



Comprehensive System of Student Assessment (CSSA)



Educator Guide To Test Interpretation for the Alaska Alternate Assessment For Science Spring 2015

Introduction

The *Educator Guide* explains the Alaska Alternate Assessment (AKAA) so educators can understand the outcomes and various reports. The following information is included here:

- The first four pages of the *Educator Guide* provide an explanation of the purpose of testing, the components of the AKAA, and a description of the Student Report
- The Conditions of Administration of the AKAA, including standard administration and eligibility for using the Expanded Levels of Support (ELOS) test items
- Example Report: Expanded Levels of Support (ELOS)
- Example Report: Unofficial Student Report
- Description of the Reading, Writing, and Mathematics tasks
- AKAA Regulation, Cut Score Ranges, and Proficiency Level Descriptors
- Glossary of Terms

The Purpose of Testing

The purposes of statewide student assessment specifically are to: 1) help determine which children are meeting statewide performance standards; 2) produce statewide information to facilitate sound decision making by policy makers, parents, educators, and the public; and 3) provide a focus for instructional improvement [4 AAC 06.700]. The purpose of the Alaska Alternate Assessment (AKAA) is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities have access to, participate in, and make progress in the general education curricula, as well as show what they know and can learn [4 AAC 06.775].

What the Alaska Alternate Assessment in Science Measures

The Alaska Alternate Assessment measures what students know and can do at their grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics (and science) compared to the Alaska Extended Grade Level Expectations (ExGLEs) for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The Alaska Alternate Assessment is based on Extended Grade Level Expectations with the performance measured against alternate achievement standards that differ in complexity

from grade level achievement standards. The AKAAs in science are tested in grades 4, 8, and 10.

Components of the Alternate Assessment in Science

The Alaska Alternate Assessment tests reading, writing, and mathematics (and science) as required by state and federal law. Statewide assessment of functional skills is not included in this academic assessment as the statewide assessment must measure the student’s academic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The tasks included in this assessment are performance, curriculum-based measures and are aligned to the Extended Grade Level Expectations. The assessment permits the use of accommodations, assistive technology, and adaptations of the material in order to provide the best access of the content for each student.

Science

The alternate assessment in science is comprised of three grade level assessments (grades 4, 8, and 10) designed to measure essential skills in science. The tasks are designed to measure the degree to which students with significant cognitive disabilities are learning to comprehend and apply scientific knowledge. The tasks increase in complexity with each grade and include: concepts of physical science, concepts of life science, concepts of earth science, the history and nature of science, and science and technology. Individual grade assessments are comprised of the following: grade 4 contains 4 tasks addressing 5 content standards; grade 8 contains 4 tasks addressing 4 content standards; and grade 10 contains 4 tasks addressing 4 content standards.

Reading the Individual Student Report

The Individual Student Report (ISR) provides a graphic and text display of student performance. After student information is verified for accuracy, scores are calculated, and proficiency levels assigned. An **official student report** then is uploaded to the DRA Reporting Website and downloaded by your Qualified Mentor-Trainer (QT) or your District Test Coordinator. Your QT or your DTC should share these ISRs with you and you should share them with parents.

A	This section identifies the year for the report, and all student demographic information.
B	Your Student’s Overall Performance indicates the student’s score, what score is needed for proficiency according to the approved cut scores, and the student’s proficiency levels for the subject area of science.
C	Interpretation of Chart explains how to read components of the chart such as proficiency levels, student skills performance, and expanded levels of support.
D	This section describes the proficiency level reported in B for Science separated into strands, giving the total possible score and the score earned.
E	This is a graphical representation of the score needed to obtain levels of proficiency for reading (FB – Far Below, BP – Below Proficiency, P – Proficient, and A – Advanced Proficient) and indicates where the student’s score falls on the proficiency graph.
F	Reverse side of page shows the Proficiency Level Descriptors and cut scores by proficiency level for this grade.

All students eligible for the Alaska Alternate Assessment must first take the standard administration of the AKAA before becoming eligible for the Expanded Levels of Support (ELOS) test items. ELOS scores are always far below proficient and not scaled to the cut scores. The following rules govern the administration of standard or ELOS items.

Science Score Possible and Score Earned columns display raw scores. Only valid scores are used for Alaska School Performance Indicator (ASPI). Scores for the Expanded Levels of Support (ELOS) items are designated as Far Below Proficient, and ELOS scores are not graphically displayed. If the student takes both Standard and ELOS items, only the standard data are displayed.

Explanation of the Conditions of Administration for the Alaska Alternate Assessment

STD means **Standard administration with or without accommodations**. A standard administration refers to a student taking the test in a manner consistent with the test directions and appropriate accommodations. The tasks can be administered with accommodations that do not alter the content being assessed. A score obtained under standard administration conditions with or without accommodations is considered comparable to other scores obtained under the standard administration conditions.

Three Task–Three Item Rule. Every student taking an Alaska reading, writing, mathematics, or science Alternate Assessment must take a minimum three tasks under the Standard administration with or without accommodations. For each of the minimum three tasks, the student must be presented with at least three items in the task before moving on to the next task. When the student gives no response, refuses, or earns a zero score on three consecutive items in three consecutive tasks, the assessor may stop the assessment for that content area. Not Administered— Inappropriate (NA-I) will not be accepted as an administration condition for the three minimum tasks.

Not Administered-Inappropriate (NA-I). NA-I is to be used only for specific disabilities as applied to the Reading Assessment: Task 1.34A for students who are blind or visually impaired and Task 1.34C and 1.910A for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Not Tested (NT). Not tested indicates the student did not test in that content area. The reasons a student may not be assessed in a content area include: Absent, IEP change, Late Entry, Long Term Illness, Suspension, and Other. Other requires an explanation. If a content area is not assessed, a reason not tested is required; otherwise student scores cannot be submitted in the online data entry system.

Expanded Level of Support (ELOS) Items. ELOS test items were developed to provide access to the academic tests for students with the most profound disabilities so that they have an opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. The ELOS items are linked to the content strands, but the items are sub-skills of the Extended Grade Level Expectations, and therefore do not adequately assess the content areas resulting in Far Below Proficient scores.

Three Task-Fifteen Item Rule (ELOS). Each ELOS task has five items. Students are scored using the *Levels of Independence Scoring Rubric* shown below. Each student is presented with three tasks composed of five items, for a total of 15 items.

Levels of Independence / Student Score

Support Level/Score	Description
1	Assessor uses full physical contact to elicit student response
2	Assessor uses partial physical contact to elicit student response
3	Assessor uses visual, verbal, and/or gestural prompts to elicit student response
4	Student independently responds; no contact and no prompting required

Unofficial Student Reports

An **unofficial student report** is generated when a Qualified Assessor enters student test scores after completing the administration of the AKA during the test window in March - May 2015. It is immediately available and is designed to provide instructional feedback. A separate student report is generated for reading, writing, and mathematics. The unofficial, online reports have a different appearance than the official reports. Scores are represented as "percentage correct" and no proficiency levels are assigned.

The following is an example of an *Unofficial Student Report*. A summary page reflects percentages correct of the tasks the student took. These scores do not reflect the scores required to gain proficiency. A Summary of Scores by Subject Area is given, indicating the student's percent correct for each subject area. Although Grade 8 is tested in all subject areas, reading, writing, math and science this sample report only demonstrates all required tasks for the Grade 8 Science.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT UNOFFICIAL STUDENT REPORT 2012 SPRING		
This unofficial report details student performance by task. Scores are listed both as number correct / maximum possible and total percent correct. Tasks with no student score information are blank. For more information about these scores or testing procedures, please refer to the appropriate scoring protocol or training manual. This report is informational only and will be superseded by release of the official student report.		
NAME : Grade, Eighth	DISTRICT : DRA	GRADE : 8
BIRTHDATE : 01/01/2000	SCHOOL : DRA	STATE ID NUMBER : 99999
DISTRICT ID NUMBER :		
Summary Scores by Subject Area		
Subject Area	Standard Administration	ELOS Items
Reading	49%	NA*
Writing	50%	NA*
Mathematics	71%	2%
Science	100%	NA*
Unofficial Report: 3/22/2013 *Not Administered		
Alternate Reading: Standard Administration		
Assessor Name : Kim Sherman	Date of Assessment : March 29th, 2012	Teacher Name : Kim Sherman
1.78A - Read Words of Increasing Complexity	4 / 8 = 50%	50%
1.78B - Obtain Information	7 / 7 = 100%	100%
1.78C - Read Sentences	4 / 19 = 21%	21%
2.78A - Read Passages: Story 1, Hannah's Homework	12 / 22 = 55%	55%
3.78B - Short Response: Obou? Explain I look at the pictures		

Science Alternate Assessment Task Descriptions

This section contains a description of the Science tasks found in the AKA. The tasks are grouped by content standard and grade. For example Task 1.4 means this is the first task for the content standard (1) for grade 4 (.4).

Task 1.4, 1.8, 1.10 – Concepts of Physical Science

Task 2.4, 2.8, 2.10 – Concepts of Life Science

Task 3.4, 3.8, 3.10 – Concepts of Earth Science

Task 4.4 – History of Nature of Science, Science and Technology

Task 4.8, 4.10 – Science and Technology

Proficiency Level Descriptors and Score Ranges

Science assessments were required by the federal government to be administered in spring 2008. The Alternate Assessment Standard Setting Committee met in May 2008 to determine the proficiency levels and cut scores for the alternate assessment in science. The State Board of Education has adopted the following cut scores for the Alternate Assessment.

Alternate Assessment Regulation for Science

4 AAC 06.775(b) is amended to read:

(c) To obtain a proficiency level of advanced, proficient, below proficient, or far below proficient in science the Alaska Alternate Assessment, a student must obtain a score as set out in the following table:

Proficiency Level	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Science: Advanced	44 or above	44 or above	44 or above
Science: Proficient	24-43	29-43	26-43
Science: Below proficient	12-23	16-28	18-25
Science: Far Below Proficient	11 or below	15 or below	17 or below

Authority: AS 14.03.075 AS 14.07.060

Glossary of Terms

Alternate Assessments are designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities that prevent them from taking the regular Standards Based Assessment (SBA) with or without accommodations. Students must meet the eligibility criteria as specified in the *Participation Guidelines* or located on the Alternate Assessment website in expanded format at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/AlternateOptional/05-06/ExpandedFormatPartCriteriaAug05.pdf>

Access Skills (Early Entry Points) are the very basic, underlying social, motor, or communication skills needed by students to be able to accomplish the content learning standards and may be part of the student's Individualized Education Program's (IEP). Instead of teaching these skills in isolation, they may be embedded within the context of standards-based instructional activities. This allows the student to practice targeted IEP skills while providing access to the general education curriculum. Access skills are not part of the grade level expectations but when used during content-related activities, they meaningfully engage students in the content activities and expose students to new ideas while practicing necessary skills required in the student's IEP.

Age-Appropriate Instruction and Materials – Instruction of students should open up opportunities to access the content standards, not limit participation in the grade level instructional activities. Materials and activities should reflect the chronological age of the student and be consistent with the content, activities, materials, and expected outcomes for all students. Materials may be adapted to provide access for the student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Content Standards are broad statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of their public school experience.

Performance Standards are aligned to the Content Standards and are measurable statements of what students should know and be able to do in the age spans 5-7, 8-10, 11-14, and 15-18. Within these standards are **strands**, which are clusters of learning standards in the content area organized around a central idea or concept.

Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) are specific statements of the knowledge and/or skills that students are expected to demonstrate at each grade level. They serve as checkpoints that monitor progress towards the performance standards and ultimately, the content standards. The grade-level expectations do not replace the performance standards; rather, they serve to clarify the standards. They also serve to define and communicate eligible content, or the range of knowledge and skills from which instruction and the new assessments are designed.

Extended Grade Level Expectations (ExGLEs) are linked to the Performance Standards/Grade Level Expectations. They are measurable statements of what students with significant cognitive disabilities should know and be able to do at grade level. The

extended grade level expectations are foundational skills and are less complex than the grade level expectations.

Early Entry Points describe the least complex skills and are prerequisites to the skills being assessed. They provide a range of options at which a student with a disability can access the learning standard at a less complex level. See above for definition of **Access Skills** and their relationship to standards.

Achievement Standards are descriptions of a test taker's competency, and **Alternate Achievement Standards** (AAS) are descriptions of competency for students who take the alternate assessment. There are four components of achievement standards.

1. **Labels** designating the different levels of student achievement. Alaska's proficiency levels are labeled: Advanced, Proficient, Below Proficient, and Far Below Proficient.
2. **Proficiency descriptors** are narrative statements describing student achievement at the different levels of competence useful in determining cut scores.
3. **Cut scores** separate the different achievement levels
4. **Exemplars** are samples of student work or student test results.

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