

# Guidance for IEP Teams Working with Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Assessment and Eligibility for the Alternate Framework

Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services

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## Purpose

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The purpose of special education, as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and reiterated by the United States Supreme Court in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, 580 U.S. (2017), is to ensure that all children with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. All students with disabilities must have an IEP that is appropriate for their needs and is “reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress,” and “every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives” (*Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District RE-1*, 2017). In Maryland, these objectives are expressed in the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) and in Local Education Agency (LEA) curricula. Students’ achievement of standards is measured in a variety of ways, including through the successful completion of state and local assessments.

While the focus on the implementation of consistent standards and high expectations applies to all students, the law recognizes that a small group of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be unable to achieve the standards that apply to all students, even with the provision of extensive and intensive specially designed instruction, supports and accommodations. These students require instruction and standards that are modified to focus on essential grade level skills and allow for intensive direct instruction and repeated practice of skills. Their educational attainment is measured through an Alternate Assessment that is based on the MCCRS but aligned to alternate academic achievement standards that reflect reduced complexity, breadth, and depth. Instruction and assessment based on this Alternate Education Framework may not allow the student to earn course credits and acquire the skills necessary to receive a Maryland High School Diploma.

The decision to align instruction and/or assessment to the Alternate Education Framework is one of the most significant recommendations an IEP team makes about a student’s education and future. Because of the consequences of this decision, the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) has developed criteria and a detailed analysis process to guide IEP teams in their consideration of a student’s eligibility for instruction and assessment aligned with the alternate academic achievement standards. The IEP team must review this decision annually. Maryland law also requires that parents consent to instruction and/or assessment aligned with the alternate academic achievement standards (AAAS) for their child.

The purpose of this guide is to provide additional information and support to IEP teams in making these critical participation decisions. This document reviews the requirements for eligibility and the process for determining and documenting eligibility to assist teams in ensuring that only those students who truly meet the criteria are participating in the Alternate Framework.

## The Alternate Education Framework

All Maryland students are expected to meet rigorous expectations and demonstrate their proficiency through a variety of methods, including State assessments. These expectations are defined by the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) and implemented through the learning activities designed at the system, school, and classroom level.

ALL students are taught the content and skills outlined in the MCCRS. Most students with disabilities are expected to demonstrate mastery of the general standards through participation in the general assessment and have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. A small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities cannot demonstrate their learning and progress on the standard assessment. For these students, learning is assessed according to alternate academic achievement standards (AAAS). The AAAS are measures of attainment of the skills that reflect reduced complexity, breadth, and/or depth as compared to the general standards. The skills measured through the alternate academic achievement standards are derived from the grade-level MCCRS and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS); they do not represent a separate set of standards.

The AAAS on which Maryland students participating in the Alternate Educational Framework are assessed are known as the “Essential Elements” (EEs) and are developed by Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). An EE is a representation of the essential “core” or big idea of the content standard in the MCCRS and NGSS. Each EE was identified by examining hypothesized learning progressions. Each EE is a specific statement of knowledge and skill linked to grade band expectations. EEs address a small number of standards, representing the breadth but not the depth of coverage across the entire standards framework. For each EE, DLM has identified a set of “linkage levels” that reflect either precursor/prerequisite skills less complex than the EE itself or extensions of the skill.

These elements represent key skills on which students will be assessed and inform the prioritization of skills in the development of IEP goals and ongoing instructional plans. Because the students are not assessed on the full breadth and depth of the curriculum, they generally do not have the opportunity to earn high school credits or to receive a Maryland High School Diploma. They exit school with a Certificate of Program Completion. For more information on the DLM and the EEs, visit the [Dynamic Learning Maps](#) website.

### Examples of MD CCRS and Aligned Essential Elements

Domain	Grade Level Standard	DLM Essential Element
<b>ELA: Reading (Informational Text) - 5th Grade</b>	RI 5.3: Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.	EE. RI.5.3: Compare two individuals, events, or ideas in a text.

Domain	Grade Level Standard	DLM Essential Element
<b>Mathematics: Algebra- High School</b>	A.REI.12. Graph the solutions to a linear inequality in two variables as a half plane (excluding the boundary in the case of a strict inequality) and graph the solution set to a system of linear inequalities in two variables as the intersection of the corresponding half-planes.	M.EE.A.REI.10–12. Interpret the meaning of a point on the graph of a line. For example, on a graph of pizza purchases, trace the graph to a point and tell the number of pizzas purchased and the total cost of the pizzas.
<b>Science: Life Science– Middle School</b>	MS-LS2-2: Construct an explanation that predicts patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems.	EE.MS-LS2-2 Use models of food chains/webs to identify producers and consumers in aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems

## ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION IN ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE

The alternate assessments for English/language arts (reading and writing) and mathematics are given in grades 3 through 8 and 11. These are online assessments (with paper and pencil option) of approximately 30 test items that assess approximately ten prioritized content targets per grade level in each content area.

These content targets were identified for each grade based on learning progressions and alignment to the grade level MCCRS. The assessments include 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.

The assessment design includes allowances for flexibility in administration (for example, a student may respond to administrator-presented stimuli rather than to the item stimuli on the computer). A trained testing administrator familiar to the student (e.g., the student's teacher) facilitates the administration. Items are administered over the course of one or more testing sessions as needed. Testing sessions are scheduled within a testing window of approximately eight weeks, dictated by the State.

The Alternate Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (Alt-MISA) is an online assessment which measures a participating student's progress on attainment of knowledge and skills linked to the grade span expectations of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in grades 5, 8, and 11. The Science Essential Elements (EE) address a small number of science standards, representing the breadth, but not the depth, of coverage across the entire standards framework. A trained testing administrator familiar to the student (e.g., the student's teacher) facilitates the administration and items are administered over the course of one or more testing sessions as needed.

## THE ONE PERCENT THRESHOLD

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that the State ensure that the total number of students participating in the Maryland Alternate Assessments does not exceed the one percent (1.0%) threshold of the total number of students within the State who are assessed within the Maryland Comprehensive

Assessment Program (MCAP). As a component of the ESSA oversight, MSDE requires each local education agency (LEA) to project the percentage of students participating in one or more of the alternate academic assessments as compared to the total number of students participating in all academic assessments. Any LEA that anticipates exceeding the one percent threshold for the number of students participating in one or more of the alternate academic assessments is required to submit a justification to the MSDE. The MSDE and local system regularly monitor the IEP team decision-making process related to eligibility and participation in instruction and/or assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. Systems with higher than anticipated participation are required to review the development and implementation of local policies, guidance, professional development, and provide coaching to ensure the quality of IEP team decision-making.

However, an IEP team should not consider the number/percentage of students in the district participating in the alternate assessment when considering the eligibility of an individual student for instruction and assessment using alternate academic achievement standards. Each IEP team decision is based on a thorough review of the information described in this document and Alternate Appendix A in order to make an appropriate determination for the individual student.

## Eligibility for the Alternate Assessment

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The development of every IEP, both initial and annual review, includes the IEP team's planning for the student's participation in assessments. Teams start from the expectation that the student will participate in the general assessment, with presentation, response, setting, and timing accommodations individually selected as required to provide the student equitable access. Most students with disabilities (approximately 90%), including many of those identified with an Intellectual Disability, will participate in the general assessment.

If the team believes that the student may have a significant cognitive disability that makes the general assessment inappropriate, they engage in a careful review of multiple sources of data to determine if the student meets the criteria for instruction and assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards. In order to be eligible for instruction and assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards, the student must meet ALL FOUR of the following criteria. If any of the following is not true of the student, they do not meet the definition and they participate in the general assessment:

1. The student has an IEP.
2. The student has a "significant cognitive disability" that has a pervasive impact on intellectual, educational, and adaptive performance that is evident across time, setting, contexts, and tasks.
3. The student requires significant modifications to curriculum in order to access knowledge and skills and demonstrate progress on the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.
4. The student requires extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction.

The team reviews a variety of evidence from multiple sources, including individual assessments, educational records, and family and educator input, to answer these questions. The team must also rule out a variety of other factors that may impact the student's educational performance or the decision-making process.

In Maryland, the Appendix A guides teams through the eligibility decision-making process, providing information about each of the four criteria. The team must complete Appendix A every year to verify that the student remains eligible for the Alternate Framework. The discussion may occur during the annual review or at a separate meeting just for the purpose of discussing and determining eligibility for the Alternate Framework. Whether in an annual review or separate meeting, the team should ensure that adequate time is allocated for a thorough review of information and discussion. The team should include someone, such as a school psychologist, who is qualified to interpret the assessment results, including the cognitive and adaptive assessments.

Parent/family participation is critical to the decision-making process and parent consent is required for instruction and/or assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. LEAs must ensure that parents have the opportunity to participate in the process.

The completed form is kept in the student's electronic record in the IEP system. If at any point the team begins the process and determines that the student does NOT meet the criteria, the Appendix A form documenting that determination is also retained in the student's record.



## THE PRINCIPAL OF THE “LEAST DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION”

“In the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the likelihood that students will be able to function independently as adults” (Donnellan, 1984).

Determining the true knowledge, skills, and potential of student with complex support needs is challenging, even impossible. When faced with uncertain or contradictory evidence about a student’s cognitive ability, teams should exercise extreme caution in determining eligibility for instruction and assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. Participation in the alternate framework has very significant ramifications for a student’s educational program and experience and potentially for post-school opportunities and outcomes. Educating a student according to the Alternate Framework if they do not truly have a most significant cognitive disability is more likely to cause harm to the student’s education and future than continuing with the full standards for a student who could appropriately be found eligible for the alternate assessment. When a student’s eligibility is unclear, teams should strongly consider postponing a determination and proceeding with instruction and assessment based on the full standards, revisiting the decision as more information becomes available (such as the student’s response to intensive, appropriate instruction). This is particularly important if the student is an English learner, has had limited or interrupted education, has sensory or motor disabilities, has not had appropriate opportunities to learn communication skills, or has other complicating factors.

## Participation Criteria

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The IEP team carefully reviews each component of the participation criteria. If at any point during the discussion, the team determines that the student does not meet any of the criteria, the team may proceed to the final section and document the decision that the student is not eligible; it is not necessary to complete the rest of the form.

### SECTION 1: DETERMINING INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

#### Individualized Education Plan

First, the team verifies that the student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Only students who are eligible for special education can participate in the Alternate Assessment. Most students who are appropriately determined eligible for the alternate assessment have already been receiving special education services for some time before the decision is made. If a newly identified student is being considered for the alternate assessment, the team must take care to ensure that lack of appropriate intervention or other factors are not the cause of the student's difficulty progressing towards the standards.

#### IDEA Eligibility Category

Most students with disabilities, across all eligibility categories, participate in the general assessment. Eligibility for the alternate assessment is an individual determination and not based on disability category, diagnosis, or label. The fact that the student meets the criteria for a specific IDEA category (e.g., Intellectual Disability, Autism) or has a particular medical diagnosis (e.g., Down Syndrome, DeafBlindness) should not be considered a reason for them to participate in the alternate assessment.

However, the criteria for some IDEA disability categories specifically **exclude** Intellectual Disability as the reason for the student's educational needs. If a student was found eligible for special education under the categories of Emotional Disability, Speech-Language Impairment (only), or Specific Learning Disability, they were determined not to have an Intellectual Disability. A student who does not have an Intellectual Disability does not have a significant cognitive disability and therefore is not eligible for the alternate assessment.

Students whose primary disability is sensory or physical in nature (e.g., Visual Impairment/Blindness, Deaf, Hearing Impairment, Other Health Impairment, or Orthopedic Impairment) rarely also have a most significant cognitive disabilities. The team must also carefully consider the impact of the physical/sensory disability on the student's development and on their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on standardized assessments. Students with significant sensory, motor, or medical needs may not have had the same opportunities to learn incidentally and through exploration of their environments and may have unconventional or limited ways of communicating what they understand. Teams considering eligibility for these students should proceed with extreme caution.

The IDEA eligibility category of "Developmental Delay" is used for children from ages three through seven who demonstrate a delay in one or more areas of development that results in a need for special education services. IEP teams frequently select Developmental Delay as the eligibility category because it can be difficult to know with certainty the causes for and/or likely trajectory of a child's developmental needs. Many standardized assessments, especially cognitive measures, are not considered reliable on very young children, especially those who may have physical or medical needs, limited exposure to learning opportunities, or other complicating factors. Because of this uncertainty and the significant impact of

determining a child eligible for the alternate assessment on the rest of their school experience, teams should proceed with extreme caution when considering alternate assessments for a student identified with Developmental Delay.

### Multilingual Learners

When considering the eligibility for alternate assessments of Multilingual Learners, IEP teams must be careful to ensure that the student's level of English language proficiency does not influence the determination of cognitive disability. Standardized assessments should be conducted in the student's dominant language to the extent possible. If assessments are conducted using an interpreter for a language in which they have not been standardized, they should be interpreted cautiously and with the input of a school psychologist or other professionals experienced with the assessment of multilingual learners. Nonverbal assessments, classroom work samples and progress reports, and other sources of information are especially important in these situations.

Teams should also consider the impact of cultural norms and expectations, life experience, and educational history on adaptive and educational assessments. Lack of opportunity to develop and practice a skill should not be mistaken for the inability to learn to perform it due to the impact of disability. Culturally competent professionals who understand the student's community and/or can elicit appropriate information from families are critical to good team decision making. The team also considers the impact of limited or disrupted prior educational experiences when evaluating students who are newly arrived in the US in order to ensure that language learner status and/or educational status are not the reason for the student's difficulty accessing the breadth and depth of the standards. If an EL with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessments, he/she should take the general assessment with or without accommodations as appropriate.

### Communicative Competence

Students with a variety of disabilities experience difficulty learning and using spoken language; some may require extensive support and intervention to develop speech, while others may need alternative or augmentative forms of communication. Not all students who have complex communication needs also have significant cognitive disabilities; the fact that a student is nonspeaking is not in and of itself a justification for participation in the alternate assessment.

When a student does not have a reliable means of communication, it is difficult to accurately assess their cognitive abilities, and limited formal communication will also result in lower scores on adaptive assessments that may not truly reflect the student's potential. Students who do not have a reliable communication system (whether speech, sign, AAC, or a combination) **and** who have not had appropriate intervention and support to develop communication (including opportunities to learn to use AAC) are not eligible for the alternate assessment because their cognitive abilities cannot be reliably measured. If a student has had intensive and appropriate intervention to support communication development but still has limited or inconsistent formal communication, the team should proceed with the eligibility determination process with caution and consider multiple points of information, including nonverbal cognitive assessments and other indicators of cognitive ability.

## SECTION 2: SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY

A significant cognitive disability is determined by a holistic understanding of a student's development and performance in a variety of settings. For a student to be determined to have a significant cognitive disability, a review of student records must indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that **significantly** impact cognitive functioning, educational performance, and adaptive behavior. Formal, individually

administered standardized assessments are a key component, but not the sole factor, in determining eligibility for the alternate assessment.

For more information about standardized assessments of intellectual and adaptive function, including examples of instruments and information about cultural and linguistic considerations, see *ID GUIDANCE DOCUMENT*. **NOTE:** The IDEA category of “Intellectual Disability” is a different construct with different criteria than “significant cognitive disability” for the purposes of eligibility for the Alternate Framework. MOST students with Intellectual Disability participate in the general assessment. It is not necessary for a student to be found eligible for special education under the ID category to be eligible for the alternate assessment, BUT if a student does not meet the criteria for ID eligibility, they do not have a significant cognitive disability.

While there is no set “cut score” for eligibility for the alternate assessment, both standardized assessment results and other information about the student’s performance must reflect very substantial impact of the disability on intellectual, adaptive, and academic functioning. Students appropriately found eligible for the alternate assessment display significant needs in these areas compared not only to typically developing peers, but also to most other students with disabilities. Teams should also take care to separate the impact of sensory and physical disabilities from that of cognitive impairments as much as possible in their considerations. For example, the fact that student requires assistance with self-care skills like dressing and eating is not indicative of a significant cognitive disability if the student has a physical disability that limits the development of those skills. The team should not make those items as evidence and should focus on ways of understanding cognitive ability that can be separated from physical ability. Similarly, all forms of symbolic communication (sign language, augmentative communication) should be considered when assessing a student’s communication abilities, not just speech.

Appendix A provides multiple examples of student functioning in each of the adaptive domains (conceptual, social, and practical). The team should select items that specifically describe the student’s performance, discussing concrete evidence and examples from school, home, and community contexts.

The team then reviews the items selected as describing the student’s performance. If ANY of the characteristics in Columns 1 or 2 describe the student, the student DOES NOT meet the criteria of having a significant cognitive disability. The student is NOT ELIGIBLE for the alternate assessment. The team records this conclusion at the end of the form and returns to developing the IEP. For students who demonstrate some skills in Column 3 and some in Column 4, the team may proceed with extreme caution to consider the remaining criteria before making a final determination about the student’s eligibility for the alternate assessment. Students who show significant numbers of skills in Column 3 may not meet the definition of significant cognitive disabilities. If ALL of the student’s skills align with the descriptors in Column 4, the student meets the criteria for significant cognitive disability and MAY be eligible for the alternate assessment (based on the other determining factors).

### SECTION 3: CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS

#### Educational Performance

The team reviews standardized assessments and other data describing the student’s educational performance. Additional sources of information may include teacher-made assessments, work samples, data from educational interventions, IEP goal progress, and observational reports. There is no set level of educational performance or degree of “achievement gap” that indicates eligibility for the alternate assessment, but because students who have the most significant cognitive disabilities require extensive repetition and practice to learn new skills, gaps compared to expectations tend to widen over time.

Students who are eligible for the Alternate Framework are those who require extensive adaptation to the content, as well as the delivery, of instruction to make progress. As with adaptive functioning, these are students who require considerably more supports and modifications than not only typical peers but than most other students with disabilities. In addition, students who are able to demonstrate understanding of the content given appropriate accommodations (e.g., a middle school student who struggles with decoding but can understand grade-level concepts when they are presented verbally or in videos is not a student with a most significant cognitive disability). The fact that the student requires accommodations is not in and of itself an indication of a significant cognitive disability.

The team selects the pieces of evidence that best describe the student's performance and need for modifications to the curriculum in order to demonstrate progress. If any of the evidence aligns with columns one or two, the student does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment. If the evidence items selected align primarily or exclusively with column four, the student may be eligible and the team proceeds to the next section.

## **SECTION 4: EXTENSION, DIRECT, REPEATED, AND INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION**

### **Instruction**

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible for the Alternate Framework require highly specialized and intensive instruction in order to learn new content, concepts, and skills. They may need tasks and information broken into very small chunks and repeated practice with extensive prompting and other supports to acquire the skills. Generalization and application of skills to novel settings and contexts is difficult for them and typically requires deliberate planning, practice, and re-teaching. These learning characteristics distinguish these students not only from typical peers but from most other learners with disabilities in the intensity required. The needs are evident across contexts, skills, and settings – a student who needs extensive repetition to learn math facts or science vocabulary but easily learns household tasks or recreation skills is not a student with a most significant cognitive disability.

The team reviews the pieces of evidence in Appendix A in light of multiple sources of information about the student's performance. For this section, IEP progress reports, intervention data, and other classroom performance information, as well as reports from teachers, related service providers, and family members are critical to selecting the evidence that best describes the student's performance. If any characteristics in any settings align with columns one or two, the student does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment. If the evidence is primarily in column four, inclusive of some items in column three in some cases, the team proceeds to the next section.

## **SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Before making a final determination of eligibility, the team must assure that the decision is not being influenced by inappropriate factors related to the student, the education program, or the school or LEA.

The team must rule out other factors that may be contributing to the student's difficulty in accessing and mastering grade-level content standards. If the team recognizes that one or more of these factors may be impacting the student's learning, additional supplementary aids, services, and other supports should be put in place to address the issue. Students are not eligible for the alternate educational framework if their learning difficulties and/or limited rate of progress may be attributable to:

- Poor attendance or extended absences, including disengagement due to school closure
- Social, cultural, or economic differences

- English Learner (EL) status
- Low reading and mathematics achievement level (without other evidence of significant cognitive disability)
- Interfering behavior that prevents the student from participating in instruction or assessment
- Need for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) or other assistive technology to access learning and/or participate in an assessment or
- Lack of engagement or the inability to receive a FAPE due to factors impacting the student or the entire school system (e.g., medical needs, extended school closure).

The team's determination that the student may have difficulty with, or not perform successfully on, the general assessment is also not an acceptable reason to instruct or assess the student according to alternate achievement standards. Students with and without disabilities who are not proficient on the assessment should receive intensified supports while continuing to have the opportunity to progress towards a high school diploma. In response to educator or parent concerns about the student's emotional or behavioral response to the assessment, the team should consider the allowable accommodations, which include adaptations to the presentation of materials, student response, and/or the assessment setting (e.g., separate location, small group, frequent breaks).

Lastly, administrative and programmatic factors should also not impact the decision. Teams should not base eligibility decisions on:

- Academic and other services the student receives
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Percent of time receiving special education services
- Impact of test scores on the accountability system
- Administrator preference
- Number of students in a district participating in the Alternate Assessment.

Low academic achievement must be differentiated from significant cognitive disabilities with global impact as evidenced by multiple sources, such as adaptive scores, classroom, community, social, and work performance. Below average cognitive scores alone also do not mean that a student is eligible for the alternate assessment - the impairment must be significant and pervasive.

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## Alternate Framework Participation Decision

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The team documents its decision for participation in the Alternate Framework, which includes assessment and instruction, based on a thorough review of all the factors. If any of the student's characteristics do not align with the eligibility criteria (e.g., the student shows any performance evidence in columns one or two or the student does not have a significant deficit in adaptive behavior on the assessment), the team must select "NO." For all other students, the team makes a consensus judgement in light of the totality of the evidence. In situations with significant uncertainty (e.g., a large number of performance indicators aligned with column three; a student with limited English language skills or school experience; a significant discrepancy in adaptive score reporting between the family and the school, or other conflicting or inclusive evidence), the team should remember the principle of the "least dangerous assumption." In such cases, it may be preferable to not determine the student eligible and to revisit the decision in the future, with additional data and evidence as needed.

## Parent/Guardian Understanding and Consent

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Because of the impact of the decision to instruct and assess a student in alignment with alternate academic achievement standards, it is critical to ensure that families understand and actively participate in the decision-making process. Information about the student's learning and performance outside of the school setting is necessary to make an appropriate determination, and families are the best source of this information. In addition, parents must provide written consent for their child to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments and/or instruction aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (Md. Code Ann., Educ. §8-405(f)).

Prior to beginning the discussion of the student's eligibility, the IEP chair or another member of the team reads a statement that describes for the family the potential impact of the decision.

"The purpose of the next portion of this meeting is to discuss (or determine) whether \_\_\_\_\_ is eligible for participation in the Alternate Academic Framework, which includes an Alternate Assessment and instruction aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards. The Alternate Assessment is aligned to alternate academic achievement standards, which are reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity from the standards that most students are expected to master. The Alternate Academic Framework is designed for a very small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot demonstrate learning on the standard assessments, even with accommodations and support. Participation in instruction and testing aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards may not prepare your child to meet all of the requirements to earn a High School Diploma. If \_\_\_\_\_ leaves high school without earning a diploma, their access to post-secondary education, training, and work options may be limited."

After answering any questions the family may have, the IEP team completes the document. The IEP Team must affirm that the parent understands the decision-making process, including that the decision is reviewed annually, and the implications of the decision, namely that if the student continues with instruction and assessment according to the AAAS, they will be unable to complete the requirements for a Maryland High School Diploma. The team should explain the potential consequences of not obtaining a diploma to the family. Parent understanding of the decision is documented in Appendix A.

After ensuring that the family understands the decision, the team continues with the determination process, involving the family as equal team members in responding to the questions and selecting the performance evidence statements. If the team determines that the student meets the eligibility criteria, the team asks the parent(s) to affirm their understanding of and participation in the decision. The parent(s) respond to each statement.

Once understanding is affirmed, the team asks whether or not the parents' consent to instruction and/or assessment aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards. The chair or another team member reads the statement that is part of the Appendix A and the parent(s) give or refuse consent. Parents can sign their consent using an electronic signature feature built into the online IEP; a separate signature page is no longer required.

Note: While ELIGIBILITY is determined for **both** instruction and assessment aligned to alternate standards as one decision (i.e., the team cannot find the student eligible for assessment based on the alternate standards but not instruction) PARENT CONSENT can be given for either, neither, or both.

- If the parent provides written consent during the meeting, the team implements the proposed action. The team documents the consent in the student's record.



- If the parent provides written refusal during the meeting, the team may not implement the proposed action. The team documents the refusal in the student's record.
- If the parent does not provide written consent or written refusal or is not present during the meeting, the IEP team must provide written notice within 5 days of the meeting explaining their right to consent or refuse consent to their child's instruction and/or assessment according to Alternate Academic Achievement Standards.
- If the parent does not respond within 15 days of the meeting, the team may implement the decision. If the parent provides written consent after the 15 days, the team amends the IEP to reflect the parent's consent and continues implementing the decision. If the parent refuses consent after the 15 days, the IEP team stops implementing the decision and amends the IEP to reflect the refusal. In the event of parent nonresponse, the school team makes every effort to provide the parent with appropriate information about the decision and to obtain consent or refusal.

If the IEP team disagrees with the parents' refusal of consent for instruction and/or assessment according to the alternate academic achievement standards and determines that the failure to provide consent results in the child not receiving FAPE, the IEP team may pursue dispute resolution via mediation and due process. For more information, see Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services Technical Assistance Bulletin #17-02, Parental Consent Under Maryland Law.

## Student Scenarios

### STUDENT #1

Alexandra (Alex) Anderson is a 14-year-old 8th grade student. Alex was determined eligible for special education services in first grade as a student with an Intellectual Disability. Alex uses modified reading materials that include text that is significantly below grade level and that incorporates pictures, graphics, or images. In math class, Alex has access to materials that allow for explicit instruction and uses concrete manipulatives. The curriculum differs significantly from that of her non-disabled peers. Instructional activities are individualized and taught in alternative ways to include a variety of multi-sensory strategies. Alex's curriculum is currently centered on the Essential Elements from the Dynamic Learning Map. The team has identified areas of strength to include the following: answering “wh” questions related to a familiar text, identifying events related to the theme of the story, identifying upper- and lower-case letters in the alphabet, and identifying all of the letters in her first name. The team has also identified the following strengths in mathematics: identifying numbers from 0 to 25, single digit addition and subtraction using manipulatives, and identifying geometric shapes. In the area of adaptive behaviors skills, Alex is able to answer direct questions, engage in limited self-care behaviors, and communicate her wants/needs. Alex has difficulty with complex social interactions, understanding multi-step directions, and managing her behaviors related to safety.

Alex's current IEP includes 25 hours outside of the general education setting to include special education services to address identified needs in reading decoding, reading comprehension, written language expression, math calculation and problems solving, self-management, and communication. She attends resource classes (such as Physical Education and Fine Arts), school assemblies, and lunch with her non-disabled peers.

See below for a sample Appendix A for a student who likely qualifies for the Alternate Framework.

**IEP TEAM DATE:** 8/14/2023

<b>Student Name:</b> Alexandra “Alex” Anderson		<b>SASID#:</b> 1234567891
<b>DOB:</b> 5/5/2009	<b>Grade:</b> 8	<b>Disability Code:</b> Intellectual Disability
<b>Residence School:</b> Bedrock Middle School		<b>Service School:</b> Bedrock Middle School
<b>Service County:</b> Flintstone County		<b>LEA #:</b> 100

## IEP TEAM MEMBERS

Printed Name	Title
Dr. E Smith, Ph.D.	School Psychologist
Jane Jones	Special Educator
Marin Murphy	General Educator
Karin Kurt	IEP Chair
Jane Jones	Parent
Sally Smith	Speech Language Pathologist
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

If neither parent can attend an IEP Team meeting, the public agency must use other methods to ensure parent participation, including video conferences or conference calls. See 34 CFR §§ 300.322 and .328.

## PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

The criteria for participation in the alternate assessments and/or instruction aligned with alternate achievement standards reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate. A student who participates in the Alternate Assessments participates in the assessments for all content areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

### SECTION 1: DETERMINING INITIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALTERNATE FRAMEWORK

#### I. Does the student have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

☐ No, the student does not have an IEP.

☒ Yes, the student has a current IEP.



Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.



Proceed to the next statement.

#### II. Review the student's IDEA eligibility category

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:

- ☐ Emotional Disability (ED)
- ☐ Speech Language Impairment (SLI)
- ☐ Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

The student is not eligible for participation in the alternate assessment.

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:




- ☐ Visual Impairment
- ☐ Deaf/Hearing Impairment
- ☐ Developmental Delay (DD)
- ☐ Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- ☐ Orthopedic Impairment







A student identified with any of the disability categories **very rarely** will be a student with a most significant cognitive

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:

- ☐ Multiple Disabilities
- ☒ Intellectual Disability (ID)
- ☐ Autism
- ☐ Deaf Blind
- ☐ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A student identified with any of the disability categories above **may** have a significant cognitive disability. However, the majority of students in these categories will not have a most

	<p>disability and, therefore, <b>rarely</b>, if ever, qualify for the alternate assessment.</p> <p>Proceed with extreme caution. Please remember that students with the disabilities above are rarely students who will participate in the alternate assessment.</p>	<p>significant cognitive disability and, therefore, will not qualify for the alternate assessment.</p>
 <p><b>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</b></p>	 <p><b>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</b></p>	 <p><b>Proceed to the next statement.</b></p>
<p><b>III. Is the student a Multilingual Learner?</b>    <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (if no, please move to Section 2)</p> <p>Assessment if their difficulty accessing grade-level content and/or their assessment performance is attributable to their English Language skills. Assessments should be conducted in the student's dominant language and reviewed by a multidisciplinary team that includes member(s) with expertise in multi-lingual development.</p>		
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student was assessed in their dominant language using culturally relevant cognitive and adaptive assessments. Test results are not consistent with significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Culturally relevant, standardized assessments are not available in the student's dominant language.</p> <p>Non-verbal cognitive assessments and family interviews conducted in the family's preferred language by a knowledgeable assessor suggest a most significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>The student <b>may</b> be eligible for the alternate assessment based on team analysis of all available information, including response to instruction. Proceed with extreme caution. Consider postponing a decision for</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student was assessed in their dominant language using culturally relevant assessments and test results are consistent with significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>The student <b>may</b> be eligible for the alternate assessment if all criteria are met. Ensure that the team considers the impact of language and cultural differences, previous educational experiences, and other factors.</p>

	participation in the alternate assessment until more information about student's responses to instruction can be gathered (especially for students with limited previous educational experience).	
 <b>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</b>	 <b>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</b>	 <b>Proceed to the next statement.</b>
<b>IV. Does the student have a reliable, symbolic means of communication (verbal, sign language, AAC, or some combination)?</b> Communication is critical for students to be able to demonstrate their learning and capabilities. A student who does not have a reliable means of communication may not be able to demonstrate their cognitive abilities.		
<input type="checkbox"/> The student has not had appropriate opportunities (including instruction and access to assistive technology) to develop a reliable means of communication AND has minimal or inconsistent means of communication.  The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment. It is not possible to reliably assess the cognitive and educational ability of a student who has not had an opportunity to develop communication. Increase communication support and revisit the alternate assessment conversation in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has minimal or inconsistent symbolic communication but has had intensive and appropriate instruction designed to develop communication skills.  The student may be eligible for the alternate assessment based on a review of all evidence. Non-verbal cognitive assessments should be considered, and caution applied when interpreting all results.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has a reliable, symbolic means of communication that can be readily understood by others.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication does not appear to be the primary cause of the student's academic challenges.
 <b>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</b>	 <b>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</b>	 <b>Proceed to the next statement.</b>

## SECTION 2: DOES THE STUDENT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY?

### Cognitive Assessment(s)

Name/Title of Examiner:	Dr. E. Smith
Test Date:	6/1/2023
Assessment Name:	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – 5th Edition (WISC-V)
Score(s):	Verbal Comprehension- 60 (Extremely low) Visual Spatial- 50 (Extremely Low) Fluid Reasoning- 40 (Extremely Low) Working Memory- <40 (Extremely Low) Processing Speed- 40 (Extremely Low) Full Scale IQ- 50 (Extremely Low)
Assessment Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.	Alex's cognitive scores fall in the extremely low range.

### Adaptive Skills Assessment(s)

Name/Title of Examiner:	Dr. E. Smith
Test Date:	6/5/2023
Assessment Name:	Adapted Behavior Assessment System – 3rd Edition
Score(s): Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>General Adaptive Composite</b>

	<p>Teacher-53 (Extremely low)</p> <p>Parent- 60 (Low)</p> <p><b>Conceptual</b></p> <p>Teacher- 55 (Extremely low)</p> <p>Parent- 62 (Low)</p> <p><b>Social</b></p> <p>Teacher- 56 (Extremely low)</p> <p>Parent- 57 (Extremely low)</p> <p><b>Practical</b></p> <p>Teacher- 60 (Low)</p> <p>Parent- 62 (Low)</p>
<p>Assessment Comments: The speech and language pathologist provides support to Alex around expressive and receptive language along with pragmatics. Alex is very interested in communicating and interacting with her peers. She has a tendency to talk about topics that are of interest to her but are not always age appropriate (Peppa Pig, Paw Patrol, for example.).</p>	
<p>Additional Sources of Information: Parent and teacher interviews, staff interviews (SLP, PE).</p>	



**I. Conceptual Domain: Covers skills related to language and literacy; use of money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction.**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is on grade level academically in all content areas.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has age-appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills, including conversation skills (verbally or through a communication device).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student expresses and makes independent choices, exhibits self-control, and takes responsibility for choices at an age-appropriate level.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty learning academic content from Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards but is making progress with appropriate supports and interventions as specified in the IEP.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> After learning new content, the student may need additional practice with direct instruction to generalize the new skills into daily living activities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has some age-appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills (verbally or through a communication device), uses and understands simple, nonverbal communication, and can follow simple, age-appropriate directions and routines with prompting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated academic difficulties that may have caused an achievement gap.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty learning grade-level academic content across all subject areas and may require multiple tiers of intervention, accommodations, or modifications.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may need instruction that is significantly below grade level in order to build base skills to get back to grade level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may struggle to generalize skills outside the classroom, even with assistance and practice.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty communicating wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas but receptively understands messages.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student struggles to follow directions and routines without significant assistance.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has significant difficulty with learning academic content and may require instruction that is designed by clustering grade-level standards into life-applied units of study with intensive accommodations for access.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires significantly modified curriculum and instruction using Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards and likely is unable to apply or generalize skills outside the classroom setting.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may be unable to clearly express wants and needs and may not seem to understand the messages conveyed by others. The student likely requires maximum adult assistance to communicate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires layers of support (accommodations, scaffolding, and assistive technologies) to follow directions</p>

		developmental delays, and the achievement gap between the student and typical peers has persisted over time.	and daily routine activities.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated developmental delays over an extended period, and the achievement gap between the student and typical peers has increased over time.
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**II. Social Domain: Covers behaviors needed to engage in interpersonal interactions, act with social responsibility, and use leisure time. This includes social competence, self-esteem, gullibility, naivete (wariness), social problem-solving, following rules/obeying laws, and avoiding being victimized.**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

No Evidence 1	Little Evidence 2	Partial Evidence 3	Complete Evidence 4
<input type="checkbox"/> The student displays age-appropriate social, communication, and leisure skills.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student can initiate and maintain friendships and express and recognize emotions with peers who are the same age.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student engages in play and recreational activities without additional support.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student may have difficulty with social interactions (i.e., may misinterpret peers' social cues or others may consider the student's actions as immature).  <input type="checkbox"/> The student's communication, language, and conversation skills are more concrete or immature than peers who are the same age.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student may have challenges in regulating emotion and behavior in an age-appropriate manner, and these challenges may be noticed by peers and adults.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has social, behavioral, and communication skills markedly different from peers who are the same age.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student is able to be understood but uses a mode for communication that is much less complex than peers who are the same age.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may use behaviors to communicate.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student may not perceive or interpret social cues accurately.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student often uses behaviors to communicate.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's communication skills are very limited in terms of vocabulary and grammar.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student may be in the process of developing a mode of communication, may be described as nonverbal, or uses very limited non-symbolic communication.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant adult assistance to communicate with peers or adults and may require layers of support

		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student often needs significant support to engage in social situations and/or use communication skills.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may be easily persuaded to do things that go against the rules or safe boundaries when coaxed to do so.	(simple speech, visuals, gestures, etc.) to communicate.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student may not yet show an understanding of symbolic communication with speech or gesture.
<b>III. Practical Domain: Covers behaviors related to activities of daily living (i.e., personal care), occupation skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, and use of the telephone.</b>  Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.			
<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is able to follow safety rules and functions in the community and classroom setting similarly to peers who are the same age.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student independently performs self-care activities such as eating, dressing, and taking care of personal hygiene.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student often functions age-appropriately in personal care daily living activities and using community resources.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student displays recreational skills typically on the same level as peers, although some additional support may be needed.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student may need support in navigating the school and community and may need reminders about being mindful of safety hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student may need support to care for personal needs (i.e., eating, dressing, toileting needs), may have needed an extended period of explicit teaching in these areas, and may require prompting or cues.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student often requires additional support and learning opportunities for recreational skills.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires intensive support to safely navigate the school and community.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant support and direct instruction across all activities of daily living (i.e., meals, dressing, bathing, toileting needs) or may be dependent on others for all aspects of physical care, health, and safety.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires intensive teaching and ongoing support for recreational and navigation skills, not because of physical ability but because of significant cognitive needs. The student requires supervision at all times.

**IV. After considering the conceptual, social, and practical domains above, does the student have a significant cognitive disability? The student will show needs in adaptive and cognitive areas.**

The student's daily functioning skills do not align with column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for ALL three adaptive skills domains above, or

The student's cognitive needs are not indicative of a significant cognitive disability.

The student's daily functioning skills do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above.

Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of a significant cognitive disability.

The student's daily functioning skills align only within column 4 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above, and

The student has a documented cognitive disability. The student has a most significant cognitive disability and may be eligible for the alternate assessment.



Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.



Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.



Proceed to the next statement.

### SECTION 3: DOES THE STUDENT REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS TO CURRICULUM IN ORDER TO ACCESS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS IN THE MARYLAND COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS?

#### Educational Assessment

Name/Title of Examiner:	Ms. J. Jones, Special Education Teacher
Test Date:	6/10/2023
Assessment Name:	Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement – Form C
Score(s): Click or tap here to enter text.	<p>Letter- Word ID- 70 (Low)</p> <p>Passage Comprehension- 54 (Low)</p> <p>Oral Reading- 60 (Low)</p> <p>Sentence Reading Fluency- 55 (Low)</p> <p>Word Attack- 55 (Low)</p> <p>Spelling- 60 (Low)</p> <p>Writing Samples- 45 (Very Low)</p> <p>Applied Problem Solving- &lt;40 (Very Low)</p> <p>Math Calculation- 49 (Very Low)</p> <p>Math Fact Fluency- 50 (Low)</p>
Assessment Comments:	Alex scored significantly below average on all subsections.
Additional Sources of Information: (please specify)	Classroom observation, student work samples, teacher interview, SLP interview, curriculum based measures.

**I. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Consider the following sources: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, Data from scientific research-based interventions, and informal assessments (i.e., teacher-collected data, checklists, work samples, and observations).**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student's present levels of performance on the IEP indicates that skills are closely aligned with grade-level standards, concepts and skills with present-level data showing skill gaps represented within the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes annual goals and objectives aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and may include short-term learning objectives aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards in the area(s) of determined needs.  <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are aligned to grade-level targets that build in complexity toward the achievement of learning aligned to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, and  <input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based and includes explicit instruction in all content areas on grade-level standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes goals and objectives that target modified grade-level standards at or above the target level.  <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are aligned to modified grade-level standards at or above the target level.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based grade-level learning and includes instruction on critical life skills, and  <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires both accommodations and modifications.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes present levels of performance statements that align learner data with grade-level standards through the alternate academic achievement standards below the target level.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are based on student data, likely showing significant skill gaps within the alternate academic achievement standards below the target level, and  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based grade-level learning and includes explicit instruction on critical life skills, and  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires extensive accommodations and modifications.

**II. Accommodations/ Modifications/ Supplementary Aids:**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Fact Sheet AFA-1: Accessibility Features for All Students that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Section 4A: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Section 4A: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access, and  <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires additional individualized accommodations, modifications, and scaffolds not allowed on Maryland's State Assessments. These also are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines individualized supports, accommodations, modifications, and materials beyond those that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> to meet the cognitive and physical task demands of instruction and assessment. These additional supports address the communication, motor, and/or sensory needs of the student and provide the student with opportunities to show what he/she knows and can do.
<b>III. After considering the student-specific examples of curriculum, instruction, assessment, accommodations, modifications, and supplementary aids above, does the student require significant modifications to the curriculum in order to access knowledge and skills and demonstrate progress in the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards?</b>			
The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) and skills do not align within column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for both sections above.	The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above.	The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) align only with column 4 of both sections above. The student requires significantly modified learning targets aligned to the	

	Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of requiring significant modifications to curriculum.	alternate academic achievement standards and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.
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## SECTION 4: DOES THE STUDENT REQUIRE EXTENSIVE, DIRECT, REPEATED, AND INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION?

Sources of Information: (please specify):

Classroom-based assessments, county benchmarks, observation, student work samples, data collection

### I. Instruction:

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student learns new content and skills through the instruction provided to all students.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student does not routinely require pre-teaching or re-teaching of instructional material and usually retains learned information and skills with minimal reminders.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With exposure, the student can generalize and transfer skills to school, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is not anticipated to require direct adult support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, or daily living).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction to learn some content and skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires some additional opportunities for instruction and feedback (such as pre-teaching or re-teaching) to learn academic materials and skills. The student may require occasional review of previously learned skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With repeated practice and some support, the student can generalize and transfer skills to new school, home, and community environments.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction to learn most content and skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires multiple opportunities for instruction and feedback (such as pre-teaching and re-teaching) to learn most instructional material and skills. The student may require additional reminders and practice to maintain skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With planned opportunities for instruction and practice, extended time, and repeated exposure, the student can generalize and transfer skills to new school, home, and community environments.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction adapted to address sensory, communication, behavioral, cognitive, and other needs to learn new information and develop academic and functional skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires explicit and intensive instructional strategies (i.e., chaining, structured prompt fading, etc.) to acquire new skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires extensive repetitions (more than most other students with disabilities) to learn information and skills. Learned skills need to be practiced and reinforced regularly to support continued retention.</p>

	<input type="checkbox"/> After appropriate instruction, the student is able to utilize assistive technology and other accommodations with limited or no adult support.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student is anticipated to require some adult support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, or daily living).	<input type="checkbox"/> The student requires direct instruction and some ongoing prompting and support to utilize assistive technology and other accommodations.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student is anticipated to require partial support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, continued education, or community living).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires targeted support and instruction to appropriately generalize skills to new contexts or settings.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant prompting and support to utilize assistive technology and other accommodations.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student currently requires continuous direct and explicit instruction to acquire and maintain functional skills that support independence and is anticipated to continue to need intensive support in post-secondary settings.
<b>II. After considering the student-specific examples of instruction above, does the student require extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial support?</b>			
The student's instructional needs do not align with column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for the Instruction section above.	The student's instructional needs do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for the Instruction section above.  Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of requiring extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and	The student's instructional skills align only with column 4 for the Instruction section above.  The student requires extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.	



Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.



Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.



Proceed to the next statement.

## SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decision to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments and/or Alternate Achievement Standards is made after reviewing all data and completing the above sections of Appendix A. Assure that the decision was NOT based solely on any of the following:

- ☒ Disability category or label
- ☒ Poor attendance or extended absences
- ☒ Native language/social/cultural/economic differences
- ☒ Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- ☒ Academic, related, or other services the student receives
- ☒ Instructional setting
- ☒ Percentage of the school day receiving special education services
- ☒ Multilingual learner status
- ☒ Low mathematics or reading achievement level
- ☒ Behavior concerns
- ☒ The impact of test scores on the accountability system
- ☒ Administrator decision or convenience
- ☒ Need for accommodations including assistive technology or augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) to participate in assessment

### ALTERNATE FRAMEWORK PARTICIPATION

As documented through the Participation Criteria and Additional Considerations in Sections 1-5 above, does the student meet all criteria for participation in the alternate assessment and/or instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards?

☒ **Yes**, the student meets all criteria and will participate in the alternate assessment and/or participate in instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards.

☐ **No**, the student does not meet all the criteria above and, as such, will not participate in the alternate assessment and/or participate in instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

I have been informed that if my child is determined eligible to participate in instruction using alternate achievement standards and/or the alternate assessments through the IEP team decision-making process:

☒ Yes, I DO give consent for my child to participate in instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards.

☒ Yes, I DO give consent for my child to participate in the Alternate Assessment aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards.

☐ No, I DO NOT give consent for my child to participate in instruction aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards.

☐ No, I DO NOT give consent for my child to participate in the Alternate Assessment aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards.

**STUDENT #2**

Lina is a 12-year-old student who is enrolled in 6th grade. She was determined eligible for special education services in first grade as a student with Autism. Lina can recognize some pre-primer sight words as well as some words at the kindergarten and 1st grade levels. Lina struggles to read complex sentences and has difficulty with determining the meaning of the sentences. She had difficulty with reading and pronouncing blends and digraphs. She struggles with comprehending grade level text; she benefits from hearing the text read aloud. Lina understands money concepts and can tell time by the hour and half-hour. She can add and subtract both single and double-digit numbers with some regrouping. She performs well in numbers and operations in base ten and in operations and algebraic thinking; she is at the third-grade level in math. Lina receives speech therapy to address her expressive and receptive language needs. She benefits from the use of visuals to facilitate both her understanding of, and use of, language. She really enjoys drawing, and that can be helpful to facilitate her expressive communication. She is eager to participate and show what she knows to staff and friends.

Lina's current IEP includes 26 hours and 40 minutes outside of the general education setting to include special education services to address identified needs in phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, written language mechanics, math calculation, expressive and receptive language needs, and social interaction skills. She attends special subject courses, school assemblies, and lunch with her non-disabled peers.

See below for a sample Appendix A for a student for whom the team may need additional information before determining that she qualifies for the Alternate Framework.

**IEP TEAM DATE:** 3/15/2023

<b>Student Name:</b> Lina Lennon		<b>SASID#:</b> 2345678901
<b>DOB:</b> 3/9/2011	<b>Grade:</b> 6	<b>Disability Code:</b> Autism
<b>Residence School:</b> Roadrunner Middle		<b>Service School:</b> Roadrunner Middle
<b>Service County:</b> Wylie County		<b>LEA #:</b> 300

**IEP TEAM MEMBERS**

Printed Name	Title
William Whitman	Psychologist
Janet Jones	Special Educator
Minnie Mint	General Educator
Sally Smith	Speech Language Pathologist
Ernest Irving	IEP Chair
Laurie Lennon	Parent
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

If neither parent can attend an IEP Team meeting, the public agency must use other methods to ensure parent participation, including video conferences or conference calls. See 34 CFR §§ 300.322 and .328.

**PARTICIPATION CRITERIA**

The criteria for participation in the alternate assessments and/or instruction aligned with alternate achievement standards reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate. A student who participates in the Alternate Assessments participates in the assessments for all content areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

## SECTION 1: DETERMINING INITIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALTERNATE FRAMEWORK

### I. Does the student have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

☐ No, the student does not have an IEP.

☒ Yes, the student has a current IEP.



Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.



Proceed to the next statement.

### II. Review the student's IDEA eligibility category

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:

- ☐ Emotional Disability (ED)
- ☐ Speech Language Impairment (SLI)
- ☐ Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

The student is not eligible for participation in the alternate assessment.

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:




- ☐ Visual Impairment
- ☐ Deaf/Hearing Impairment
- ☐ Developmental Delay (DD)
- ☐ Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- ☐ Orthopedic Impairment

A student identified with any of the disability categories **very rarely** will be a student with a most significant cognitive disability and, therefore, **rarely**, if ever, qualify for the alternate assessment.







Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:

- ☐ Multiple Disabilities
- ☐ Intellectual Disability (ID)
- ☒ Autism
- ☐ Deaf Blindness
- ☐ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A student identified with any of the disability categories above **may** have a significant cognitive disability. However, the majority of students in these categories will not have a most significant cognitive disability and, therefore, will not qualify for the alternate assessment.

	Proceed with extreme caution. Please remember that students with the disabilities above are rarely students who will participate in the alternate assessment.	
 <b>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</b>	 <b>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</b>	 <b>Proceed to the next statement.</b>
<b>III. Is the student a Multilingual Learner?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (if no, please move to Section 2)		
<p>Students are not eligible for the Alternate Assessment if their difficulty accessing grade-level content and/or their assessment performance is attributable to their English Language skills. Assessments should be conducted in the student's dominant language and reviewed by a multidisciplinary team that includes member(s) with expertise in multi-lingual development.</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The student was assessed in their dominant language using culturally relevant cognitive and adaptive assessments. Test results are not consistent with significant cognitive disability.  The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Culturally relevant, standardized assessments are not available in the student's dominant language.  Non-verbal cognitive assessments and family interviews conducted in the family's preferred language by a knowledgeable assessor suggest a most significant cognitive disability.  The student <u>may</u> be eligible for the alternate assessment based on team analysis of all available information, including response to instruction. Proceed with extreme caution.  Consider postponing a decision for participation in the alternate assessment until more information about student's responses to instruction can be gathered (especially for students with limited previous educational experience).	<input type="checkbox"/> The student was assessed in their dominant language using culturally relevant assessments and test results are consistent with significant cognitive disability.  The student <u>may</u> be eligible for the alternate assessment if all criteria are met. Ensure that the team considers the impact of language and cultural differences, previous educational experiences, and other factors.



	<p>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</p>		<p>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</p>		<p>Proceed to the next statement.</p>
<p><b>IV. Does the student have a reliable, symbolic means of communication (verbal, sign language, AAC, or some combination)?</b></p> <p>Communication is critical for students to be able to demonstrate their learning and capabilities. A student who does not have a reliable means of communication may not be able to demonstrate their cognitive abilities.</p>					
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has not had appropriate opportunities (including instruction and access to assistive technology) to develop a reliable means of communication AND has minimal or inconsistent means of communication.</p> <p>The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment. It is not possible to reliably assess the cognitive and educational ability of a student who has not had an opportunity to develop communication. Increase communication support and revisit the alternate assessment conversation in the future.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has minimal or inconsistent symbolic communication but has had intensive and appropriate instruction designed to develop communication skills.</p> <p>The student may be eligible for the alternate assessment based on a review of all evidence. Non-verbal cognitive assessments should be considered, and caution applied when interpreting all results.</p>		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has a reliable, symbolic means of communication that can be readily understood by others.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication does not appear to be the primary cause of the student's academic challenges.</p>	
	<p>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</p>		<p>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</p>		<p>Proceed to the next statement.</p>

**SECTION 2: DOES THE STUDENT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY?****Cognitive Assessment(s)**

Name/Title of Examiner:	Dr. W. Whitman, Psychologist
Test Date:	February 1, 2023
Assessment Name:	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – 5th Edition
Score(s): Click or tap here to enter text.	<p>Verbal Comprehension- 45 (Extremely Low)</p> <p>Visual Spatial Index- 84 (Low Average)</p> <p>Fluid Reasoning Index- 85 (Low Average)</p> <p>Processing Speed- 69 (Extremely Low)</p> <p>Working Memory Index-51 (Extremely Low)</p> <p>Full Scale IQ- 65 (Extremely Low)</p>
Assessment Comments:	Lina demonstrates deficits in verbal language skills which impacts her ability to meet the demands of the general education curriculum.

**Adaptive Skills Assessment(s)**

Name/Title of Examiner:	Dr. W. Whitman, Psychologist
Test Date:	2/10/2023
Assessment Name:	Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales – 3rd Edition

Score(s): Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Communication</b>  Teacher- 48 (very low)  Parent- 60 (very low)  <b>Daily Living</b>  Teacher- 70 (low)  Parent- 70 (low)  <b>Socialization</b>  Teacher- 65 (very low)  Parent- 70 (low)  <b>General Adaptive Composite</b>  Teacher- 61 (very low)  Parent- 66 (very low)
Assessment Comments:	Lina's ratings on the Vineland-3 indicate significant delays across all areas.
Additional Sources of Information: (please specify)	Classroom observation, teacher, and staff interviews.

**I. Conceptual Domain: Covers skills related to language and literacy; use of money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction.**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is on grade level academically in all content areas.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has age-appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills, including conversation skills (verbally or through a communication device).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student expresses and makes independent choices, exhibits self-control, and takes responsibility for choices at an age-appropriate level.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty learning academic content from Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards but is making progress with appropriate supports and interventions as specified in the IEP.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> After learning new content, the student may need additional practice with direct instruction to generalize the new skills into daily living activities.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has some age-appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills (verbally or through a communication device), uses and understands simple, nonverbal communication, and can follow simple, age-appropriate directions and routines with prompting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated academic difficulties that may have caused an achievement gap.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty learning grade-level academic content across all subject areas and may require multiple tiers of intervention, accommodations, or modifications.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may need instruction that is significantly below grade level in order to build base skills to get back to grade level.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may struggle to generalize skills outside the classroom, even with assistance and practice.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty communicating wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas but receptively understands messages.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student struggles to follow directions and routines without significant assistance.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has significant difficulty with learning academic content and may require instruction that is designed by clustering grade-level standards into life-applied units of study with intensive accommodations for access.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significantly modified curriculum and instruction using Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards and likely is unable to apply or generalize skills outside the classroom setting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may be unable to clearly express wants and needs and may not seem to understand the messages conveyed by others. The student likely requires maximum adult assistance to communicate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires layers of support (accommodations, scaffolding, and assistive technologies) to follow directions</p>

		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated developmental delays, and the achievement gap between the student and typical peers has persisted over time.	and daily routine activities.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated developmental delays over an extended period, and the achievement gap between the student and typical peers has increased over time.
<p><b>II. Social Domain: Covers behaviors needed to engage in interpersonal interactions, act with social responsibility, and use leisure time. This includes social competence, self-esteem, gullibility, naivete (wariness), social problem-solving, following rules/obeying laws, and avoiding being victimized.</b></p> <p>Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.</p>			
<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student displays age-appropriate social, communication, and leisure skills.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student can initiate and maintain friendships and express and recognize emotions with peers who are the same age.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student engages in play and recreational activities without additional support.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may have difficulty with social interactions (i.e., may misinterpret peers' social cues or others may consider the student's actions as immature).  <input type="checkbox"/> The student's communication, language, and conversation skills are more concrete or immature than peers who are the same age.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may have challenges in regulating emotion and behavior in an age-appropriate manner, and these challenges may be noticed by peers and adults.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has social, behavioral, and communication skills markedly different from peers who are the same age.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student is able to be understood but uses a mode for communication that is much less complex than peers who are the same age.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may use behaviors to communicate.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may not perceive or interpret social cues accurately.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student often uses behaviors to communicate.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student's communication skills are very limited in terms of vocabulary and grammar.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student may be in the process of developing a mode of communication, may be described as nonverbal, or uses very limited non-symbolic communication.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant adult assistance to communicate with peers or adults and may require layers of support

		<input type="checkbox"/> The student often needs significant support to engage in social situations and/or use communication skills.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may be easily persuaded to do things that go against the rules or safe boundaries when coaxed to do so.	(simple speech, visuals, gestures, etc.) to communicate.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student may not yet show an understanding of symbolic communication with speech or gesture.
<b>III. Practical Domain: Covers behaviors related to activities of daily living (i.e., personal care), occupation skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, and use of the telephone.</b>  Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.			
<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is able to follow safety rules and functions in the community and classroom setting similarly to peers who are the same age.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student independently performs self-care activities such as eating, dressing, and taking care of personal hygiene.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student often functions age-appropriately in personal care daily living activities and using community resources.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student displays recreational skills typically on the same level as peers, although some additional support may be needed.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may need support in navigating the school and community and may need reminders about being mindful of safety hazards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may need support to care for personal needs (i.e., eating, dressing, toileting needs), may have needed an extended period of explicit teaching in these areas, and may require prompting or cues.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student often requires additional support and learning opportunities for recreational skills.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires intensive support to safely navigate the school and community.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant support and direct instruction across all activities of daily living (i.e., meals, dressing, bathing, toileting needs) or may be dependent on others for all aspects of physical care, health, and safety.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires intensive teaching and ongoing support for recreational and navigation skills, not because of physical ability but because of significant cognitive needs. The student requires supervision at all times.

**IV. After considering the conceptual, social, and practical domains above, does the student have a significant cognitive disability? The student will show needs in adaptive and cognitive areas.**

The student's daily functioning skills do not align with column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for ALL three adaptive skills domains above, or

The student's cognitive needs are not indicative of a significant cognitive disability.

The student's daily functioning skills do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above.

Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of a significant cognitive disability.

The student's daily functioning skills align only within column 4 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above, and

The student has a documented cognitive disability. The student has a most significant cognitive disability and may be eligible for the alternate assessment.



Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.



Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.



Proceed to the next statement.

### SECTION 3: DOES THE STUDENT REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS TO CURRICULUM IN ORDER TO ACCESS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS IN THE MARYLAND COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS?

#### Educational Assessment

Name/Title of Examiner:	Ms. Janet Jones, Special Educator
Test Date:	2/15/2023
Assessment Name:	Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - Fourth Edition
Score(s): Click or tap here to enter text.	<p>Total achievement- 58 (Very Low)</p> <p>Reading Comprehension- 64 (Very Low)</p> <p>Math Problem Solving- 66 (Very Low)</p> <p>Numerical Operations- 82 (Low Average)</p> <p>Phonemic Proficiency- 44 (Extremely Low)</p>
Assessment Comments:	Lina's overall performance on this assessment places her in the Extremely Low to Very Low Average ability range. Her performance on this assessment indicates she is working below the expected performance level for same-age/grade peers. Lina's grade equivalency ranges from PK.6 to 3.6 while her age equivalency ranges from 4:6 to 8:10.
Additional Sources of Information: (please specify)	classroom observation, student work samples, formal and informal assessments, classroom data collection.



**I. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Consider the following sources: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, Data from scientific research-based interventions, and informal assessments (i.e., teacher-collected data, checklists, work samples, and observations).**




Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence 1</b>	<b>Little Evidence 2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence 3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence 4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's present levels of performance on the IEP indicates that skills are closely aligned with grade-level standards, concepts and skills with present-level data showing skill gaps represented within the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes annual goals and objectives aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and may include short-term learning objectives aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards in the area(s) of determined needs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are aligned to grade-level targets that build in complexity toward the achievement of learning aligned to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, and</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based and includes explicit instruction in all content areas on grade-level standards.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes goals and objectives that target modified grade-level standards at or above the target level.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are aligned to modified grade-level standards at or above the target level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based grade-level learning and includes instruction on critical life skills, and</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires both accommodations and modifications.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes present levels of performance statements that align learner data with grade-level standards through the alternate academic achievement standards below the target level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are based on student data, likely showing significant skill gaps within the alternate academic achievement standards below the target level, and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based grade-level learning and includes explicit instruction on critical life skills, and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires extensive accommodations and modifications.</p>

## II. Accommodations/ Modifications/ Supplementary Aids:

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Fact Sheet AFA-1: Accessibility Features for All Students that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Section 4A: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Section 4A: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access, and  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires additional individualized accommodations, modifications, and scaffolds not allowed on Maryland's State Assessments. These also are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines individualized supports, accommodations, modifications, and materials beyond those that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> to meet the cognitive and physical task demands of instruction and assessment. These additional supports address the communication, motor, and/or sensory needs of the student and provide the student with opportunities to show what he/she knows and can do.
<b>III. After considering the student-specific examples of curriculum, instruction, assessment, accommodations, modifications, and supplementary aids above, does the student require significant modifications to the curriculum in order to access knowledge and skills and demonstrate progress in the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards?</b>			
The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) and skills do not align within column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for both sections	The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for ALL three	The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) align only with column 4 of both sections above. The student requires significantly	

above.	adaptive skills domains above. Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of requiring significant modifications to curriculum.	modified learning targets aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.
 Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.	 Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.	 Proceed to the next statement.

## SECTION 4: DOES THE STUDENT REQUIRE EXTENSIVE, DIRECT, REPEATED, AND INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION?




Sources of Information:

Formal and informal assessments, teacher made quizzes and tests, classroom observation, student work samples

### I. Instruction:

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student learns new content and skills through the instruction provided to all students.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student does not routinely require pre-teaching or re-teaching of instructional material and usually retains learned information and skills with minimal reminders.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With exposure, the student can generalize and transfer skills to school, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is not anticipated to require direct adult support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, or daily living).</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction to learn some content and skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires some additional opportunities for instruction and feedback (such as pre-teaching or re-teaching) to learn academic materials and skills. The student may require occasional review of previously learned skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With repeated practice and some support, the student can generalize and transfer skills to new school, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> After appropriate instruction, the student is able to utilize assistive technology and other</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction to learn most content and skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires multiple opportunities for instruction and feedback (such as pre-teaching and re-teaching) to learn most instructional material and skills. The student may require additional reminders and practice to maintain skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With planned opportunities for instruction and practice, extended time, and repeated exposure, the student can generalize and transfer skills to new school, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires direct instruction and some ongoing prompting and support to utilize</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction adapted to address sensory, communication, behavioral, cognitive, and other needs to learn new information and develop academic and functional skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires explicit and intensive instructional strategies (i.e., chaining, structured prompt fading, etc.) to acquire new skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires extensive repetitions (more than most other students with disabilities) to learn information and skills. Learned skills need to be practiced and reinforced regularly to support continued retention.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires targeted support and instruction to</p>

	<p>accommodations with limited or no adult support.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is anticipated to require some adult support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, or daily living).</p>	<p>assistive technology and other accommodations.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student is anticipated to require partial support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, continued education, or community living).</p>	<p>appropriately generalize skills to new contexts or settings.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant prompting and support to utilize assistive technology and other accommodations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student currently requires continuous direct and explicit instruction to acquire and maintain functional skills that support independence and is anticipated to continue to need intensive support in post-secondary settings.</p>
<p><b>II. After considering the student-specific examples of instruction above, does the student require extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial support?</b></p>			
<p>The student's instructional needs do not align with column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for the Instruction section above.</p>	<p>The student's instructional needs do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for the Instruction section above.</p> <p>Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of requiring extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and</p>	<p>The student's instructional skills align only with column 4 for the Instruction section above.</p> <p>The student requires extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.</p>	
 <p>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</p>	 <p>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</p>	 <p>Proceed to the next statement.</p>	

## SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decision to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments and/or Alternate Achievement Standards is made after reviewing all data and completing the above sections of Appendix A. Assure that the decision was NOT based solely on any of the following:

- ☒ Disability category or label
- ☒ Poor attendance or extended absences
- ☒ Native language/social/cultural/economic differences
- ☒ Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- ☒ Academic, related, or other services the student receives
- ☒ Instructional setting
- ☒ Percentage of the school day receiving special education services
- ☒ Multilingual learner status
- ☒ Low mathematics or reading achievement level
- ☒ Behavior concerns
- ☒ The impact of test scores on the accountability system
- ☒ Administrator decision or convenience
- ☒ Need for accommodations including assistive technology or augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) to participate in assessment

**ALTERNATE FRAMEWORK PARTICIPATION**

As documented through the Participation Criteria and Additional Considerations in Sections 1-5 above, does the student meet all criteria for participation in the alternate assessment and/or instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards?

☐ **Yes**, the student meets all criteria and will participate in the alternate assessment and/or participate in instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards.

☒ **No**, the student does not meet all the criteria above and, as such, will not participate in the alternate assessment and/or participate in instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards.

Below is a sample Prior Written Notice for a student for whom the team would like additional information in order to determine eligibility for the Alternate Framework.

#### **Prior Written Notice**

Student's Name: Lina Lennon

Date: 08/14/2023

Residence School: Roadrunner Middle School

Grade: 6

SASID: 2345678901

Date of Birth: 03/12/2011

#### **Purpose of the meeting: (In response to or as a result of):**

To determine whether Lina is eligible to participate in the Alternate Education Framework.

#### **Description of the action proposed or refused by the school system:**

The IEP team determined that there is not sufficient evidence to conclude is eligible to participate in the Alternate Education Framework. The IEP team will collect and review additional data to include curriculum-based measures, an Informal Reading Inventory, and a Key Math assessment.

#### **Explanation of why the school system proposes or refuses to take this action:**

The lead school psychologist administered the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children on 2/2/2023. Lina's scores ranged from 45 (verbal comprehension) to 85 (fluid reasoning) with a full-scale IQ of 65. Ms. Jones administered the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test- Fourth Edition on 2/27/23. Lina's scores ranged from 44 (phonemic proficiency) to 82 (numerical proficiency). Her total achievement score was 58. Finally, the lead school psychologist also administered the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales on 2/13/23. Scores ranged between 48 (communication) to 70 (daily living) with an Adaptive Behavior Composite of 62.

The team determined that there is insufficient evidence of classroom performance and curriculum-based data at this time. The team would like to administer less-formal assessments to develop a comprehensive understanding of Lina's skills.

#### **Description of any options the school district considered prior to this proposal:**

The IEP team considered having Lina participate in the Alternate Education Framework, as well as continuing in the standard grade level standards and assessments.

#### **Reasons the above listed options were rejected:**

The team determined there is not sufficient evidence to conclude Lina qualifies as a student with the most significant cognitive disability and is, therefore, eligible to participate in the Alternate Education Framework. The IEP team would like to collect and review additional informal academic performance data prior to making this decision.



**Description of evaluation procedures, tests, records, or reports the school district used as a basis for the proposal or refusal:**

Several formal assessments, including the WISC, Vineland, and WIAT were used to assess Lina's cognitive, adaptive, and educational levels. Additionally, classroom observations and staff interviews were conducted.

**Other factors relevant to the action proposed are:**

Lina is relatively new to the county, having moved here from out of state. The team would like to consider additional assessments along with continued opportunities for Lina to participate in the general education setting.

As parents of a child with a disability, you are entitled to certain procedural safeguards as outlined in the enclosed brochure entitled "Parents Rights Maryland Procedural Safeguard Notice." Your rights include the right to request mediation or file a due process complaint if you disagree with proposed and/or refused decision(s).

If you have any questions about the information provided, please call Karin Kurt at 410-767-0001. If you want help understanding this document or your rights, you may contact the local Partners for Success Center at 410-767-0003, Parents' Place of Maryland, Inc. at (410-768-9100), or the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services at 410-767-0264.

**STUDENT #3**

Jeremy Jefferson is an 18-year-old 11th grade student. Jeremy was determined eligible for special education services as a student with Autism in 3rd grade in another county in Maryland. Jeremy benefits from learning in a small group setting in which the instruction is direct and explicit. He also requires a very structured and routine-based environment.

Jeremy is able to answer “wh” questions related to grade level texts that have been modified to his instructional reading level. When given a completed graphic organizer and teacher modeling, Jeremy is able to write a paragraph including an introductory sentence, three supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Jeremy is able to identify the base number and the exponent. Using his calculator, he can independently write out the proper equation and then use his calculator to find the value of whole number exponents squared or cubed on 3 consecutive trials. He is able to calculate the elapsed time forward to the 15-, 30- and 45-minute increments.

Jeremy’s current IEP includes 8.5 hours per week outside of the general education environment to address his IEP goals for reading comprehension, mathematics calculations, mathematics problem solving and written language. He also receives two 30-minute speech and language therapy sessions weekly.

Below is a sample Appendix A for a student whom the IEP team does appear to meet the criteria for participation in the Alternate Framework.

**IEP TEAM DATE:** 4/1/2023

<b>Student Name:</b> Jeremy Jefferson		<b>SASID#:</b> 3456789012
<b>DOB:</b> 3/10/2005	<b>Grade:</b> 11	<b>Disability Code:</b> Autism
<b>Residence School:</b> Schroeder High School		<b>Service School:</b> Schroeder High School
<b>Service County:</b> Brown County		<b>LEA #:</b> 200

## IEP TEAM MEMBERS

Printed Name	Title
Dr. E Edwards	Primary Care Physician, via Zoom
Polly Peterson	School Psychologist
Patty Smith, M. Ed	Special Educator
Sally Jones	General Educator
Joan Jefferson	Parent
Jeremy Jefferson	Student
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

If neither parent can attend an IEP Team meeting, the public agency must use other methods to ensure parent participation, including video conferences or conference calls. See 34 CFR §§ 300.322 and .328.

## PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

The criteria for participation in the alternate assessments and/or instruction aligned with alternate achievement standards reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate. A student who participates in the Alternate Assessments participates in the assessments for all content areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

### SECTION 1: DETERMINING INITIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALTERNATE FRAMEWORK

#### I. Does the student have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

☐ No, the student does not have an IEP.

☒ Yes, the student has a current IEP.



Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.



Proceed to the next statement.

#### II. Review the student's IDEA eligibility category

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:

- ☐ Emotional Disability (ED)
- ☐ Speech Language Impairment (SLI)
- ☐ Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

The student is not eligible for participation in the alternate assessment.

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:




- ☐ Visual Impairment
- ☐ Deaf/Hearing Impairment
- ☐ Developmental Delay (DD)
- ☐ Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- ☐ Orthopedic Impairment







A student identified with any of the disability categories **very rarely** will be a student with a most significant cognitive disability and,

Student meets state eligibility criteria under only one of the following disability category designations:

- ☐ Multiple Disabilities
- ☐ Intellectual Disability (ID)
- ☒ Autism
- ☐ Deaf Blindness
- ☐ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A student identified with any of the disability categories above **may** have a significant cognitive disability. However, the majority of

	<p>therefore, <b>rarely</b>, if ever, qualify for the alternate assessment.</p> <p>Proceed with extreme caution. Please remember that students with the disabilities above are rarely students who will participate in the alternate assessment.</p>	students in these categories will not have a most significant cognitive disability and, therefore, will not qualify for the alternate assessment.
 Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.	 Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.	 Proceed to the next statement.
<p><b>III. Is the student a Multilingual Learner?</b>    <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (if no, please move to Section 2)</p> <p>Students are not eligible for the Alternate Assessment if their difficulty accessing grade-level content and/or their assessment performance is attributable to their English Language skills. Assessments should be conducted in the student's dominant language and reviewed by a multidisciplinary team that includes member(s) with expertise in multi-lingual development.</p>		
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student was assessed in their dominant language using culturally relevant cognitive and adaptive assessments. Test results are not consistent with significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Culturally relevant, standardized assessments are not available in the student's dominant language.</p> <p>Non-verbal cognitive assessments and family interviews conducted in the family's preferred language by a knowledgeable assessor suggest a most significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>The student <b>may</b> be eligible for the alternate assessment based on team analysis of all available information, including response to instruction. Proceed with extreme caution.</p> <p>Consider postponing a decision for participation in the alternate assessment until more information about student's responses</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student was assessed in their dominant language using culturally relevant assessments and test results are consistent with significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>The student <b>may</b> be eligible for the alternate assessment if all criteria are met. Ensure that the team considers the impact of language and cultural differences, previous educational experiences, and other factors.</p>

	to instruction can be gathered (especially for students with limited previous educational experience).	
 <b>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</b>	 <b>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</b>	 <b>Proceed to the next statement.</b>
<b>IV. Does the student have a reliable, symbolic means of communication (verbal, sign language, AAC, or some combination)?</b> Communication is critical for students to be able to demonstrate their learning and capabilities. A student who does not have a reliable means of communication may not be able to demonstrate their cognitive abilities.		
<input type="checkbox"/> The student has not had appropriate opportunities (including instruction and access to assistive technology) to develop a reliable means of communication AND has minimal or inconsistent means of communication.  The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment. It is not possible to reliably assess the cognitive and educational ability of a student who has not had an opportunity to develop communication. Increase communication support and revisit the alternate assessment conversation in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has minimal or inconsistent symbolic communication but has had intensive and appropriate instruction designed to develop communication skills.  The student may be eligible for the alternate assessment based on a review of all evidence. Non-verbal cognitive assessments should be considered, and caution applied when interpreting all results.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has a reliable, symbolic means of communication that can be readily understood by others.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication does not appear to be the primary cause of the student's academic challenges.
 <b>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</b>	 <b>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</b>	 <b>Proceed to the next statement.</b>

## SECTION 2: DOES THE STUDENT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY?

### Cognitive Assessment(s)

Name/Title of Examiner:	Dr. E. Edwards
Test Date:	9/19/19
Assessment Name:	Kauffman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA)
Score(s):	Full Scale IQ: 78 (Low)
Assessment Comments:	Jeremy struggles with many academic tasks. He struggles to apply what he has learned to novel situations.

### Adaptive Skills Assessment(s)

Name/Title of Examiner:	Polly Peters, School Psychologist
Test Date:	09/10/21
Assessment Name:	Adaptive Behavior Assessment System- Third Edition
Score(s):	<b>General Adaptive Composite (GAC):</b>  Parent scale- 75 (Low)  Teacher scale- 72 (Low)  <b>Conceptual:</b>  Parent scale- 73 (Low)

	<p>Teacher scale- 72 (Low)</p> <p><b>Social:</b></p> <p>Parent scale- 65 (Extremely Low)</p> <p>Teacher scale- 62 (Extremely Low)</p> <p><b>Practical:</b></p> <p>Parent scale- 75 (Low)</p> <p>Teacher scale – 70 (Low)</p>
Assessment Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.	Jeremy's cognitive and adaptive scores are below average but not significantly below average.
Additional Sources of Information: (please specify)	Parent interview, teacher interview, observation

**I. Conceptual Domain: Covers skills related to language and literacy; use of money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction.**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

No Evidence 1	Little Evidence 2	Partial Evidence 3	Complete Evidence 4
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is on grade level academically in all content areas.  <input type="checkbox"/> The student has age-appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills, including conversation skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty learning academic content from Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards but is making progress with appropriate supports and interventions as specified in the IEP.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty learning grade-level academic content across all subject areas and may require multiple tiers of intervention, accommodations, or modifications.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has significant difficulty with learning academic content and may require instruction that is designed by clustering grade-level standards into life-applied units of study with intensive accommodations



<p>(verbally or through a communication device).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student expresses and makes independent choices, exhibits self-control, and takes responsibility for choices at an age-appropriate level.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> After learning new content, the student may need additional practice with direct instruction to generalize the new skills into daily living activities.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has some age-appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills (verbally or through a communication device), uses and understands simple, nonverbal communication, and can follow simple, age-appropriate directions and routines with prompting.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated academic difficulties that may have caused an achievement gap.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may need instruction that is significantly below grade level in order to build base skills to get back to grade level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may struggle to generalize skills outside the classroom, even with assistance and practice.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty communicating wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas but receptively understands messages.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student struggles to follow directions and routines without significant assistance.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated developmental delays, and the achievement gap between the student and typical peers has persisted over time.</p>	<p>for access.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significantly modified curriculum and instruction using Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards and likely is unable to apply or generalize skills outside the classroom setting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may be unable to clearly express wants and needs and may not seem to understand the messages conveyed by others. The student likely requires maximum adult assistance to communicate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires layers of support (accommodations, scaffolding, and assistive technologies) to follow directions and daily routine activities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has demonstrated developmental delays over an extended period, and the achievement gap between the student and typical peers has increased over time.</p>
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**II. Social Domain: Covers behaviors needed to engage in interpersonal interactions, act with social responsibility, and use leisure time. This includes social competence, self-esteem, gullibility, naivete (wariness), social problem-solving, following rules/obeying laws, and avoiding being victimized.**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student displays age-appropriate social, communication, and leisure skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student can initiate and maintain friendships and express and recognize emotions with peers who are the same age.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student engages in play and recreational activities without additional support.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may have difficulty with social interactions (i.e., may misinterpret peers' social cues or others may consider the student's actions as immature).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's communication, language, and conversation skills are more concrete or immature than peers who are the same age.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may have challenges in regulating emotion and behavior in an age-appropriate manner, and these challenges may be noticed by peers and adults.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student has social, behavioral, and communication skills markedly different from peers who are the same age.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is able to be understood but uses a mode for communication that is much less complex than peers who are the same age.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may use behaviors to communicate.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may not perceive or interpret social cues accurately.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student often needs significant support to engage in social situations and/or use communication skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may be easily persuaded to do things that go against the rules or safe boundaries when coaxed to do so.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student often uses behaviors to communicate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's communication skills are very limited in terms of vocabulary and grammar.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may be in the process of developing a mode of communication, may be described as nonverbal, or uses very limited non-symbolic communication.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant adult assistance to communicate with peers or adults and may require layers of support (simple speech, visuals, gestures, etc.) to communicate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may not yet show an understanding of symbolic communication with speech or gesture.</p>




**III. Practical Domain: Covers behaviors related to activities of daily living (i.e., personal care), occupation skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, and use of the telephone.**

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is able to follow safety rules and functions in the community and classroom setting similarly to peers who are the same age.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student independently performs self-care activities such as eating, dressing, and taking care of personal hygiene.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student often functions age-appropriately in personal care daily living activities and using community resources.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student displays recreational skills typically on the same level as peers, although some additional support may be needed.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student may need support in navigating the school and community and may need reminders about being mindful of safety hazards.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student may need support to care for personal needs (i.e., eating, dressing, toileting needs), may have needed an extended period of explicit teaching in these areas, and may require prompting or cues.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student often requires additional support and learning opportunities for recreational skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires intensive support to safely navigate the school and community.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant support and direct instruction across all activities of daily living (i.e., meals, dressing, bathing, toileting needs) or may be dependent on others for all aspects of physical care, health, and safety.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires intensive teaching and ongoing support for recreational and navigation skills, not because of physical ability but because of significant cognitive needs. The student requires supervision at all times.</p>

**IV. After considering the conceptual, social, and practical domains above, does the student have a significant cognitive disability? The student will show needs in adaptive and cognitive areas.**

<p>The student's daily functioning skills do not align with column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for ALL three adaptive skills domains above, or</p>	<p>The student's daily functioning skills do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above.</p>	<p>The student's daily functioning skills align only within column 4 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above, and</p> <p>The student has a documented cognitive disability. The student has a most significant</p>
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The student's cognitive needs are not indicative of a significant cognitive disability.	Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of a significant cognitive disability.	cognitive disability and may be eligible for the alternate assessment.
 Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.	 Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.	 Proceed to the next statement.

### SECTION 3: DOES THE STUDENT REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS TO CURRICULUM IN ORDER TO ACCESS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS IN THE MARYLAND COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS?

#### Educational Assessment

Name/Title of Examiner:	Patty Smith, M.Ed.
Test Date:	9/26/19
Assessment Name:	Kauffman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA)
Score(s):	Broad Reading- 80 (Low Average) Letter Word ID- 86 (Average) Reading Comprehension- 86 (Average) Broad Math- 79 (Low Average) Math Concepts and Application-67 (Low) Math Computation- 93 (Average) Written Expression- 55 (Low)
Assessment Comments:	Jeremy scored at the average to low average range for most subtests.
Additional Sources of Information:	Formal and informal assessments, classroom observation, teacher interview

**I. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Consider the following sources: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, Data from scientific research-based interventions, and informal assessments (i.e., teacher-collected data, checklists, work samples, and observations).**




Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's present levels of performance on the IEP indicates that skills are closely aligned with grade-level standards, concepts and skills with present-level data showing skill gaps represented within the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes annual goals and objectives aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and may include short-term learning objectives aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards in the area(s) of determined needs.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are aligned to grade-level targets that build in complexity toward the achievement of learning aligned to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, and</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based and includes explicit instruction in all content areas on grade-level standards.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes goals and objectives that target modified grade-level standards at or above the target level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are aligned to modified grade-level standards at or above the target level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based grade-level learning and includes instruction on critical life skills, and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires both accommodations and modifications.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP includes present levels of performance statements that align learner data with grade-level standards through the alternate academic achievement standards below the target level.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction and assessments are based on student data, likely showing significant skill gaps within the alternate academic achievement standards below the target level, and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP requires specially designed instruction that is standards-based grade-level learning and includes explicit instruction on critical life skills, and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires extensive accommodations and modifications.</p>

## II. Accommodations/ Modifications/ Supplementary Aids:

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Fact Sheet AFA-1: Accessibility Features for All Students that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Section 4A: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines a list of accessibility features that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> under Section 4A: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that are provided during instruction and assessment to support access, and  <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires additional individualized accommodations, modifications, and scaffolds not allowed on Maryland's State Assessments. These also are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP outlines individualized supports, accommodations, modifications, and materials beyond those that are presented in the <i>Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Policy Manual</i> to meet the cognitive and physical task demands of instruction and assessment. These additional supports address the communication, motor, and/or sensory needs of the student and provide the student with opportunities to show what he/she knows and can do.
<b>III. After considering the student-specific examples of curriculum, instruction, assessment, accommodations, modifications, and supplementary aids above, does the student require significant modifications to the curriculum in order to access knowledge and skills and demonstrate progress in the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards?</b>			
The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) and skills do not align within column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for both sections above.	The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for ALL three adaptive skills domains above. Proceed with	The student's curriculum needs (and documented accommodations/ modifications) align only with column 4 of both sections above. The student requires significantly modified learning targets aligned to the	

	extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of requiring significant modifications to curriculum.	alternate academic achievement standards and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.
 Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.	 Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.	 Proceed to the next statement.



## SECTION 4: DOES THE STUDENT REQUIRE EXTENSIVE, DIRECT, REPEATED, AND INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION?




Sources of Information:

Classroom observation, formal and informal assessment measures, teacher collected data, student work samples.

### I. Instruction:

Directions: Please check the pieces of evidence below that are specific to the student.

<b>No Evidence</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Little Evidence</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Partial Evidence</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Complete Evidence</b> <b>4</b>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student learns new content and skills through the instruction provided to all students.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student does not routinely require pre-teaching or re-teaching of instructional material and usually retains learned information and skills with minimal reminders.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With exposure, the student can generalize and transfer skills to school, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is not anticipated to require direct adult support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, or daily living).</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction to learn some content and skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student requires some additional opportunities for instruction and feedback (such as pre-teaching or re-teaching) to learn academic materials and skills. The student may require occasional review of previously learned skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With repeated practice and some support, the student can generalize and transfer skills to new school, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> After appropriate instruction, the student is able to utilize assistive technology and other</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction to learn most content and skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires multiple opportunities for instruction and feedback (such as pre-teaching and re-teaching) to learn most instructional material and skills. The student may require additional reminders and practice to maintain skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With planned opportunities for instruction and practice, extended time, and repeated exposure, the student can generalize and transfer skills to new school, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires direct instruction and some ongoing</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires specially designed instruction adapted to address sensory, communication, behavioral, cognitive, and other needs to learn new information and develop academic and functional skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires explicit and intensive instructional strategies (i.e., chaining, structured prompt fading, etc.) to acquire new skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires extensive repetitions (more than most other students with disabilities) to learn information and skills. Learned skills need to be practiced and reinforced regularly to support continued retention.</p>

	<p>accommodations with limited or no adult support.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The student is anticipated to require some adult support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, or daily living).</p>	<p>prompting and support to utilize assistive technology and other accommodations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student is anticipated to require partial support in post-secondary settings (i.e., work, continued education, or community living).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires targeted support and instruction to appropriately generalize skills to new contexts or settings.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student requires significant prompting and support to utilize assistive technology and other accommodations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student currently requires continuous direct and explicit instruction to acquire and maintain functional skills that support independence and is anticipated to continue to need intensive support in post-secondary settings.</p>
<p><b>II. After considering the student-specific examples of instruction above, does the student require extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial support?</b></p>			
<p>The student's instructional needs do not align with column 4 (or occasionally column 3) for the Instruction section above.</p>	<p>The student's instructional needs do not align only with column 4 and may have some aspects of column 3 for the Instruction section above.</p> <p>Proceed with extreme caution. Remember that if a student displays some characteristics of column 3, the student's needs may not be indicative of requiring extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial support</p>	<p>The student's instructional skills align only with column 4 for the Instruction section above.</p> <p>The student requires extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.</p>	
 <p>Stop here. The student is not eligible for alternate assessments.</p>	 <p>Proceed with extreme caution to the next statement.</p>	 <p>Proceed to the next statement.</p>	

## SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decision to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments and/or Alternate Achievement Standards is made after reviewing all data and completing the above sections of Appendix A. Assure that the decision was NOT based solely on any of the following:

- ☒ Disability category or label
- ☒ Poor attendance or extended absences
- ☒ Native language/social/cultural/economic differences
- ☒ Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- ☒ Academic, related, or other services the student receives
- ☒ Instructional setting
- ☒ Percentage of the school day receiving special education services
- ☒ Multilingual learner status
- ☒ Low mathematics or reading achievement level
- ☒ Behavior concerns
- ☒ The impact of test scores on the accountability system
- ☒ Administrator decision or convenience
- ☒ Need for accommodations including assistive technology or augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) to participate in assessment

**ALTERNATE FRAMEWORK PARTICIPATION**

As documented through the Participation Criteria and Additional Considerations in Sections 1-5 above, does the student meet all criteria for participation in the alternate assessment and/or instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards?

☐ **Yes**, the student meets all criteria and will participate in the alternate assessment and/or participate in instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards.

☒ **No**, the student does not meet all the criteria above and, as such, will not participate in the alternate assessment and/or participate in instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. Does Appendix A need to be completed for students who are not in a tested grade?

**Yes.** The alternate assessments are administered in grades three through eight and once in high school (in Maryland, typically during 11th grade), but the participation decision impacts both instruction and assessment and therefore must be made annually, including reviewing updated assessment and performance information and obtaining parent consent. The team must complete the Appendix A and must obtain parental consent annually in order for the student to participate in alternate assessments and/or in instruction aligned with alternate academic standards.

For young students, especially those below third grade, the IEP team must exercise extreme caution in making a decision for participation in the Alternate Education Framework. Determining that a very young student will not receive the full breadth and depth of the curriculum is a very consequential decision. If there is any question about the reliability and validity of the cognitive assessments or if the student has not had adequate opportunity to receive intensive specially designed instruction to allow them to access and progress in the curriculum, the team should not determine them eligible. The decision to participate in the Alternate Education Framework is an annual decision and can be made in the assessed grades mentioned above or in a non-assessed grade.

### 2. If a student is found eligible for the Alternate Framework, must they be placed in a special class, program, or school?

**No.** Decisions about the appropriate academic achievement standards for instruction and assessment are separate from decisions about placement. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities must be educated with their non-disabled peers and only be removed for instruction in separate settings if the student is unable to make progress on the goals identified in the IEP in the general education classroom even with supplementary aids, services, and specially designed instruction. Although the curriculum may be substantially modified for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, teachers can adapt the lesson for meaningful participation and learning in the general education classroom.

### 3. Can a student be found eligible for the Alternate Assessment in only one content area?

**No.** A student who is determined eligible for participation in the alternate assessments and instruction using alternate academic achievement standards is a student whose disability affects all aspects of his or her life across all academic areas, independent functioning, community living, leisure, and vocational activities. If only some academic content areas are significantly impacted, the student does not meet the criteria for participation in the Alternate Education Framework.

### 4. What should the IEP team do if they believe a student will be distressed by taking the general assessment or will be disruptive to the testing process?

A (potential or documented) negative reaction to the testing environment is NOT an acceptable reason to make a student eligible for the alternate assessment. Teams can consider a variety of accommodations and adjustments to the testing process (e.g., testing the student in a one-on-one setting, providing frequent breaks, administering the test over multiple sessions, providing behavioral supports) to address these concerns.

## **5. Who decides whether a student should participate in the alternate assessments and/or instruction aligned with alternate academic achievement standards?**

The IEP team makes the determination annually of how a student will participate in instruction and statewide assessments, based on a thorough review of data from multiple sources. No one member of the IEP team makes this decision. This process is guided by and documented in Alternate Appendix A.

Effective July 1, 2017, parents must provide written consent for their child to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments and instruction aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (Md. Code Ann., Educ. §8-405(f)). The parent may provide consent at or after the IEP meeting. If the parent does not respond to the question or is not present during the meeting, the IEP team must provide written notice within 5 days of the meeting explaining their right to consent or refuse consent to their child's instruction and/or assessment according to Alternate Academic Achievement Standards.

If the parent does not respond within 15 days of the meeting, the team may implement the decision. If the parent provides written consent after the 15 days, the team amends the IEP to reflect the parent's consent and continues implementing the decision. If the parent refuses consent after the 15 days, the IEP team stops implementing the decision and amends the IEP to reflect the refusal. In the event of parent nonresponse, the school team makes every effort to provide the parent with appropriate information about the decision and to obtain consent or refusal. LEAs should note patterns of non-response to determine needs for additional parent education or outreach.

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

A student with a significant cognitive disability faces the most profound and complex learning challenges that are pervasive and affect learning across all content areas, independent functioning, community living, leisure, and vocational activities and therefore require instruction and assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards. The expectations for performance are substantially modified by reductions in difficulty and/or complexity from grade-level expectations, and instructional materials are substantially modified in order to provide meaningful access to the general curriculum. Accommodations and modifications make how the student communicates, responds to the environment, and learns look considerably different from those same characteristics of other students with and without disabilities.

Students with a significant cognitive disability have intellectual functioning well below average that exists concurrently with impairments or deficits in adaptive functioning. Adaptive functioning is defined as the behavior essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.

Determination for student participation in instruction and assessment aligned on alternate academic achievement standards must be evidence-based and made individually for each student by the IEP team using the criteria set forth in this document. A student who is eligible for instruction and assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards is one for whom the general assessments are inappropriate even with accommodations. Students demonstrating mild to moderate cognitive disabilities participate in the general assessment with or without accommodations. Anticipated or past low achievement on the general assessment does not mean the student should take the alternate assessments.

## **7. How do I know if the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for a Multilingual Learner (MLL) with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills?**

A Multilingual Learner (MLL) may be considered for the alternate assessment if their intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in their primary language as

appropriate and they meet the other participation criteria for the alternate assessments. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should be interpreted considering linguistic and sociocultural factors and considered alongside progress on IEP goals and objectives and other sources of information to determine if the student meets the criteria for significant cognitive disability. The team also considers the impact of limited or disrupted prior educational experiences when evaluating students who are newly arrived in the US in order to ensure that language learner status and/or educational status are not the reason for the student's difficulty accessing the breadth and depth of the standards. If a MLL with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessments, he/she should take the general assessment with or without accommodations as appropriate.

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

Developing a consistent and reliable form of communication should be a high priority from early intervention onward. While continuing to explore options (including augmentative and alternative communication strategies), the team should also recognize that all behavior the student exhibits is a form of communication and use this as a starting point. Communicative competence is a key to accessing the content standards and educational environments. Ideally, all students will have a communication system in place that allows them to demonstrate an understanding of academic concepts prior to participation in statewide accountability assessments. However, students must still participate in the Maryland assessments even if their symbolic communication is not yet reliably developed. Each IEP team should continue to provide the necessary supports in order to develop a communication system for a student.

#### **9. If a student has been tested in the past on an alternate assessment, but the current IEP team determines that the student does not meet the criteria set forth in Alternate Appendix A, can the student participate in the general assessment?**

**Yes.** The IEP team must ensure that the student receives appropriate instruction on the MCCRS and NGSS and participates in the required general assessment for their current grade level with or without accommodations. The IEP should reflect the team's decision to assess and instruct the student using general standards and assessment.

#### **10. Is it possible that a decision to participate in the Alternate Assessments and/or instruction aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards could change as a student gets older?**

**Yes.** Participating in the alternate assessments and/or instruction aligned with alternate academic achievement standards requires that the student has a significant cognitive disability and is instructed using content that has been significantly modified from that which is provided to other students. Even though students with significant cognitive disabilities may be identified for special education early, sometimes prior to starting school, many are able to participate in the general assessment during their elementary grades. IEP teams exercise caution before determining a student eligible for instruction and assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards in their early school years. If the level of support needed for the student to participate in the breadth and depth of the MCCRS and the general assessment increases, the IEP team may determine that participation in the alternate assessments and/or alternate instructional standards is appropriate. On the other hand, for some students, improved communication skills or other development will reveal greater abilities to master content and skills than were previously recognized, leading a team to recognize that continued participation in the Alternate Education Framework is not appropriate. Annual completion of Alternate Appendix A, reflecting a thorough review and discussion of the student's performance by the IEP team, is essential.

### **11. What is the relationship between the Maryland Alternate Assessments and a Maryland High School Diploma?**

In order to earn a Maryland High School Diploma, a student must meet a number of requirements, as specified by the State Board of Education and local school system, including earning specified course credits, completing service-learning requirements, and passing the general State assessment requirements (COMAR 13A.03.02.09B). If a student with a disability cannot meet the requirements for a diploma but has met other criteria, the student will be awarded a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion (COMAR 13A.03.02.09E). The final determination of whether a student will receive a Maryland High School Diploma or a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion is made during the student's final year of high school.

Most students with disabilities participate in the general assessments and earn a Maryland High School Diploma. Some students with disabilities participate in the general assessment but are unable to fulfill graduation requirements and may receive a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion. A student with a significant cognitive disability may not meet the requirements for a diploma if the student continues to receive instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards and participates in the alternate assessments through high school (COMAR 13A.03.02.09E(4)). In that case, the student would be eligible for a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion. However, a student who has participated in the alternate assessments could eventually earn a diploma by meeting all graduation requirements, which includes passing the general education Statewide assessments and earning high school credits. The IEP team must continually monitor the student's progress to determine if and when that is a possibility, before making the final decision to award a certificate during the student's last year in high school (COMAR 13A.03.02.09E(3)). Because the likelihood of fulfilling the requirements to earn a diploma decreases as a student continues to participate in the alternate assessments and/or instruction aligned with alternate academic achievement standards, it is critical for the IEP team to revisit its eligibility decisions annually in light of student progress.

### **12. If the IEP team disagrees with one question on the Appendix A, does the team stop and set aside the eligibility discussion or continue to the end? If the parents are the only team members in disagreement does the process continue?**

If all the IEP team members are in agreement that the student does not meet one of the eligibility criteria on Appendix A, the process stops, and the decision is noted in the prior written notice. The Appendix A form is retained in the student's file. IEP decisions are made by consensus, not vote. If the consensus of the team is that the student meets the criteria for eligibility the process will move forward, regardless of whether it is the parent or school staff who disagree.

### **13. Who may we contact with questions about the IEP team decision-making process, access to the general education curriculum or the alternate assessment?**

Please contact the Maryland State Department of Education at [marylandpublicschools.org](http://marylandpublicschools.org) for additional information.



## References

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