

# Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines and Annual Eligibility Determination

The Arizona Department of Education offers an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education's federal regulations and guidance. A student must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to be considered for participation in an alternate assessment. All students must participate in state assessments. IEP teams should consider the testing cycles that will occur during the student's IEP year and include suitable instructional time before administration windows. For example, an IEP team that determines eligibility before the close of the Student Selector Application in the fall has carefully considered the instructional time prior to test administration. An IEP team making the determination in the spring is documenting the preparation for the assessment during the following school year.

## Arizona's Alternate Assessments:

ELA and Mathematics Grades 3 - 8 and 11 – Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)

Science Grades 5, 8, and 11 – Science Alternate Assessment through MSAA

English Language Proficiency Grades K-12 for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities – Alt ELPA

IEP Teams will discuss and determine participation and eligibility annually using this form. The IEP team determines eligibility for alternate assessment participation, not a specific alternate assessment. English learner status and grade level will inform which assessment(s) the student will be administered.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ District ID \_\_\_\_\_ SSID \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
Case Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Grade	ELA/Math	Science	Alt ELPA
K			X
1			X
2			X
3	X		X
4	X		X
5	X	X	X
6	X		X
7	X		X
8	X	X	X
9			X
10			X
11	X	X	X
12			X

Note: The IEP team must complete the parent notification of alternate assessment participation on page 4.

☐ Alternate assessments are not administered at the student's grade level for this school year and the student is not an English learner. Alternate assessment eligibility will apply to any locally required assessments.

## Alternate Assessment Participation Decision Documentation

To meet criteria for alternate assessments, the student must meet all participation criteria descriptors.

### Participation Criterion 1

The student has a significant cognitive disability.

☐ Yes ☐ No

### Participation Criterion 1 Descriptor

Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. (Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.)

### Sources of Evidence for Criterion 1 (check if used)

Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test

Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment

Results of individual and group administered achievement tests

Results of informal assessment

Results of individual reading assessments

Results of district-wide alternate assessments

Results of language assessments including English learner (EL) language assessments if applicable.

**Describe the sources of evidence that were used for criterion 1 and how that evidence supports eligibility.**

Source

Description

**Participation Criterion 2**

The student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards.

Yes

No

**Participation Criterion 2 Descriptor**

Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade-level state standards and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student. Goals are written to allow for suitable instructional time prior to test administration.

**Sources of Evidence for Criterion 2 (check if used)**

Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples

Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives from the IEP

Data from scientific research-based interventions

Progress monitoring data

**Describe the sources of evidence that were used for criterion 2 and how that evidence supports eligibility.**

Source

Description

### Participation Criterion 3

The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and- age-appropriate curriculum.

Yes      No

### Participation Criterion 3 Descriptor

The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and (b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across academic content.

### Sources of Evidence for Criterion 3 (check if used)

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

Teacher collected data and checklists

Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and Transition Plan for students age 16 years and older unless State policy or the IEP team determines a younger age is appropriate.

**Describe the sources of evidence that were used for criterion 3 and how that evidence supports eligibility.**

Source

Description

The student may participate in alternate assessments if all criteria are marked yes.

# Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment Participation Decision Documentation

The following definition serves as the basis for the Alt ELPA participation guidelines. English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are students

- who are not proficient in the English language and who have been identified as having an English language acquisition need;
- who meet the federal definition of an English learner (ESEA §8101(20))\*;
- who meet the state definition for having a most significant cognitive disability; and
- whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams have determined an alternate assessment is appropriate for the student.

\*English learner – The term “English learner,” when used with respect to an individual, means an individual —  
(A) who is aged 3 through 21;

(B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;

(C)(i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and

(D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual — (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards; (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

**Note:** A student using American Sign Language as a means of communication is not considered an English learner for the purpose of participation in English Language Proficiency Assessments.

## Eligibility Determination for the Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment (Alt ELPA)

☐ The student has a current Arizona English Language Proficiency Assessment record (AZELLA or Alt ELPA) of less than Proficient

The student meets the federal definition of an English learner

The student is eligible for alternate content assessments (MSAA)

**The following should not be considered in the eligibility determination process:**

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

☐ Evidence shows that the decision for participating in alternate assessments was not based on above list.

**IEP Team Statement of Assurance:**

Our decision was based on multiple pieces of evidence that, when taken together, demonstrated that

- The Alternate Assessment is the most appropriate assessment for this student
- Academic instruction will be based on the CCCs linked to state content standards for MSAA and Alternate ELP Standards for the Alt ELPA
- There is suitable instructional time prior to test administration
- The additional considerations listed above were not used to make this decision
- Any additional implications of this decision were discussed thoroughly.

## Parent Notification

### Alternate Assessment Participation

Following IEP team review of participation guidelines, the student is eligible for and will participate in the following assessments:

#### MSAA ELA, Mathematics, and Science

☐ Yes School year \_\_\_\_\_ (List the current school year if this IEP meeting is on or before November 30. List the following school year if the IEP meeting is on or after December 1.)

☐ No (The student will participate in statewide achievement tests)

#### Alt ELPA

☐ Yes, the student is eligible for alternate assessments and has been determined an English learner.  
(The student must also take MSAA if enrolled in a tested grade.)

☐ No, the student will participate in AZELLA.

☐ No, the student is not an English learner.

#### Potential Consequences

Are there any effects or local policies that would preclude completion requirements for a regular high school diploma for the student participating in testing?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain:

This IEP team has determined the student is eligible to participate in alternate assessments as indicated above.

Agreement

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: