



**Guidance for IEP Teams  
on  
Participation Decisions  
for the  
Arkansas Alternate  
Assessment Program**

**2016-2017**

# Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program

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# **Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions on the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Programs of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science**

## **Introduction**

This document is intended to help guide Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to determine whether the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, an alternate assessment program based on alternate achievement standards, is the most appropriate assessment for an individual student. The Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program was developed to ensure that all students are able to participate in an assessment that is a measure of what they know and can do in relation to the grade level state content standards. This assessment program was developed to be part of a system of curriculum, instructional, and assessment tools, so that students with significant cognitive disabilities are able to participate in content instruction and assessments that are aligned to the state standards.

IEP teams must consider a student's individual characteristics when determining whether a student with a disability should participate in the general assessment with or without accommodations, or in the Alternate Assessment Program. This document outlines steps that an IEP team should take in determining whether the Alternate Assessment Program is appropriate for a student. These include (a) reviewing student records and important information across multiple school years and settings (e.g., school, home, community), and (b) determining whether the student fits all of the criteria for participating in the Alternate Assessment Program as outlined in this document.

## **Development of the Alternate Assessment for English Language Arts and Math**

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is a collaborative of 26 states and five national organizations that worked together to build an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. NCSC applied lessons learned from the past decade of research on alternate assessments to develop a comprehensive and technically defensible assessment system. This development occurred from 2011 to 2015.

## ***Assessment Design for English Language Arts and Mathematics***

The Multi-State Alternate Assessment, or MSAA, (formerly known as NCSC) is an assessment of English Language Arts (reading and writing) and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11. It is an on demand assessment of approximately 30 test items that assess approximately 10 prioritized content targets per grade level. These content targets were identified for each grade based on learning progressions and alignment to grade level state content standards. The assessment includes multiple choice items and constructed response items. Each content target is assessed by items that have been carefully and intentionally designed to assess a range of ability and performance.

## ***Assessment Administration for English Language Arts and Mathematics***

The assessment is a computer-based test with allowances for flexibility in administration (for example, a student may respond to administrator-presented item stimuli rather than to the item stimuli on the computer). A trained testing administrator familiar to the student (e.g., the student's teacher) facilitates the administration, presenting items via paper or manipulatives as appropriate for the student. Items are administered to the student over the course of one or more testing sessions as needed for a student to complete a content area assessment. Testing sessions are scheduled within a testing window of approximately two months, scheduled by the consortium.

The assessment uses an adaptive approach, meaning that each student receives items that have been determined to be an appropriate level of challenge. Embedded locator tests and classroom data help determine the items a student encounters. The administration script provides flexibility in the ways in which a student may interact with items, so that what is being measured is not changed.

## **Development of the Alternate Assessment for Science**

The Arkansas Alternate Portfolio Assessment Program for Science was developed in 2006 by a committee of Arkansas educators from across the state. This portfolio assessment was to be the Alternate Assessment for Grade 5 and 7 science and Biology End of Course. The Science Alternate Assessment Program was a parallel assessment to the Arkansas Alternate Portfolio Assessment Program for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, which was developed from 1998 to 2000 by a Task Force of Arkansas Educators. The alternate portfolio assessment for ELA and Math was in place from 2001 until 2014. The NCSC Alternate Assessment replaced the Alternate Portfolio Assessment for ELA and Math in the 2014-2015 school year.

## **Assessment Design and Administration for Science**

The Alternate Portfolio Assessment is an assessment of Science at grades 5, 7 and 10. It is a collection of student work as evidence of student performance on tasks aligned to the Arkansas Curriculum Framework in Science. The Science standards for students in grades 5 and 7 are organized into the following four strands (categories): Nature of Science (not assessed in the alternate portfolio), Life, Physical, and Earth and Space. For students in grades 5 and 7, each portfolio should consist of two entries for each of the three strands in Science.

The Science standards for students in grade 10 are organized into the following four strands and nine content standards: **Molecules and Cells:** Role of Chemistry in Life Processes; Structure and Function of Cells; How Cells Obtain and Use Energy (Energetics), **Heredity and Evolution:** Heredity; Molecular Basis of Genetics; Theory of Biological Evolution, **Classification and the Diversity of Life:** Organisms are Diverse, **Ecology and Behavioral Relationships:** Ecological and Behavioral Relationships among Organisms; Ecological Impact of Global Issues. Each portfolio for grade 10 Science should consist of one entry for every content standard.

Samples of student work (entries) for the Alternate Portfolio Assessment must be collected beginning in September and continuing until March. The portfolios are due to be mailed in to the testing vendor for scoring in March.

## Participation Decisions for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program

Arkansas's participation guidelines are provided in Appendix A. IEP teams will want to use the guidelines to determine whether a student participates in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program. The Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program is administered each year to students in grades 3-8 and 11 for literacy and math and in grades 5, 7 and 10 for science who meet the required criteria. As reflected in the Guidelines, to participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment a student must meet all three of the following criteria:

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 essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.
2. **The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the State Content Standards.** Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade-level state content standards and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.
3. **The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade and age-appropriate curriculum.**

The student:

- 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.

## Participation Descriptions

1. **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.*
2. **The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Arkansas State Content Standards.** The student's disability or multiple disabilities affect how the student learns curriculum linked to the Arkansas Content Standards. The student is learning content that appropriately breaks the standards into smaller steps. MSAA has derived these smaller steps from the Content Standards to guide instruction and they are called Core Content Connectors (CCC). A CCC is a representation of the essential "core" content of a standard in the State Content Standard. Each CCC was identified by examining hypothesized learning progressions aligned with the CCSS to determine the critical content for students with significant cognitive disabilities.  
For information on the CCC, click here  
([https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core\\_Content\\_Connectors#Core\\_Content\\_Connectors\\_by\\_Common\\_Core\\_State\\_Standards](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core_Content_Connectors#Core_Content_Connectors_by_Common_Core_State_Standards)).

The student's disability or multiple disabilities affect how the student learns curriculum linked to the Arkansas Science Content Standards. The student is learning content that appropriately breaks the standards into smaller steps. The Resource Guide to the Arkansas Curriculum Framework for Students with Disabilities for Science Grades 5, 7, and 10 was designed by teachers to link activities to the science framework. When selecting appropriate activities, decisions must be based on individual student needs and abilities. For information on the Resource Guide, click here:<http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/assessment/assessments-for-students-with-disabilities/assessment-materials-for-students-with-disabilities> .

3. **The student's need for extensive direct individualized instruction is not temporary or transient.** His or her need for substantial supports to achieve gains in the grade and age-appropriate curriculum requires substantially adapted materials and customized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.



The IEP team is to consider the following information to determine whether the Alternate Assessments are appropriate for an individual student:

- Description of the student's curriculum and 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 alternate assessments
- Results of individualized reading assessments
- IEP information including:
  - Present levels of performance (include—Strengths, Needs and Data Sources)
  - 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.

### ***Do Not Use the Following as Criteria for Participation Decisions***

In addition to the three criteria for determining participation, there are other issues that may affect a student's learning experience and his/her ability to learn that are **not appropriate** to consider during the decision-making process for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program. These are:

1. A disability category or label
2. Poor attendance or extended absences
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
5. Academic and other services student receives
6. Educational environment or instructional setting
7. Percent of time receiving special education services
8. English Learner (EL) status
9. Low reading level/achievement level
10. Anticipated disruptive behavior
11. Impact of test scores on accountability system
12. Administrator decision
13. Anticipated emotional distress
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment

### **Participation Tools**

There are several tools that may be helpful to IEP teams as they collect and organize evidence before making a decision about whether a student meets all of the criteria listed above. Participation forms and other tools designed to assist teams in collecting and reviewing evidence to determine whether it is appropriate for an individual student to participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program are provided in the appendices.

**Appendix A. Participation Guidelines.** This is a short form that IEP teams can use to make decisions about whether a student should take the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program assessments.

**Appendix B. Participation Checklist.** This is a form that includes a way to indicate the evidence that was used in making decisions and the considerations that should not be the basis of making decisions.

**Appendix C. Decision Flowchart for Participation.** This shows the sequence of decisions made by IEP teams when determining whether a student should participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.

**Appendix D. 2016-2017 Special Education Assessments and Course Codes and eSchool codes.**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. Who decides that a student should participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program?**

The IEP team makes the determination of how a student will participate in statewide assessments. The IEP team must follow the Arkansas Participation Guidelines if they are to assign a student to participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program. No one member of the IEP team makes this decision. Parents, teachers, and administrators make the decision based on evidence and adherence to the *Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program*.

### **2. How do we know that a student has a “significant cognitive disability”?**

Arkansas does not define a “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. 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 solely on these disabilities for participation in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program. 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 pervasive, affecting student learning across content areas and in social and community settings. Students with autism or intellectual disabilities should be carefully considered for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, but they should not automatically be assigned to the alternate assessments based on their identified disability category. 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. 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 IEP team. 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 Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.

**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 using assessments in his/her home language as appropriate, 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.

**4. Why is it important to indicate that a student, participating in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, is receiving instruction on content linked to the State Content Standards and his/her performance measured against alternate achievement standards?**

The decision to align a student's academic program to the ELA and Math Core Content Connectors that are linked to the State Content Standards and participation in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program limits a student's direct contact with the breadth of the State Content Standards for the grade level in which he/she is enrolled. This limited or modified exposure to the grade level standards may have significant impact on academic outcomes and post-secondary opportunities.

**5. What if it is impossible to assess a student because the student does not appear to communicate?**

All attempts should be made to find a route of communication with the student as soon as he or she is enrolled. If various approaches and technologies do not appear to demonstrate a route of communication, then consider that all behavior that the student exhibits is a form of communication, and use this as the starting point. A critical element in assessing all students is a focus on communicative competency as the base for student access to the State Content Standards. Best practice would indicate that students should enter Kindergarten with a communication system that allows them to demonstrate an

understanding of academic concepts prior to entering the third grade. However, with or without a communication system, students must still participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.

**6. If a student has been tested in the past on an alternate assessment, but the current IEP team determines that the student does not meet the Arkansas Participation Guidelines, can the student be assigned to the general assessment?**

Yes. The IEP team must ensure that the student receives appropriate instruction on the State Content Standards and participates in the required general assessments for their current grade level with or without accommodations.

**7. Is it possible that a decision to participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program could change as a student gets older?**

Participating in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program requires that the student has a significant cognitive impairment and interacts with content that has been significantly modified from that which is provided to the student's typically developing peers. Even though students with significant cognitive disabilities often are identified early, prior to starting school, they may be able to participate in the general assessment during their elementary grades. IEP teams should be especially cautious about assigning students with significant cognitive disabilities to an alternate assessment in their early school years. When the level of support needed for the student to participate in the breadth of the State Content Standards and the general assessment increases, the team may determine that participation in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program is appropriate.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities are likely to continue to need supports to live as independently as possible throughout their adult lives after high school. Students who did not need early intervention services, or who are unlikely to need substantial daily supports in their adult lives, probably do not have a significant cognitive disability and would not be appropriately placed in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.

**8. Who can we ask if we have questions about this important decision?**

Contact the Arkansas Department of Education if you have any questions about participation decision making for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.

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## Glossary

**AAC:** Augmentative and Alternative Communication (e.g., speech generating devices such as text-to-speech communication aids, picture or symbol boards, etc.)

**Accommodation:** A change in materials or procedures that facilitates access during instruction and assessment. Accommodations do not change the construct or intent of what is being taught or measured. Assessment accommodations are intended to allow the student to participate in the assessment and to produce valid results that indicate what a student knows and can do.

**Adaptive behavior:** Behaviors defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.

**Arkansas Alternate Science Portfolio Assessment:** A system used to gather data on the performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are not expected to participate in the Arkansas general assessments for science.

**Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks:** Documents that clearly describe what students must know and be able to do in mathematics and science at each grade level for grades K-8 and in high school courses and in literacy at each grade level K-12. The rigorous content standards and student learning expectations provide the focus for instruction for each local school district without rigidly prescribing every element of the local curriculum.

**Assessment:** The process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions about student achievement.

**Assistive Technology:** Devices, items, pieces of equipment, or product systems that are used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a significant cognitive disability. Students with significant cognitive disabilities should have access to technology which will assist them in developing and participating in meaningful academics, social relationships, and employment activities. Both low and high technology approaches can be combined to allow students to communicate with others and to exert varied levels of control over their environments.

**Authentic:** Objectives, activities, and materials are meaningful, functional, and related to the real world.

**Challenging:** A realistic degree of difficulty for the student in relation to the student's abilities and present level of functioning.

**Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** The CCSS are a set of content standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics that define what students are expected to learn at each grade in order to leave school ready for college or careers. The CCSS were developed by teachers, school administrators, and experts, with support from the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

For information on the CCSS, click here <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/> and <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/>

**Communicative competence:** The use of a communication system that allows students to gain and demonstrate knowledge.

**Constructed response items:** Student forms an answer to a question rather than choosing from answer options.

**Content target:** Content targets identify those content standards that are the focus of the assessment. For the MSAA Alternate Assessment the content targets are defined by the Core Content Connectors in English language arts and mathematics.

**Context:** The degree to which the tasks reflect meaningful, real-world activities with age-appropriate materials and provide a challenge for the student.

**Core Content Connector (CCC):** A CCC is a representation of the essential “core” content of a standard in the CCSS. Each CCC was identified by examining hypothesized learning progressions aligned with the CCSS to determine the critical content for students with significant cognitive disabilities. For information on the CCC, click here [https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core\\_Content\\_Connectors](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core_Content_Connectors)

**Criteria:** Guidelines used to judge the quality of student performance. Scoring rubrics are based on evaluation criteria and define what those criteria mean and how they relate to the score scale.

**Domain:** Categories used for scoring the Alternate Science Portfolio Assessment (Performance, Context, Level of Assistance).

**English Learner (EL):** An EL is a student whose native language is a language other than English or a student who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual’s level of English language proficiency. An EL’s difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be a barrier to learning in classrooms instructed in English and to performance on assessments presented in English.

**Entry:** A science portfolio component that includes various types of evidence that show what a student knows. Each entry must be aligned with a grade-level student learning expectation for the content area being assessed. At least 3 pieces of evidence should be submitted with each entry to show mastery of the skill.

**Evidence:** This refers to the specific sources of information being used to identify student characteristics that either meet or do not meet the participation criteria. Also, student-generated products that document the student’s performance (i.e., actual student work/permanent product, captioned photographs, or scripted digital video and audio).

**Extensive direct individualized instruction:** Concentrated instruction designed for and directed toward an individual student. This type of instruction is needed by students with significant cognitive disabilities to acquire knowledge and skills in content. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are likely to need this extensively to apply knowledge and skills in multiple contexts.

**Generalization:** The ability to transfer learned skills to other settings and to demonstrate those skills with other people, materials, and similar tasks.

**High Mobility Students:** Any students enrolled in the current school or moving between schools in the district after October 1 of the current school year.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A written plan for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with 34 CFR 300.320-300.324.

**Learning progression:** A learning progression is a description of the way in which typically developing students may develop and build academic competencies over time. Learning progressions can be useful tools for teachers to use to determine where a student is in the process of learning a specific skill or understanding a concept.

**LEA Number:** A distinct local educational agency number assigned by the Arkansas Department of Education for reporting purposes.

**Level of Assistance:** The degree of independence demonstrated in the student's performance. The Level of Assistance is determined after the introduction of the lesson activity. Each science portfolio entry is scored for Level of Assistance.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students:** Those having a language background other than English and who have been assessed and found to have difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language. A district's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee determines whether a student is Limited English Proficient.

**Mastery:** Consistent performance of a skill as demonstrated on multiple occasions.

**Meaningful/Functional:** The degree to which an activity has meaning for a student in current or future integrated environments and results in increased capacity or independence. Meaningful (functional) skill instruction is based upon a student's needs in his/her home, school, community, and work place.

**Modification:** A change in materials or procedures during instruction and assessment that changes the learning expectations of the grade level content. Modifications during instruction may be appropriate on a temporary basis for scaffolding the student's understanding and skills. Assessment modifications result in invalid measures of a student's knowledge and skills and thus should be avoided.

**Multiple Settings:** Appropriate locations in which students perform tasks. Skills selected for instruction should be taught in the settings in which the activities typically occur.

**Observation:** The process of watching and documenting student performance.

**Participation criteria descriptor:** These descriptors provide further information about the characteristics students would have in order to meet the three participation criteria for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.

**Peer:** A student without identified significant cognitive disabilities who is within a two-year age span of the targeted student; a peer at the senior high level could be 16 years old or older (e.g., an adult co-worker of any age).

**Permanent Product:** A work sample created by a student such as a card, collage, or model. A photograph of the product may be submitted if it is impractical to submit it in the portfolio.

**Pervasive:** Present across academic content areas and across multiple settings (including school, home, and community).

**Portfolio Assessment:** A showcase of student work that documents, measures, and reflects student performance; has a defined assessment purpose; clear criteria or methods for what to put into the portfolio, by whom, and when; and criteria for making judgments about performance. Portfolio tasks should be a natural part of daily instruction and provide opportunity for a wide range of instructional strategies.

**Progress:** The forward movement of student performance on a targeted IEP goal/objective from a beginning to a more advanced level; this is most easily documented with instructional data and graphs.

**Prompts:** Ways students are helped to learn skills or get better at skills they have already acquired. The purpose of prompts is not to give the most help possible. Giving the least amount of help is usually best because minimal assistance encourages independence.

- **Prompts, Verbal:** For the Alternate Portfolio Science Assessment, verbal cues that lead the student to the correct response.
- **Prompt, Physical:** For the Alternate Portfolio Science Assessment, touch or hand-over-hand assistance to guide the student to the correct response. This prompt gives the most direct kind of help because the teacher actually guides the student's movements. This is allowable with the Science Portfolio Assessment.

**Rubric:** The set of criteria by which entries are scored.

**Scorer:** A person who evaluates or judges student performance on a portfolio assessment using specific scoring criteria. Sometimes referred to as a "reader" or "rater".

**Selected response items:** Assessment items that are structured for students to respond by choosing an answer (e.g., multiple choice, true or false, etc.)

**Substantial supports:** Substantial supports include support from the teachers and others (e.g., resource teacher, co-teacher, and aide) and various material supports within the student's environment. Examples include adapting text for assessments and learning, and extensive scaffolding of content to support learning.

**Substantially adapted materials:** Substantially adapted materials include various classroom and other materials that have been altered in appearance and content from the materials that peers without disabilities use for instruction or assessment. Examples include significantly shortening the length of passages, or using raised dots and hand-over-hand counting when identifying a matching number in math.



**Supports:** That which is required by the student (either technological or human assistance) to function independently.

**Instructional/Environmental/Social/Natural Supports:** Support provided by peers in the context of students learning together (e.g., cooperative learning groups, working on a class project together, assisting the student with significant cognitive disabilities in a regular class activity, assistance on the job provided by a co-worker, interpreting the student's communication response to peers on the playground). Support is provided to all students in the context of regular education (e.g., instruction provided by the regular education teacher, help given by a regular classroom volunteer, community worker using a student's adaptation within the context of a normally occurring interaction, support from a collaborative special education teacher/paraprofessional/therapist in an integrated setting that is consistent with support provided to all students).

**Task:** For the science assessment, an activity or assignment aligned to a specific standard and student learning expectation.

# **Appendix A**

## ***Determination of Participation in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program***

## Arkansas Participation Guidelines

The criteria for participation in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate in this assessment. Thus, a student who participates in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program participates in this assessment for English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science.

In addition, evidence for the decision for participating in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program is **not based** on:

1. A disability category or label
2. Poor attendance or extended absences
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
5. Academic and other services student receives
6. Educational environment or instructional setting
7. Percent of time receiving special education services
8. English Learner (EL) status
9. Low reading level/achievement level
10. Anticipated disruptive behavior
11. Impact of student scores on accountability system
12. Administrator decision
13. Anticipated emotional duress
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in the assessment process

Participation Criteria	Participation Criteria Descriptors	Agree (Yes) or Disagree (No)? Provide documentation for each
1. The student has a significant cognitive disability	Review (of student records) indicates a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. <i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i>	Yes / No
2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Arkansas State Content Standards	Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade level content standards and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.	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 (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.	Yes / No

The student may participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program if **all responses** are marked YES.

# **Appendix B**

## **Participation Checklist**



## Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program

### Participation Decision Documentation

To meet the criteria for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, the student must meet **ALL** participation criteria descriptors.

Participation Criteria	Participation Criteria Descriptors	Sources of Evidence [check if used]
<p>1. The student has a significant cognitive disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> YES  <input type="radio"/> NO                 </p>	<p>Review (of student records) indicates a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.</p> <p><i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English learner (EL) language assessments if applicable</li> </ul>
<p>2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Arkansas State Content Standards.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> YES  <input type="radio"/> NO                 </p>	<p>Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade-level Arkansas State Content Standards and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data</li> </ul>
<p>3. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measureable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> YES  <input type="radio"/> NO                 </p>	<p>The student</p> <p>(a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and</p> <p>(b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across academic content.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and the Transition Plan for students age 12 and older</li> </ul>

**If all responses above are marked YES, the student may participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.**

**Additional Considerations Not to Use in Reviewing Evidence**

- |  |
|--|
| 1. A disability category or label  |
| 2. Poor attendance or extended absences  |
| 3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference  |
| 4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment                                 |
| 5. Academic and other services received  |
| 6. Educational environment or instructional setting  |
| 7. Percent of time receiving special education services  |
| 8. English Learner (EL) status   |
| 9. Low reading level/achievement level   |
| 10. Anticipated disruptive behavior  |
| 11. Impact of test scores on accountability system   |
| 12. Administrator decision   |
| 13. Anticipated emotional duress   |
| 14. Need for accommodations, e.g., assistive technology/AAC to participate in assessment process |

**Evidence shows that the decision for participating in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program was not based on the above list- (check  $\checkmark$ )**

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 Core Content Connectors linked to the 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.

Each of us agrees with the participation decision in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Appendix C**

## **Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program Participation Decision Flowchart**



**For student with current IEP, enrolled in grade level that requires state or district assessment:**

**Consider These:**

Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test, Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment, Individual/group/ administered achievement tests, and district-wide alternate assessments, and English learner (EL) language assessments, if applicable.

Data from scientific research-based interventions, progress monitoring data, results of informal assessments, teacher collected data and checklists.

Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials, work samples from school or community based instruction.

Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and the Transition Plan if applicable.

1. Do 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 life.

**Yes** ↓

2. Would the student be appropriately challenged by goals and instruction linked to the enrolled grade-level state standards

**Yes** ↓

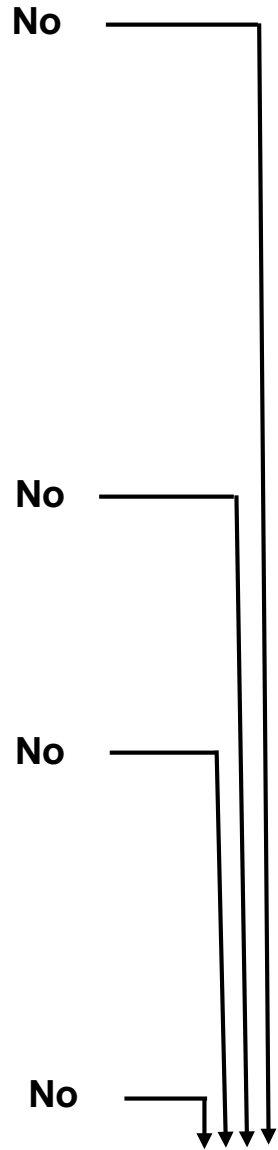
3a. Does the student require extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature?

**Yes** ↓

3b. Does the student use substantially adapted materials with individualized methods of accessing information in alternate ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills

**Yes** ↓

**Student may participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment**



**Student must participate in the Standard State Assessment. Student may be eligible to use**

# **Appendix D**

**2016-2017**

## **Special Education Assessments**

**Course Codes  
and  
eSchool Codes**

## 2016-2017 Special Education Assessments and Course Codes

[tinyurl.com/16-17sped](http://tinyurl.com/16-17sped)

Grade	Statewide Assessment for Students in Special Education Classes Who Will Take the Regular Assessment				Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities only		
	ELA	Reading	Math	Science	Lit	Math	Science
K-2	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	971540 or 971550	971540 or 971550	971540 or 971550
3	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	MSAA	MSAA	971540 or
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	972120- ELA	972350- Math	971550
4	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	MSAA	MSAA	971540 or
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	972120- ELA	972350- Math	971550
5	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	MSAA	MSAA	Portfolio
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	972120- ELA	972350- Math	973910- Science
6	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	MSAA	MSAA	971540 or
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	972120- ELA	972350- Math	971550
7	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	MSAA	MSAA	Portfolio
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	972120- ELA	972350- Math	973910- Science
8	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	MSAA	MSAA	971540 or
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	972120- ELA	972350- Math	971550
9	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	971540 or	971540 or	971540 or
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	971550	971550	971550
10	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	971540 or	971540 or	Portfolio
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	971550	971550	973910- Science
11	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	MSAA	MSAA	971540 or
	972100 SPED ELA	972110 SPED Reading	972300 SPED Math	972200 SPED Science	972120- ELA	972350- Math	971550
12	972100	972110	972300	972200	971540 or	971540 or	971540 or
					971550	971550	971550

***Students will either take ALL alternate assessments or ALL ACT Aspire assessments. Students will not take ELA and Math ACT Aspire assessments plus the Science Portfolio. Districts may change the last digit of a course code.***

## Alternate Assessment Field in eSchool

**NA** = Not Applicable or Null (default)

**ALM** = Alternate Literacy & Math (**Grades 3,4,6,8, 11**)

**ALMS** = Alternate Literacy, Math & Science (**Grades 5 & 7**)

**DLM** = Delaying Alternate Literacy & Math Assessment to Grade 11 (Applies to students in **Grade 9**)

**SDLM** = Taking Alternate Science but Delaying Alternate Literacy & Math to Grade 11 (Applies to students in **Grade 10**)

### Alternate Portfolio Search

Search For:

### Search Results

Description	Code
Alt. Lit/Math (Grades: 3, 4, 6, 8, & 11)	ALM
Alt. Lit/Math/Sci (Grades: 5 & 7 only)	ALMS
Delaying Alt. Lit/Math to Grade 11 (Grade: 9 only)	DLM
Not Applicable or Null (default)	NA
Taking Alt. Sci.; delaying Alt. Lit/Math to Grade 11 (Grade: 10 only)	SDLM