



Comprehensive System of Student Assessment (CSSA)



Parent Guide To Test Interpretation for the Alternate Assessment In Science Spring 2009

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 Alternate Assessment (AA) is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities will 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 Alternate Assessment in Science Measures

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

Components of the Alternate Assessment

The Alternate Assessment now tests science as required by state and federal law. Assessment of functional skills is not included in the alternate assessments as statewide assessments must measure the student's academic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The tasks included in these assessments are performance curriculum-based measures and are aligned to the Extended Grade Level Expectations (ExGLEs). The assessment permits the use of accommodations, assistive technologies, and adaptations of the material in order to provide the best access to 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.