In rare instances, a student may be unable to participate in any part of the assessment due to a significant and documented medical or mental emergency. Examples of significant medical emergency includes a serious car accident, hospitalization, severe trauma, mental health crisis that is dangerous to self or others, or placement in hospice care. All medically fragile students are expected to participate in the statewide assessment unless a significant and documented medical emergency exists in addition to medical fragility.</p> <p>Criteria for a Significant Medical Emergency: For a student to qualify for the Significant Medical Emergency exemption from the participation rate calculation, all the following must be true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The situation was rare and unique in that the student was unable, for medical reason, to participate in any part of the assessment. · The significant medical emergency was due to a medical condition such as a serious car accident, hospitalization, severe trauma, mental health crisis that was dangerous to self or others, or placement in hospice care. · The student was unable, due to the significant medical emergency, to receive academic instruction during the testing period. <p>The medical emergency must be documented by the student's licensed physician on the Non-Participation Due to a Significant Medical Emergency Form. (Due to HIPPA, the parent may need to assist in obtaining this documentation.) The signature of the parent/legal guardian is required for submission.</p>

State	Types of Exemption and Non-Exemptions
New Hampshire	<p>EL One-Year Exemption, Extraordinary Circumstance, and Medical Exemption: Updated: 9/13/18 Statewide Assessment Exemptions Request for State Approved Special Considerations (SASC) School Year 20182019 Each year, students with very serious, chronic, and fragile medical or other conditions can and do participate successfully in New Hampshire's Statewide Assessment System. However, there are rare and unique situations in which a student is unable to participate in any part of the statewide assessment. Such decisions must be made with the greatest care and restraint. Exemptions for participation in the statewide assessment must be submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) for approval.</p> <p>The following exemptions may be considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medical emergency/serious illness 2. Severe emotional distress 3. Death in the family 4. Student who participates in another State assessment system 5. Exemption from the ELA (and writing) portion ONLY of the statewide assessment system for ELL students who have been in the country 12 months or less. <p>GENERAL GUIDELINE: If the student is able to receive instruction than he/she is able to participate in the state wide assessment. A request for an exemption can be made for any of the statewide assessments by submitting a SASC request to the NHDOE Bureau of Assessment and Accountability for approval. Source: https://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/assessment/alt_assess/documents/nhdoe_sasc_2018_19.pdf</p>
New Jersey	<p>Alternate for One or More Content Areas: Participation in the NJ DLM alternate assessment requires a yes answer to Question 1 and to Questions 2 & 3 for each of the applicable content areas. Based on the guideline questions below, a student may participate in the DLM in a content area and the general assessment in another content area, although this is rare.</p> <p>English Language Arts Check One Only: Student will participate in the DLM _____ or PARCC _____ Mathematics Check One Only: Student will participate in the DLM _____ or PARCC _____ Science Check One Only: Student will participate in the DLM _____ or NJSLA-S _____</p>
North Dakota	<p>Alternate for All Content Areas: IEP teams must select alternate assessment for all content areas assessed (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science). Students who participate in North Dakota's Alternate Assessments will not participate in the North Dakota State Assessment</p>

State	Types of Exemption and Non-Exemptions
Ohio	<p>Alternate for All Content Areas: A student who participates in the AASCD participates in this assessment for all content areas.</p>
Texas	<p>No Authentic Academic Response Exemption and Medical Exemption:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</p> <p>If the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee has previously determined that a student meets the eligibility criteria for STAAR Alternate 2 and TELPAS Alternate and the student is being considered for a No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR) designation, the ARD committee must discuss the eligibility criteria below. The answer to at least one of the two NAAR Eligibility Criteria questions listed below must be YES. Additionally the ARD committee must discuss the two assurances. Both assurances must be initiated by district personnel in order for the student to receive a NAAR designation. Students qualifying for NAAR will not be required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 and TELPAS Alternate for any course, subject, or domain. A score code of 'N' must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</p> <p>If the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee has previously determined that a student meets the eligibility criteria for STAAR Alternate 2 and TELPAS Alternate and the student is being considered for a medical exception designation, the ARD committee, in conjunction with LPAC as necessary, must discuss the eligibility criteria below. At least one of the specific medical conditions listed below should describe the medical condition of the student. Additionally the ARD committee must discuss the three assurances. All of these assurances must be initiated by district personnel in order for the student to receive a medical exception. Students qualifying for a medical exception will not be required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 and TELPAS Alternate for any course, subject, or domain for which they are enrolled in the current year. A score code of 'M' must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken. Assessment decisions must be communicated to necessary personnel.</p>

State	Types of Exemption and Non-Exemptions
Utah	<p>Alternate for All Content Areas, and Parent Exemption Process: Student is learning content linked to the Utah Core Standards through the Alternate Achievement Standards, the Essential Elements and the Extended Core Standards for all content areas; and • Determined by the IEP team. From criteria document.</p> <p>Has exemption process: 3.1. Special Conditions That Warrant Exemption from Statewide Assessment A parent or legal guardian may opt his or her student out of taking an assessment if the parent contacts the local school to request/inform the school that the parent's student not be tested, consistent with LEA Administrative timelines and procedures. When a student is exempted from an assessment, it is only for the immediate administration of the assessment. The student will be included in the next administration of the assessment, or in other assessments administered during the same school year. The Reason for the exemption must be documented in the student's cumulative record. Students not tested due to parent request shall receive a non-proficient score, which shall be used in school accountability calculations.</p>
Washington	<p>Alternate for All Content Areas: Note: Students meeting criteria and unable to participate in the Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics tests and the WCAS should take the WA-AIM in all areas.</p>
Wyoming	<p>Alternate for All Content Areas, and No Opt-Out: Can students participate in the general assessment in one content area (e.g., mathematics) and participate in the WY-ALT in another content area (e.g., ELA)? No. If a student can participate in any part of the general assessment, then he or she should take the entire general assessment with accommodations, as needed. As many students as possible should participate in the general assessment.</p> <p>Can parents opt their child(ren) out of required statewide assessments such as WY-TOPPP? No, opting out of state tests required by law is not allowed. In the spring of 2014, the WDE requested an opinion from the Wyoming Attorney General's Office regarding parent opt outs from state-mandated testing (e.g. WY-ALT, WY-TOPPP, and ACT). The following is part of the AG's response: "In summary, the State Board of Education is authorized to establish the statewide accountability system pursuant to state law, including the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act. It has promulgated rules that require districts to administer the relevant assessments to all students in the appropriate grade levels. These requirements are within the authority granted to the board by the legislature. Consequently, districts may not allow students or their parents to opt them out of the assessments provided by law." https://1dd1xt2jowkvs672myo6z14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/WY-ALT-FAQ_11.13.18.pdf</p>

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