



**Participation Criteria
For Determining Student Eligibility in
Alaska's Non-Diploma Track
Alternate Assessment**

Students with significant cognitive disabilities will have access to, participate in, and make progress in the general education curricula. These students must also participate in statewide assessments administered in all grades 3–10, but they will usually take an Alternate Assessment. The Alternate Assessment is based on Alaska standards but measured against alternate achievement standards, and the Alternate Assessment does not lead to a diploma. Alternate achievement standards are expectations of performance that differ in complexity from grade level achievement standards. It is expected that only a small number (less than two percent) of all students will participate in the Alternate Assessment. District personnel must be trained and certified to access and administer the Alternate Assessment.

Eligibility for the Alaska Alternate Assessment is a decision made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members. Decisions made by the IEP team are reflected on the student's IEP and kept in the student's special education file. Parents must be informed when their child's achievement will be based on alternate achievement standards. Alternate achievements standards are proficiency scores and proficiency level descriptors that are different from the achievement standards for the Standards Based Assessment. Students taking the Alternate Assessment are not eligible to receive a high school diploma

The IEP form found in the Special Education Handbook includes a page for selecting state and district-wide assessments. The section for students taking the Alternate Assessment must be completed and filed in the student's special education file. This section includes the following information:

1. The Alternate Assessment is based on alternate achievement standards and does not lead to a diploma.
2. The IEP team must provide a statement describing why the regular assessment is not appropriate.
3. The IEP team must provide a statement describing why the Alternate Assessment is appropriate.
4. A parent's signature is required to acknowledge the student's participation in a non-diploma track assessment.

Criteria for IEP teams in determining student eligibility for Alternate Assessment:

Instructions: If any response to the criteria is “No” or “Disagree” the student must participate in regular state assessments with or without accommodations.

Yes/ Agree	No/ Disagree	Participation Criteria
		The student’s cognitive ability and adaptive skill levels prevent completion of the standard academic curricula that lead to a diploma, even with adaptations.
		The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
		The decision for using the alternate assessment is an IEP team decision, and the decision is not being made for program administration reasons.
		The modifications needed by the student to participate in the regular assessment would compromise the validity of the test.
		Objectives written for the student in the designated content area(s) are less complex than the grade level expectations, making the regular assessment, even with accommodations, inappropriate for this student.
		The student requires extensive, frequent, individualized instruction in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, generalize and demonstrate performance of skills.
		The student demonstrates cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum.
		The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not based solely on excessive or extended absences.
		The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not based solely on language, social, cultural, or economic differences.
		The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not based solely on deafness/blindness, visual, auditory, and/or motor disabilities.
		The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not primarily based on a specific eligibility determination.
		The decision to administer the state’s alternate assessment is not based on the fact that the student’s instructional reading level is below the grade level of the regular assessment to be administered.
		The decision to administer the alternate assessment is not based solely on the fact that the student is expected to perform poorly on the regular assessment.
		The decision to administer the alternate assessment is not based on the fact that the student is expected to experience duress under testing conditions.
		The decision to administer the alternate assessment is not based on the fact that there is a high probability that the student will demonstrate disruptive behaviors during the regular assessment.
		The decision to administer the alternate assessment is not based primarily on the student’s visual, auditory, physical, or emotional behavioral disabilities.

The above guidance is also available on the department Alternate Assessment website.

For additional guidance to help to help IEP teams in determining accommodations for testing, refer to Table 2 for the standardization it offers.