Rhode Island State Assessment Program
IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessments
Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

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, mathematics, and science. The standards assessed in the DLM alternate assessments are the Essential Elements (EEs). The Essential Elements are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

New for 2018: Beginning in the 2018 school year, Rhode Island will replace the MSAA assessments and the RIAA Science assessment with the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments in ELA, mathematics, and science. The DLM assessments are aligned to the CCSS and the NGSS through the Essential Elements (EEs). More information on DLM can be found here: www.ride.ri.gov and on the DLM website at http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/.

What is an “alternate assessment”? The majority of students with disabilities are able to participate in the general education curriculum, and will take the RICAS (which is replacing PARCC beginning in 2018) 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 Essential Elements, 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 RICAS.

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 to evaluate the evidence in the IEP 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 the Dynamic Learning Maps in all content areas.

IEP teams must consider a student’s individual characteristics when determining if a student should participate in the general assessment (RICAS and the Rhode Island Science Assessment) 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 alternate assessments as outlined in this document.

**What do the tests look like?** Below is a short introduction to the DLM assessments. This section is to help IEP team members understand the design, accommodations, and other supports embedded within the alternate assessments.

Also included is a short description of the Alternate ACCESS for ELs. If a student is found eligible for the alternate assessments and is also identified for EL services, the student must also participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELs assessment.

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**THE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF THE DLM ASSESSMENTS**

**English language arts and mathematics:** grades 3-8 and 11

**Science:** grades 5, 8, and 11

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments are designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom general state assessments are not appropriate, even with accommodations. DLM assessments offer these students a way to show what they know and can do in mathematics, English language arts, and science.

DLM assessments also help parents and educators establish high academic expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Results from DLM assessments support interpretations about what students know and can do. Results can inform teachers’ instructional decisions while also meeting statutory requirements for reporting student achievement as required by state accountability programs.

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**ACCOMMODATIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY**

DLM assessments are designed to maximize accessibility for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Assessments are built to allow multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understandings. Assessment design also incorporates current research on communication in such forms as the DLM core vocabulary (https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/core-vocabulary), a list of words that have been determined to be highly useful for communicating in both social and academic contexts. At multiple points during the assessment development process, educators from DLM partner states who have expertise in accessibility review the assessments to ensure instructional relevance and minimize barriers for students with specific needs.

During assessment administration, students have access to unique accessibility tools and supports to fit each student’s needs and preferences. Some of these tools and supports are delivered through the online assessment system while others are provided outside the system, by the teacher. Decisions about the use of these tools and supports are made for each student, typically with input from an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

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**ASSESSMENT DESIGN**

The Dynamic Learning Maps team uses a cyclical, multi-step process to develop assessments. DLM assessments are delivered as “testlets” – short, instructionally relevant groups of items that share a common context. DLM testlets are developed using principles of evidence-centered design by subject-matter experts with additional expertise in instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Test items go through multiple rounds of review by DLM staff; internal item reviewers; editors; and educators in DLM states, who serve as external reviewers. Reviewers are carefully trained to look for
potential problems with the items’ academic content and accessibility, as well as to identify potential bias or sensitive topics in the items. After testlets are reviewed, they are field tested in DLM states. Testlets that meet certain standards after field testing can then be included in DLM assessments.

» Released Testlets can be accessed here:
http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/about/tests/releasedtestlets

STANDARDS AND CONTENT

The DLM Alternate Assessment System helps educators facilitate student success by illustrating the interrelation among the knowledge, skills, and understandings necessary to meet academic content standards in a learning map model. The learning map model plots out individual concepts in nodes, and the connections among these nodes show the multiple ways that students’ knowledge, skills, and understandings develop over time.

By examining the learning map model and the relationships between its nodes, educators can better uncover reasons a student may be struggling with a particular concept and also see paths ahead for that student to continue to expand their knowledge and skills.

To connect the model’s extensive content to real-world expectations for students, certain nodes within the model are associated with Essential Elements (EEs). EEs are specific statements about what students should know and be able to do. They are linked to grade-level-specific expectations described in college- and career-readiness standards for students in the general population, and they provide a bridge between those standards and academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

» Read more about Essential Elements and the dynamic learning map model:
http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/about/model

ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION

Dynamic Learning Maps assessments are delivered online through KITE® Client. Member states may choose from one of two models of assessment: integrated and year-end. Rhode Island will administer the year-end assessments.

In the year-end model, all students are assessed each spring, with all students in a particular grade being assessed on the same Essential Elements. Additionally, educators have the option to use instructionally embedded assessments during the year.

Both models of assessment employ adaptive testlets in the spring. In adaptive testing, students receive testlets of varying difficulty depending on their previous answers.

IEP GOALS

We recognize that 2017-18 is a transition year for IEPs to be aligned to the CCSS and NGSS through the new Essential Elements (EEs) used for the design of the DLM assessments. However, by the 2018-19 school year, all IEPs must be aligned to the CCSS and NGSS using the Essential Elements. If a student already has goals aligned to the CCCs (from MSAA), that student is still eligible for the alternate assessment and there is no need to quickly realign the IEP goals or to have a meeting to find the student eligible for the DLM assessments. The EEs function in the same way as the CCCs did for MSAA. In order to create tests appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities that are also aligned to the CCSS and the NGSS, DLM created a “bridge” called the Essential Elements (EEs).
- **EEs may be used to align intermediate goals on IEPs.** Teachers and IEP teams are encouraged to use the CCSS and NGSS along with the EEs 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.

**WHEN TO MAKE ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS**

It is important to make eligibility determinations as early in the school year as possible. Students identified as being eligible for the alternate assessment after the school year has started should take the DLM assessments for their designated grade level. If you have questions about eligibility, please contact Heather Heineke, heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov, or at 401-222-8493.
STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

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, each of the three criteria must be true as determined by the student’s IEP team.

**Required Assessments:** If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible for the alternate assessments, then the student must participate in the appropriate DLM alternate assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science for their current grade level. If the student is an English learner, then the student must also participate in the ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELs for their current grade level.

The following three eligibility criteria must be met before a student can participate in the alternate assessments:

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/Essential Elements.** Instruction in science is aligned to the NGSS but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the AAGSEs/Essential Elements. 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. **NOTE:** We recognize that the 2017-18 year is a transition year. All IEPs beginning in the 2018 school year must be aligned to the CCSS and NGSS through the Essential Elements (EEs).

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 settings.** 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 (2018)

**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 at the time of the student’s annual IEP review.

**Student Name:** ___________________________ **DOB:** ___________________________

**State-Assigned Student ID (SASID):** 1000- ___________________________ **IEP Meeting Date:** ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Criteria</th>
<th>Documentation Description</th>
<th>Decision*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function <strong>and</strong> adaptive behavior.</td>
<td>(must be provided for each criterion or attach Documentation of Evidence Worksheet)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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/Essential Elements. Instruction in science is aligned to the NGSS but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the AAGSEs/Essential Elements.**</td>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.</td>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If any decision is **no**, the student cannot participate in any alternate assessments. Instruction and curriculum for this student must be aligned to CCSS and the NGSS for their current grade level. They will also participate in the general education assessments for their grade level is required.

** We recognize that the 2017-18 year is a transition year. All IEPs beginning in the 2018 school year must be aligned to the CCSS and NGSS through the Essential Elements (EEs).

**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 alternate assessments, namely that:

- Their child’s achievement of the content standards will be measured using the Core Content Connectors/Essential Elements in ELA and mathematics and NGSS for science;
- LEAs may choose to award diplomas to students who qualify for the alternate assessment if the student demonstrates proficiency through their coursework on modified proficiency expectations on state-adopted standards. LEAs also have the authority to award a certificate of alternate recognition of high school accomplishment, in accordance with LEA-defined policies and criteria.
- 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 alternate assessments.

**Name of LEA Representative (print):** ___________________________ **Date:** ___________________________

**Signature of LEA Representative:** ___________________________
STEP 2: GATHERING EVIDENCE

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. 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 state assessments 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. 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.

- **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 make it difficult for a student to 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 general education academic assessments.** Most students receiving special education services can and do participate in general education assessments with accommodations and other supports. Poor performance on these assessments is not an appropriate factor to use when making an eligibility decision. To consider accommodations and supports available on the RICAS or other assessments, please refer to the Accommodations Manual: [http://www.ride.ri.gov/](http://www.ride.ri.gov/) or contact Heather Heineke (heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov or 401-222-8493).

- **English Language Learner (EL) status.** It is important to understand that a student’s ability to learn 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 EL 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.

- **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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Criteria</th>
<th>Write Description of Documentation and Evidence below:</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence [check if used]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Results of informal assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Results of individual reading assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Results of district-wide alternate assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Results of language assessments including ACCESS for ELs, if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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/Essential Elements. Instruction in science is aligned to the NGSS but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the AAGSEs/Essential Elements.</td>
<td>□ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Data from scientific research-based interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Progress-monitoring data</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ OTHER:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.</td>
<td>□ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Teacher-collected data and checklists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Transition Plan for students age 14 or younger, if necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ OTHER:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 3: DOCUMENTING THE DECISION

IF DECISION IS YES

If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible, 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 and 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 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 alternate assessments, 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

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**

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 available and to have as much independence as possible. LEAs have two options when considering graduation options for students who qualify for the alternate assessment:

1. **Diplomas**: Students who qualify for the alternate assessment may be eligible for a diploma by demonstrating proficiency through their coursework on modified proficiency expectations on state-adopted standards. The number and types of courses required for a diploma are the same for all students. LEAs may choose to award diplomas to students if the student meets this criteria.

2. **Certificates of alternate recognition of high school accomplishment**: 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](http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/RIPublicSchools/DiplomaSystem.aspx).

LEAs are responsible for establishing clear policies regarding diploma eligibility for students qualifying for the alternate assessments, including the use of state assessments. No earlier than the class of 2017, LEAs may choose to include state assessment results or other standardized assessment as a graduation requirement in addition to the requirements in § 6.3(A) (1) and (2) of the Secondary Regulations Reference Guide, January 2017.
APPENDIX A: STUDENT EXAMPLES

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 3rd 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Criteria</th>
<th>Description of Documentation and Evidence</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence [check if used]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. The student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.</strong></td>
<td><em>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.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>This student can write simple stories with a beginning, middle, and ending; his use of details is limited; fast/slow, light/dark, tall/short, loud/soft, etc.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>He requires a calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following formulaic directions.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Due to severe OCD, many times testing cannot be completed. Test results may not reflect this student’s true knowledge and abilities.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>He is very adept at using a computer and/or iPad to download videos and to play games and music.</em></td>
<td>☑ Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test&lt;br&gt;☑ Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment&lt;br&gt;☑ Results of individual and group administered achievement tests&lt;br&gt;☑ Results of informal assessments&lt;br&gt;☑ Results of individual reading assessments&lt;br&gt;☑ Results of district-wide alternate assessments&lt;br&gt;☑ Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable&lt;br&gt;Other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ YES ☑ NO</td>
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| **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/Essential Elements. Instruction in science is aligned to the NGSS but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the AAGSEs/Essential Elements.** | *He can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading.*<br><br>*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.* | ☑ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples<br>☑ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and short-term objectives from the IEP<br>☑ Data from scientific research-based interventions<br>☑ Progress monitoring data<br>Other: |
| ☐ YES ☑ NO | | |
3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.

- [ ] YES
- [x] NO

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. He requires extensive coaching, prompting, modeling, and breaks.

- [x] Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction
- [ ] Teacher collected data and checklists
- [x] 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

Other:
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Criteria</th>
<th>Documentation (must be provided for each criteria)</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence [check if used]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. The student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior. | She speaks using two- and three-word phrases after modeling answers. 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. 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. | □ Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test  
□ Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment  
□ Results of individual and group administered achievement tests  
☑ Results of informal assessments  
☑ Results of individual reading assessments  
□ Results of district-wide alternate assessments |
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<th><strong>STUDENT EXAMPLE C</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Student C is 17 years old and in the 10\textsuperscript{th} 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</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessments 2018</strong></th>
<th><strong>She has difficulty with 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.</strong></th>
<th><strong>assessments</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</td>
<td>Other:</td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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<td><strong>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/Essential Elements. Instruction in science is aligned to the NGSS but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the AAGSEs/Essential Elements.</strong></td>
<td><strong>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.</strong></td>
<td><strong>☑ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</strong></td>
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<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td><strong>☑ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</strong></td>
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<td><strong>☑ Teacher collected data and checklists</strong></td>
<td><strong>☑ 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</strong></td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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| **3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.** | **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.** | **☑ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school- and community-based instruction** |
|                                                              | **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.** | **☑ 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** |
|                                                              | **She will only read if her teacher provides intensive supports like prompting, cueing, refocusing, in a one-on-one environment and with frequent breaks.** | Other:           |
|                                                              | Other:                                                                                           |                  |

**STUDENT EXAMPLE C**

Student C is 17 years old and in the 10\textsuperscript{th} 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.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participation Criteria</th>
<th>Description of Documentation and Evidence</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence [check if used]</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior. | **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.** | ☑ Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test  
☑ Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment  
☐ Results of individual and group administered achievement tests  
☑ Results of informal assessments  
☐ Results of individual reading assessments  
☐ Results of district-wide alternate assessments  
☐ Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable  
Other: |
| 2. The student’s instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards but is adapted to reflect the | **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** | ☑ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work |

-iep team guidance on eligibility for alternate assessments 2018
Knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors/Essential Elements. Instruction in science is aligned to the NGSS but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the AAGSEs/Essential Elements.

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<th>YES</th>
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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.

| ✓ | YES | ☐ | NO |

3. The student is unable to apply academic skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings.

| ✓ | YES | ☐ | NO |

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.

| ✓ | Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school- and community-based instruction |

- Teacher collected data and checklists
- 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
- Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment

Other:
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 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.