



# Alternate Assessments

*2015-2016 Guidance on Eligibility for IEP Teams*

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/RIAA>



# Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

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Participation in the Rhode Island Assessment Program is an important way of ensuring that each student has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills addressed in English language arts, writing, and mathematics. The standards assessed in the alternate assessments are the Core Content Connectors (aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)) and the Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for science.

**What is an “alternate assessment”?** The majority of students with disabilities are able to participate in the general education curriculum, and will take the PARCC and NECAP Science tests with accommodations and other supports. However, a small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities cannot participate in the general education assessments even with accommodations. These students require a different kind of test in order for them to show what they know and can do.

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 assessment program. For a student to be considered as having a significant cognitive disability for purposes of participation in the alternate assessment, ALL of the criteria found on page 9 of this document must be true as determined by the evidence collected and considered by all members of the student’s IEP team.

Alternate assessments are designed around the unique needs of students that take into account motor, hearing, vision, and other physical disabilities as well as cognitive disabilities. While these assessments assess the Core Content Connectors, which are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the level at which the content presented is less complex and students receive more scaffolding and supports through the assessment than on the general education assessment. The number of standards assessed is also much fewer than the number assessed on PARCC.

**What is the purpose of this document?** This document is intended to help Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members decide whether the alternate assessment or the general education assessment is the most appropriate test for a student. This document should be used with other IEP guidance to ensure that decisions are appropriate and in compliance with the entire IEP process.

This document also provides information about the design, content, and administration of both alternate assessments: the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA), formerly the National Center and State Consortium (MSAA), alternate assessment for English language arts and mathematics and the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA) in science.

**IEP teams must consider a student’s individual characteristics when determining if a student should participate in the general assessment (PARCC) with or without accommodations, or in the alternate assessments.** This document outlines two important steps that an IEP team should take to make that decision:

1. Review student records, data, and other important information across multiple school years and instructional settings (e.g., school, home, community), and
2. Determine whether, based on the evidence collected, the student fits all of the criteria for participating in the MSAA/RIAA as outlined in this document.

**What do the tests look like?** On the following pages are short introductions to the MSAA and RIAA Science assessments. This section is to help IEP team members understand the design, accommodations, and other supports embedded within the alternate assessments.

# The Design and Structure of the MSAA Alternate Assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics

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**Grades:** 3-8 and 11

**Content Areas:** English Language Arts (includes writing) and Mathematics

**Test Window:** March – May, 2016

The Multi-State Alternate Assessment is a collaborative of 9 states that will continue the work begun with the MSAA assessment. These states, of which Rhode Island is a member, will continue to develop an alternate assessment that measures the Common Core Standards in ways that are appropriate and challenging for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Much has been learned over the last decade of testing since No Child Left Behind was passed in 2001. This new test benefits from those lessons by including greater flexibility in how the test is administered while keeping the content essentially unchanged.

## **MSAA Assessment Design**

The MSAA 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 the grade level Common Core State Standards (CCSS). 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. All items were designed to take into account the wide range of student needs and communication methods students who take the alternate assessment use.

## **MSAA Assessment Administration**

The assessment is delivered via computer, with wide allowances for flexibility in administration. For example, a student may work and respond more effectively to a printed version of the test rather than to looking at the computer. Test administrators may use manipulatives familiar to the student in their presentation of the test items. The administration script provides flexibility in the ways in which a student may interact with items, also ensures what is being measured is not changed. The test does not have to be administered in one long sitting. It can be broken up and administered over several days. Testing sessions are scheduled within a testing window of approximately two months, scheduled by the member states of the MSAA.

# The Design and Structure of the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA) for Science

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**Grades:** 3, 4, and 11

**Content Areas:** Science

**Test Window:** October – May (for specific dates of Collection Periods, see [www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov))

The scope of standards assessed on the RIAA is much narrower than on the NECAP science assessment in order to accommodate the unique needs of the students who participate in the RIAA. Within each content area, two strands are assessed; one is required and the other is the teacher’s choice after careful consideration of the student’s needs and goals. After teachers select the AAGSEs, an assessment activity is designed. This task provides the context for assessing the standard. This design allows for content, instruction, and assessment to be successfully linked and provides a framework for evaluating what students know and can do in reading, mathematics, writing, and science.

Science follows the same structure except that the science investigation is the focus. From the science investigation, teachers assess students’ science content knowledge (Knowledge Entry) as well as their ability to conduct aspects of the investigation (Inquiry Entry).

For more information on how teachers administer the RIAA in their classrooms, please read the *RIAA Administration Manual* ([www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov)) or discuss plans directly with teachers implementing the RIAA.

## The Testing Cycle

The RIAA for Science is a year-long assessment beginning in October and ending in May. This long testing window is further divided into three smaller sections, called Collection Periods. It is useful to think of each Collection Period as a small testing window during which all testing is taking place. Each Collection Period contributes to the score of the student. Missing collection periods lowers the student’s score.

The assessment information that the teachers gather during each collection period is entered into the secure online website, ProFile. At the end of each collection period, ProFile locks, preventing further entries or edits by teachers. Administrators are able to any information entered by teachers for each student in their building, district, and/or outplacement school in a read only format.

## The Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the Core Content Connectors (CCCs), and IEP Goals

In order to create tests appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities that are also aligned to the CCSS, MSAA created a “bridge” called the Core Content Connectors (CCCs). The CCCs were developed in ELA, Writing, and Mathematics to provide guidance for test item development. In addition, IEP teams should be aware of the following:

- The main goal of each CCSS is maintained but does not extend the skills or knowledge down (like the AAGSEs). Rather, the CCCs divide the CCSSs into smaller pieces.
- MSAA tests don’t measure the full breadth of any CCSS standard. Only a portion of any CCSS or CCC is measured.
- Not all CCCs are tested on the MSAA.
- The MSAA test does not meet the criteria for an on-grade level test because of the reduced complexity, breadth, and depth at which the standards are measured.
- **CCCs may be used to align intermediate goals on IEPs.** Teachers and IEP teams are encouraged to use the CCSS and the CCCs to guide the development of appropriate academic goals that allow the student

maximum engagement with the general curriculum and typical peers with appropriate adaptations, simplifications, and modifications to grade-level materials and content.

- More information, including the CCC documents for ELA and mathematics, can be found here: [www.ride.ri.gov/RIAA](http://www.ride.ri.gov/RIAA).

## When to make Eligibility Decisions

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Below is important information to keep in mind for planning and administration purposes. For more information on RIAA for Science test administration procedures and policies, please see the *Test Administration Manual*.

### Make eligibility decisions before September

There are two reasons IEP teams should make eligibility decisions for statewide assessments before September:

1. RIAA Science begins in October and it is important that teachers have time to prepare testing activities and select the Science AAGSEs they will focus on throughout the year.
2. The MSAA assessment for ELA and mathematics is given in the spring beginning with grade 3. It is important that teachers have time to align their instruction and curriculum to the Core Content Connectors at an appropriate level for the student. All second graders should have an eligibility determination before the beginning of their third grade year.

### Late eligibility determinations

Students identified as being eligible for the alternate assessment after the school year has started should take the MSAA Alternate Assessment for their designated grade level. In most cases, students identified after the start of the school year and who are in 4, 8, or 11<sup>th</sup> grade, can also still participate in the Science alternate assessment. If a student is found eligible in January, 2016, please contact Heather Heineke, [heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov](mailto:heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov), or at 401-222-8493 for specific guidance.

## Step 1: Understanding the Eligibility Criteria for Alternate Assessments

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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, ALL of the following statements must be true as determined by the student’s IEP team.

The three eligibility criteria that students must meet in order to be eligible for the alternate assessments are:

1. **Student has 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.
2. **The student’s instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors. Instruction in science is aligned to the NECAP Grade Span Expectations but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the science AAGSEs.** Goals and instruction for this student is adapted to reflect the enrolled grade-level CCCs and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student. Life and job skills are also embedded and included as part of the student’s instruction and may provide the context for access to the standards.
  - a) **RIAA Science:** For students in grades 4, 8, or 11 instruction and curriculum should be aligned to **NECAP Grade Span Expectations but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills** in the Alternate Assessment Grade Span Expectations (AAGSEs) for Science.
3. **The student is unable to apply academic, life, and job skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple setting.** The student’s demonstrated cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior across these settings is significantly below age expectations, even with program modifications, adaptations, and accommodations. This covers the three aspects of learning:
  - a) *What the student needs in order to learn.* In other words, the student **requires** extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and supports from teachers and other professionals.
  - b) *The types of materials required in order for the student to learn.* Materials are significantly modified, customized, and adapted in order to facilitate understanding.
  - c) *How the student demonstrates their learning.* 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.



## Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form (2015-16)

*Directions: This form (and, if used, the Documentation of Evidence Worksheet) should be completed, signed, attached to the IEP, and placed in the student's file.*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

State-Assigned Student ID (SASID): 1000-\_\_\_\_\_ IEP Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participation Criteria	Documentation Description <i>(must be provided for each criteria or attach Documentation of Evidence Worksheet)</i>	Decision*
1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function <b>and</b> adaptive behavior.		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
2. The student's instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors. Instruction in science is aligned to the NECAP Science Grade Span Expectations and is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the science AAGSEs.		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

*\*If any of the decisions are "no", the student cannot participate in any alternate assessments. Instruction and curriculum for this student must be aligned to CCSS and NECAP Science GSEs for their current grade level. They will also participate in the PARCC and NECAP Science assessments as required for their designated grade level with appropriate accommodations.*

**IEP Team Assurance:** The IEP team has thoroughly discussed the evidence gathered to determine eligibility and used only the three participation criteria above, and no others, to reach that decision. The IEP team has informed the parent(s) of the implications of their child's participation in the MSAA/RIAA Science, namely that:

- Their child's achievement of the content standards will be measured using the Core Content Connectors in ELA and mathematics and AAGSEs for science;
- The MSAA/RIAA Science cannot be used to meet the state assessment requirement for graduation since it is based on alternate achievement standards (L-6-3.3; Guidance for 2011 Secondary Regulations, p. 16). Additional guidance regarding graduation requirements for students taking alternate assessments can be found on the RIDE website. District regulations and guidance should be available through the district office.
- They have been informed of any other implications, including any effects of local policies on the student's education resulting from taking an alternate assessment.
- The IEP team *does / does not (circle one)* find this student eligible to participate in the RI Alternate Assessment Program.

Name of LEA Representative (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of LEA Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 2: Gathering Evidence

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Using multiple pieces of evidence to inform this decision is important for two reasons: 1) it prevents decision-making that relies on one type of evidence (e.g., IQ score or disability category) and 2) it provides a complete picture of the student both academically and social settings. Below is a list of possible evidence that IEP teams should gather before deciding if the student meets the Participation Criteria for the MSAA/RIAA Science. It is important to remember that no one piece of evidence should be used to make this decision and no one person should be making the decision; it must be a decision reached and agreed to by all members of the IEP team.

### List 1: Good sources of evidence and data to use for eligibility conversations

- Curriculum, instructional, and classroom evidence:
  - Examples instructional objectives and materials
  - Work samples and data on progress from both school- and community-based instruction
  - Classroom work samples and data
  - Teacher observations
- Assessment data and evidence:
  - past RIAA assessment activities to compare with classroom work
  - district-wide alternate assessments
  - reading assessments
  - any other academic achievement tests
  - language assessments like ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
  - results of the initial or most recent evaluations of the student
  - observations by teachers and other service providers
  - observations by family members or guardians
- IEP information including:
  - Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, goals, and short-term objectives or post-school outcomes from the IEP.
  - Considerations for students with specific 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).

### List 2: Use these factors or evidence to create effective instructional plans; not for eligibility determinations.

Using the following types of evidence in combination with other information can provide a more complete picture of the student's strengths and weaknesses. If a student is found eligible, these additional pieces of information may provide insight into how to best support a student instructionally. Decisions should not be made using one piece of evidence exclusively.

- **Disability category (or categories).** There is no disability category that is able to predict 100% of a student's cognitive potential. Disability categories alone are not sufficient evidence to determine eligibility for the alternate assessment.
- **Cognitive ability of the student.** While most students being considered for eligibility for the alternate assessment will have an IQ test administered to them and while these tests do provide important information about the student, IQ scores alone do not qualify a student for any assessment and should not be the sole basis for making a decision.

### List 3: Do *not* use these factors or data to inform an eligibility decision.

The following factors are not appropriate to include in decision-making because they do not add to the IEP Team's understanding of what the student knows and can do. While some of the factors listed below do make it difficult for a student come to school ready to engage and learn these issues should be addressed with staff that have appropriate expertise and experience in these areas.

- **Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason.** Some students have medical conditions that prevent them from attending school regularly enough to receive instruction. While this is recognized as a factor that inhibits a child's exposure to educational experiences and meaningful instruction, it is not evidence of a child's ability or their potential to learn and must be addressed through the appropriate school resources.
- **Poor performance on the NECAP and/or PARCC.** Most students receiving special education services can and do participate in general education assessments like NECAP and PARCC with accommodations and other supports. Poor performance on PARCC or NECAP is not an appropriate factor to use when making an eligibility decision. To consider accommodations and supports available on the PARCC assessments, please refer to the Accommodations Manual: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/PARCC> or contact Heather Heineke, [heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov](mailto:heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov) or 401-222-8493.
- **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 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 ELL Director for options.
- **Impact of the student's test scores on the accountability score of the school and/or district.** How well or poorly a student may perform on any state assessment is not be used as a deciding factor in determining which assessment is appropriate for a student.
- **Location of special education services in more restrictive settings.** The setting in which a student receives his/her education is not a factor in determining cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. Districts routinely utilize staff with expertise in the challenges of a specific disability, behavior, or mental health issue, either within the school, district, or in another setting. Regardless of where a student accesses specialized care or services, meaningful academic instruction should always be given to the student. Because of this requirement, the educational placement of a student is not to be used as factor for eligibility for alternate assessments.
- **Amount of time receiving special education services.** Students receive special education services in a variety of ways and in varying degrees of intensity. It is more meaningful to consider the type and intensity of the structures and supports the student requires in order to participate academically and socially in their school than it is to consider the amount of hours or days a student requires in order to receive appropriate special education services.
- **Variety of services a student receives.** Many students receive a variety of related services that address their physical, behavioral, or other challenges beyond their cognitive ability. The type of services a student receives does not indicate a significant cognitive disability.
- **Behavior issues, including test anxiety.** Behavior challenges can make learning difficult for some students and should be treated appropriately and professionally. Behavior issues are not always indicators of significant cognitive disabilities; however some disabilities have behavioral indicators. Behavior challenges should not be considered when deciding if a student meets the criteria for an alternate assessment as they are not indicators of cognitive ability.
- **Administrator decision.** Under no circumstances is it appropriate for a school, district, or program administrator to unilaterally make an eligibility decision without the full cooperation and consensus of the IEP team, of which the parents or guardians are equal participants, or without following all standard procedures regarding educational decision-making for a student.

# Documentation of Evidence Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help IEP Teams match evidence to the specific criteria in order to help make decisions. It is not a required part of the decision-making process. If used, attach to the Eligibility Form.

Eligibility Criteria	Write Description of Documentation and Evidence below:	Sources of Evidence [check if used]
<p><b>1.</b> Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></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 language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b> The student's instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors. Instruction in science is aligned to the NECAP Science GSEs and is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the science AAGSEs</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></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> <li><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b> The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></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.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transition Plan for students age 14 or younger, if necessary.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</li> </ul>

## Step 3: Documenting the Decision

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### If Decision is Yes

If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible for the alternate assessments, they must document their decision using the *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form* and include it with the IEP; an IEP team LEA representative must sign the completed form, a copy must be attached to the IEP and placed in the student's file. This must be completed each year at the time of the IEP annual review.

*This must be done regardless of grade level.* For example, grade 9 students do not take an alternate assessment but the *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form* should be completed and kept with the student's IEP.

### If Decision is No

If the IEP team decides that the student is not eligible, then three things must happen:

1. The student must participate in the PARCC assessments with appropriate accommodations as determined by the IEP team.
2. The student's instruction must be aligned to the CCSS via the general education curriculum. Without access to the general education curriculum, students will not be able to learn the academic skills and knowledge assessed on the PARCC assessments.
3. Record of the decision must be recorded on the *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form*, attached to the IEP and placed in the student's file.

### Disagreement with the Decision

If the parent or guardian of the student disagrees with the IEP team decision regarding eligibility for the MSAA/RIAA Science, they have the right to request mediation or initiate a due process hearing as described within the procedural safeguards by visiting the Rhode Island Department of Education webpage "When Schools and Families Disagree" at the address below or by contacting the Rhode Island Department of Education Call Center at 401-222-8999.

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/SpecialEducation/WhenSchoolsandFamiliesDoNotAgree.aspx>

Additionally, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN), a nonprofit organization not affiliated with RIDE, also provides peer mentors to help parents through the IEP process. Any parent who would like access to a mentor can contact RIPIN's resource center at 401-270-0101. RIPINI does not provide advocates.

## Review of Eligibility Determinations

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The conversation around determining whether or not a student meets the criteria for eligibility is an important one. It drives the daily and long-term instruction a student receives as they prepare for options after high school. As such, it is paramount that students be engaged in the general education curriculum with appropriate modifications and the highest and most rigorous instruction appropriate. If we fall short of this goal, we risk shortchanging and second-guessing a student's ability to achieve academically as well as in other areas such as life and job skills.

To ensure that students are appropriately identified for the alternate assessments, and to ensure that guidance to the field from RIDE is clear and leads to appropriate identifications, RIDE will review data on eligibility determinations. RIDE will use this data to identify schools and districts that may need additional support and guidance to use the eligibility criteria to make valid and appropriate determinations.

## Graduation

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The following excerpt is from page 10 of the *Secondary Regulations Guidance March 2015*.

RI General Law 16-97-8(b) passed in July 2014 postponed the use of state assessment for use as a graduation requirement prior to the Class of 2017. Under this law, no LEA shall use the state assessment, or other standardized testing program, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate from high school prior to the Class of 2017.

In short, no assessments are to be used to make graduation decisions, including PARCC for our current graduating class. However, for students in graduating classes after 2017, it has been determined that even though the Core Content Connectors (CCCs) are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and they are far more rigorous than the state's previous alternate assessment standards, they do not measure the breadth, depth, or rigor of the Common Core grade 10 standards that PARCC measures (p. 7, *Secondary Regulations Guidance March 2015*). The grade 10 CCSS are the standards that students must meet in if they are to graduate with a diploma after 2017.

Still, it is vital that students with severe cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction in order to be able to take advantage of all post high-school options that are available and to have as much independence as possible. To provide students who take the alternate assessment with meaningful documentation of their academic learning and other job and life skills, there are a variety of certificates that can be used by districts to show what a student knows and can do in a variety of areas. Example certificates and other information about these certification options can be found here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/RIPublicSchools/DiplomaSystem.aspx>.

## Appendix A: Student Examples

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Several student examples are provided here to show how evidence may be used to determine whether or not the three criteria are met.

### **Student Example A**

Student A is 13 years old and uses an augmentative communication device with voice and print output to take part in classroom discussions and activities, as well as to participate in assessments. His primary disability diagnosis is autism.

**READING:** He reads using large print version of text and can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading. He prefers to be read to, rather than to read on his own. He can read simplified text and text at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level.

**WRITING:** This student can write simple stories with a beginning, middle, and end. His use of details is limited; fast/slow, light/dark, tall/short, loud/soft, etc. Because of his visual impairments, it takes him much longer than his classmates to complete writing assignments and this causes him to become frustrated at times.

**MATHEMATICS:** He requires a calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following step-by-step directions; however, he requires being reminded often about some basic numeracy concepts such as multiplication and division.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** He is very adept at using a computer and/or iPad to download videos and to play games and music. He has severe anxiety and requires extensive coaching, prompting, and breaks. Any testing requires several days to complete and due to severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), many times testing cannot be completed. Because of this, test results may not reflect this student's true knowledge and abilities.

Participation Criteria	Description of Documentation and Evidence <i>(write specific evidence here)</i>	Sources of Evidence [check if used]
<p>1. The student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/></p> <p>NO <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>He can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading. He prefers to be read to, rather than to read on his own. He can read simplified text.</i></p> <p><i>This student can write simple stories with a beginning, middle, and his use of details is limited; fast/slow, light/dark, tall/short, loud/soft, etc.</i></p> <p><i>He requires a calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following formulaic directions</i></p> <p><i>Due to severe OCD, many times testing cannot be completed. Test results may not reflect this student's true knowledge and abilities.</i></p> <p><i>He is very adept at using a computer and/or iPad to download videos and to play games and music.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>
<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the CCSS but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors. Instruction in science is aligned to the NECAP Science GSEs and is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the science AAGSEs.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/></p> <p>NO <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>He can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading.</i></p> <p><i>He requires a calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following formulaic directions; however, he requires being reminded often about some basic numeracy concepts such as multiplication and division.</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and short-term objectives from the IEP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>



<p>3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/></p> <p>NO <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>He can get the correct answer by following step-by-step directions and requires being reminded often about some basic numeracy concepts around multiplication and division.</i></p> <p><i>He requires extensive coaching, prompting, modeling, and breaks.</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p><input checked="" 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</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>
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### Student Example B

Student B is 9 years old. Her primary disability diagnosis is autism. She speaks using two- and three-word phrases after hearing answers modeled for her; she exhibits echolalia. Most of her speech consists of “yes/no” answers. She does not use an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device but is involved in a program to develop conversational speech skills and is showing some improvement. IQ test result score is 60.

**READING:** Student A is able to identify familiar pictures and picture symbols and has emerging sight word vocabulary of about 25 words. She can read somewhat independently, as long as the texts are at the Kindergarten or pre-K level, include pictures and picture symbols, and she has intensive support from her teacher. Student A can understand texts closer to her grade level (not on grade level) with supports such as picture symbols and having the text read aloud by an aide or teacher and are about subjects she enjoys; animals, especially baby animals. She enjoys books that have tactile supports embedded in the text. She will only read if her teacher provides intensive supports like prompting, cueing, refocusing, in a one-on-one environment and with frequent breaks and the text is a subject she enjoys. Historical or informational texts are not interesting to her.

**WRITING:** She can independently write her first and last name and can copy text but in most cases when she copies text, it is not clear if she understands what she is writing. She can write S-V sentences using word cards with picture symbols. She does not enjoy writing.

**MATHEMATICS:** Student A can count same-color blocks up to ten. She does not understand the concepts of subtraction or addition; she must re-count the blocks to arrive at an answer. “More/less” is a difficult concept when using numerals but she can tell which group of things is more or less than another group of the same things but not when the groups are different (group of pencils and group of erasers).

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** On a computer, she can click and drag using an adapted mouse, but only when provided a model and a clear objective (like playing a simple game). Student A has difficulty when activities change from a set schedule; sometimes has difficulty sharing with other students in the class but not always. She understands sequences of events (first, next, last, etc.) but not the idea that something is scheduled to happen at 2:00, for example. She enjoys being outside.

RIAA Participation Criteria	Documentation ( <i>must be provided for each criteria</i> )	Sources of Evidence [check if used]
<p>1. The student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.</p> <p>● Yes ○ No</p>	<p><i>She speaks using two- and three-word phrases after modeling answers.</i></p> <p><i>She can independently write her first and last name and can copy text but in most cases when she copies text, it is not clear if she understands what she is writing.</i></p> <p><i>Student A can count same-color blocks up to ten. She does not understand simple subtraction or addition; she must re-count the blocks to arrive at an answer. “More/less” is a difficult concept when using numerals.</i></p> <p><i>She has difficulty with</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>

	<i>understanding when activities change from a set schedule. She understands sequences of events but not the idea that something is scheduled to happen at 2:00.</i>	
<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors. Instruction in science is aligned to the NECAP Science GSEs and is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the science AAGSEs.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p><i>She is 9 years old and can read somewhat independently, as long as the texts are at the Kindergarten or pre-K level, include pictures and picture symbols, and she has intensive support from her teacher.</i></p> <p><i>She can understand texts closer to her grade level (not on grade level) with supports such as picture symbols and having the text read aloud by an aide or teacher and are about subjects she enjoys; animals, especially baby animals</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>
<p>3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p><i>She can read somewhat independently, as long as the texts are at the Kindergarten or pre-K level, include pictures and picture symbols, and she has intensive support from her teacher.</i></p> <p><i>She can understand texts closer to her grade level (not on grade level) with supports such as picture symbols and having the text read aloud by an aide or teacher and are about subjects she enjoys; animals, especially baby animals.</i></p> <p><i>She will only read if her teacher provides intensive supports like prompting, cueing, refocusing, in a one-on-one environment and with frequent breaks.</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p><input checked="" 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</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>

### Student Example C

Student C is 17 years old and in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. His primary diagnosis is autism and he has some vision impairment that requires some adapted materials. He is in a self-contained classroom. He can vocalize but does not use words; he is essentially non-verbal. He has a new AAC device that both the student and the staff are learning. His fine motor skills are poor; however he enjoys finger painting along with other art projects. He enjoys music as well. So far, things seem to be improving in the area of communication for this student. The lack of a consistent mode of communication has made it difficult to determine his cognitive functioning. However, learning his new AAC device has provided motivation as he is learning that people will respond to him. In addition, he has a health condition that has led to many absences. Even though he is learning how to communicate with his new device, it is clear that his content knowledge and basic skills are far below his typical peers and instruction will remain at a remedial level for the foreseeable future; because of this the GLEs/CCSS are far beyond his current ability.

**READING:** He can understand and recognize most of the pictures in his AAC device. He enjoys being read to (especially picture books about trucks, cars, and other automotive equipment and dogs). He takes a long time to look at the pictures. If you ask him to identify a type of car or a part on a car (e.g. tire, wheel, door, tractor, etc.) he can point to it accurately. During times when a movie is played in the classroom, he can order the events of the movie if they are in pictures. He can tell you if an event did not take place in the movie. He can mimic parts of the dialogue even though most of it is unintelligible; he mimics the sounds and inflection of people talking but cannot form the words.

**WRITING:** He does recognize his name and uses a name stamp that includes his entire first name and a separate stamp with his last name. His teacher has begun to use individual letter stamps to help him learn how to recognize the individual letters of his name. He can order events very well and reorder the events to produce a different ending/answer an open-ended question.

**MATHEMATICS:** Unknown at this time. His teacher has noticed that he understands when things are supposed to happen during his day (arriving at school, lunch, breaks, etc.) but it is not clear if he is reading the clock on the wall or if he is recognizing a pattern to his school day. Numbers are programmed in to his AAC device but have not been introduced; however, he did request that the teacher read three books to him one day and he used the number “3” on his AAC device. He is not interested in math.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** It is clear that he can understand the pictures displayed on his AAC device. There are no words matched with the pictures.

RIAA Participation Criteria	Description of Documentation and Evidence <i>(write specific evidence here)</i>	Sources of Evidence [check if used]
1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior. <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<i>So much is unknown about this student's true ability. However, given his reaction to his new AAC device and other observations, it is clear that while he may have some kind of cognitive disability, the extent is not known. His disabilities however, do impact his adaptive behavior significantly and his level of learning is far below that of his typical peers. As the year progresses more formal and informal assessments will be given.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable

<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors. Instruction in science is aligned to the NECAP Science GSEs and is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the science AAGSEs</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p><i>Yes. While it is largely unknown what this student knows and can do, it is clear that he is far below his typical peers. He can understand basic concepts of more/less (snacks), basic pictures both on his AAC device and in picture books. He can point out the correct picture when you ask "where is the tire, truck, door, dog, etc." after you read the book aloud.</i></p>	<p>Other:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>
<p>3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p><i>Materials are adapted because of his vision impairment. Because of his lack of communication and largely nonverbal status, much was done for this student. His student work samples are largely classroom observation.</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p><input checked="" 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</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>

## Glossary

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**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 provide access during instruction and assessment. Accommodations do not change what is being taught or measured. Assessment accommodations are intended to produce valid results that indicate what a student knows and can do.

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

**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.

**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.

**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.

**English Language Learner (ELL):** An ELL is 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 ELL’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.

**Learning progression:** A learning progression is a description of the way that student learning of skills may develop and build over time.

**Modification:** A change in materials or procedures that may provide access during instruction and assessment, but that also changes the learning expectations in instruction and what an assessment measures. 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.

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

**Substantial supports:** Substantial supports include support from the teachers and others (e.g., aide) and various material supports within the student’s environment. Examples of substantial supports in instruction include adapting text, using manipulatives and other concrete objects, 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.

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