



Idaho Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria

Effective July 1, 2019

DEFINITION OF ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

Alternate Assessments (AAs) are a statewide testing option intended only for those students with the most significant cognitive impairments, in lieu of the general education assessment, with or without supports and accommodations. Participation in AAs reflects the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive impairment and requires that a student meet all participation criteria. Students with the most significant cognitive impairments represent about 1.0% of the total student population ([2018 Idaho Special Education Manual](#), p. xxxiii).

DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

A designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for the purposes of their participation in AAs. Having a significant cognitive impairment is not solely determined by an IQ test score, nor based on a specific disability category, but rather a complete understanding of the complex needs of a student. Students with significant cognitive impairments have a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact their adaptive skills and intellectual functioning. These students have adaptive skills well below average in two or more skill areas and intellectual functioning well below average (typically associated with an IQ below 55) ([2018 Idaho Special Education Manual](#), p. xiii).

IDAHO ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

[2018 Idaho Special Education Manual](#), pp. 83-85

The IEP team shall consider a student's participation in AAs on an annual basis using the participation criteria listed below. The IEP team shall document the student's testing status in the appropriate sections of the IEP.

1. The student has a significant cognitive impairment.
 - Significant impact on adaptive skills & intellectual functioning
 - Adaptive skills well below average in 2 + areas
 - Intellectual functioning well below average (IQ typically below 55)
2. The student is receiving academic instruction that is aligned with the Idaho Extended Content Standards.

- a. The student's instruction and IEP goals/objectives/benchmarks address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for the student.
3. The student's course of study is primarily adaptive skills oriented typically not measured by state or district assessments.
 - a. Adaptive skills are essential to living independently and functioning safely in daily life, and include, but are not limited to motor skills, socialization, communication, personal care, self-direction, functional academics, and personal health and safety.
4. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.
 - a. The student consistently requires individualized instruction in core academic and adaptive skills at a substantially lower level relative to other peers with disabilities.
 - b. It is extremely difficult for the student to acquire, maintain, generalize, and apply academic and adaptive skills in multiple settings, across all content areas, even with high-quality extensive/intensive pervasive, frequent, and individualized instruction.
 - c. The student requires pervasive supports, substantially adapted materials, and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.

IDAHO ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT NON-PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

[2018 Idaho Special Education Manual](#), p. 89

Students shall not qualify to participate in Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards solely based on any of the following reasons.

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