

Guidance for IEP Teams on Determining Participation in the SC-Alt



**South Carolina Department of Education
Office of Assessment and Standards
Office of Special Education Services**

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Guidance for IEP Teams on Determining Participation in South Carolina Alternate Assessments on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

Introduction

This document is provided to assist individualized education program (IEP) teams in making decisions regarding whether Alternate Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) is appropriate for an individual student.

The IEP team, which includes parents as equal partners, is responsible for determining if a student with a disability should participate in the general assessment with accommodations or in the alternate assessment. To document that an alternate assessment is appropriate for an individual student, the IEP team should review all important information about the student over multiple school years and multiple instructional settings (e.g., school, home, community) and determine that the student has a significant cognitive disability and meets all of the participation criteria for alternate assessment.

The state alternate assessments on alternate achievement standards are designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in a school curriculum that includes functional and life skills as well as academic instruction. The content, learning objectives, and expected outcomes for the academic instruction are extended to focus on the emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational and/or functional (real life) application of the general curriculum.

Eligibility Criteria

To participate in an Alternate Assessment on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) a student must meet **all** the following criteria:

- demonstrate a significant cognitive disability **and** adaptive skill deficits, which result in performance that is substantially below grade-level achievement expectations even with the use of accommodations and modifications;
- access the state approved curriculum standards at less complex levels and with extensively modified instruction;
- possess current adaptive skills requiring extensive direct instruction and practice in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of skills necessary for application in school, work, home, and community environments;
- be unable to apply or use academic skills across natural settings when instructed solely or primarily through classroom instruction; and
- the inability to achieve the state grade-level achievement expectations is not the result of excessive or extended absences or social, cultural, or economic differences.

The *Grade Reference Sheet* is available on the [SC-Alt Portal](#) to assist with test assignment for each assessment in the SC-Alt.

Eligibility Descriptions

Significant cognitive disability is characterized by ability scores on both verbal and nonverbal scales that are at least 2½–3 standard deviations below the mean. Students with ability scores in the average range are NOT considered to be students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Adaptive skills relate to independence in everyday living skills, including interpersonal and social interactions across multiple settings. To be eligible to participate in an alternate assessment, students should demonstrate deficits in adaptive behavior skills with scores that are at least 2½–3 standard deviations below the mean in at least two adaptive skill domains.

A student with a significant cognitive disability requires substantial modifications, adaptations, or supports to meaningfully access the subject area content and requires intensive individualized instruction in order to acquire and generalize knowledge. The student's instruction should be based on the *Prioritized Standards*, which provide access to the general education curriculum at emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational, and less complex skill levels. Students with abilities below grade level should not be considered for alternate assessment if their ability and adaptive scores are in the average range, abilities that are below grade level do not mean a student should take an alternate assessment.

Students who meet the eligibility criteria for alternate assessment may be classified in any of the disability categories listed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as long as there is documentation that the student has a significant cognitive disability or severe intellectual disability and significant adaptive skills deficits.

Some disability categories, as defined by the *State Board of Education Criteria for Entry into Programs of Special Education for Students with Disabilities* (43–243), may not meet the necessary criteria for participation in an alternate assessment. For example, a student who is evaluated and determined to qualify for special education services as a child with a Specific Learning Disability or Emotional Disability would not exhibit an intellectual disability according to the State Board of Education criteria. Also, while some students determined eligible under the categories of Other Health Impaired (OHI), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), and Autism may have concomitant cognitive impairment, often times they do not. Such students would not meet the necessary criteria for participation in an alternate assessment.

Information the IEP Team can use to determine if alternate assessment is appropriate for an individual student

The IEP team should review and discuss multiple sources of information. Some sources that the team may consider reviewing include: psychological evaluation reports, results of individual cognitive ability tests, adaptive behavior skills data, results of individual or group administered achievement assessments, district-wide alternate assessments, individual reading assessments, findings of communication or language proficiency assessments, teacher collected data from classroom observations, progress monitoring data, and IEPs.

The team should consider:

- IEP information including
 - present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), goals, and short-term objectives. Short-term objectives are required for IEPs of students who participate in alternate assessment (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 (IDEA) Section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(I)(cc)).
 - information from both the student interests and preferences in section I and the PLAAFP in section II of the IEP related to post school outcomes for students of transition age in South Carolina. Many students who are eligible for alternate assessment will have post school outcomes that include community supports.
 - special considerations related to communication or English language learners.
- description of the student's curriculum and typical instruction and progress data. The student's curriculum should include academic instruction at emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational, and less complex skill levels based on the extended academic standards in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- teacher collected data and work samples from classroom and community-based instruction, if applicable. Although there should be evidence that a student who participates in an alternate assessment receives extensive instruction in functional curriculum and daily living skills, only academic instruction or English language proficiency is assessed with alternate assessment.
- descriptions of achievement levels for the alternate assessments. The team should determine if the alternate descriptions more appropriately capture the student's performance than do the descriptors for the general assessments. These can be found on the SCDE web site.
- examples of alternate assessment tasks to determine if they are more like the student's routine instruction and assessment than are the general assessment sample items. Examples of sample tasks can be found on the SCDE web site.

- results of district-wide alternate assessments. IDEA requires that students who are unable to participate in district-wide assessments even with appropriate accommodations receive an alternate assessment to the district assessment.
- results of individual reading assessments.
- achievement score data from the general assessment, if the student previously participated in the general assessment. Many students with and without disabilities score “Not Met” on general assessments and are reading below their assigned grade level. Below grade-level reading scores or poor performance on previous assessments alone does not indicate that the alternate assessment is the appropriate assessment for a student.
- information on communication modes from multiple data sources (e.g., classroom, homework, observations of expressive, receptive, written, and pragmatic language) along with standardized scores from norm-referenced tests. Review descriptions of adaptations or modifications that have been used to assist the student with communication.
- results of English language proficiency assessments if the student is also classified as an English language learner (ELL).

Worksheets and checklists designed to assist teams in collecting and reviewing evidence to determine if participation in alternate assessment is appropriate for an individual student may be found in the appendices. Appendix A, *Initial Determination of Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Participation Worksheet*, is an **optional** worksheet for use by the IEP team to document existing data from various sources to facilitate the initial determination of alternate assessment participation. Appendix B, *Review of Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Participation Checklist*, is an optional checklist that may be used both during initial determination and at annual IEP reviews to document that the alternate assessment is the appropriate assessment for a student. Appendix C *Review of Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Checklist for Students who are Multilingual (ML) Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities* may be used with students who are ML with significant cognitive disabilities, ages 5-77. The decision regarding how students will participate in state and district-wide testing must be made annually. If an IEP team uses the worksheet or checklist it is recommended that a copy be maintained with the notes from the meeting as documentation required by IDEA Section 614 (d)(1)(A)(VI)(bb) to provide for state monitoring of student files (34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600 through 604.)

Alternate Assessment and Diploma Requirements

The IEP team should be aware that participation in alternate assessment on alternate academic achievement standards means that that the student is participating in a curriculum that does not lead to a high school diploma. The achievement expectations for the alternate assessment are not the same as the expectations for the general assessment. Students must earn units in the core content as a requirement for a high school diploma. IEP teams should also be aware that if a student **without** a significant cognitive disability participates in the alternate assessment, the results will not reflect what the student knows and can do. The assessment

results may not be valid and the student may be considered as not participating in assessment for state and federal accountability purposes.

Contact Information

For information about South Carolina alternate assessment and for assistance with instruction for students who participate in alternate assessments contact:

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Office of Assessment and Standards
(803)734-0564
reford@ed.sc.gov

Appendix A

*Initial Determination of Eligibility for Alternate
Assessment on Alternate Academic Achievement
Standards Participation Worksheet*



Initial Determination of Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Participation Worksheet

Name of Student:			
IEP Category of Disability:			
Enrolled Grade:		Date of Review:	

What assessment did the student participate in last year?

- General Assessment
- Alternate Assessment
- New to state (Assessment in previous state) Specify: _____
- NA (Student is entering school for the first time)

<i>Eligibility Criteria</i>	<i>YES (Agree) NO (Disagree)</i>
The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP).	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
The student has a significant cognitive disability (e.g., the student has a severe intellectual disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact cognitive function and adaptive behavior).	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

If the response is NO to either of these statements, the IEP team should not complete this form and instead determine how the student will participate in the general assessment with accommodations, if necessary.

If the response is YES to both of these statements, use the following Evaluation Review of existing psycho-educational assessment results to include Cognitive Ability, Adaptive Behavior Skills, and Achievement Levels prior to initial decision of eligibility for alternate assessment.

**Initial Determination of Eligibility for
Alternate Assessment Participation Worksheet**

Individual Cognitive Ability Test: _____ Date of Assessment: _____

Name of Examiner: _____ Title of Examiner: _____

Total Battery Score: _____ Verbal Scale Score: _____ Non-Verbal Scale Score: _____

Additional Cognitive Test (if administered): _____ Date: _____

Total Battery Score: _____ Verbal Scale Score: _____ Non-Verbal Scale Score: _____

Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment: _____ Date of Assessment: _____

Name of Examiner: _____ Title of Examiner: _____

Parent Scale:

Total Battery Score: _____ Highest Area/Domain: _____ SS*: _____

Three Lowest Area/Domains:

Area/Domain: _____ SS: _____

Area/Domain: _____ SS: _____

Area/Domain: _____ SS: _____

Teacher Scale:

Total Battery Score: _____ Highest Area/Domain: _____ SS: _____

Three Lowest Area/Domains:

Area/Domain: _____ SS: _____

Area/Domain: _____ SS: _____

Area/Domain: _____ SS: _____

** SS = standard score to be reported for all standardized tests.*

Individually Administered Achievement Level Scores:

Test 1: _____ Date: _____ Examiner: _____

Reading Total: _____ Percentile: _____ SS*: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Total: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Written Expression Total: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

* SS = standard score to be reported for all standardized tests.

Test 2: _____ Date: _____ Examiner: _____

Reading Total: _____ Percentile: _____ SS*: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Reading Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Total: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Math Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Written Expression Total: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Writing Subtest: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

Informal Assessment Results:

Measure: _____ Results: _____

Measure: _____ Results: _____

Measure: _____ Results: _____

Measure: _____ Results: _____

* SS = standard score to be reported for all standardized tests.

Individual or Group Achievement Level Scores (all available):

MAP Reading:

Date: _____ RIT Score: _____ Percentile: _____ SS*: _____ GE: _____

MAP Math:

Date: _____ RIT Score: _____ Percentile: _____ SS: _____ GE: _____

SC Ready ELA:

Grade: _____ Achievement Level: _____ Scale Score: _____ Lexile Range: _____

SC Ready Math:

Grade: _____ Achievement Level: _____ Scale Score: _____

District Alternate Assessment

Test _____ SS _____ Results _____

Comments/Summary _____

Individual Reading Assessments

Test _____ SS or Stanine _____ Results _____

Comments/Summary _____

Test _____ SS or Stanine _____ Results _____

Comments/Summary _____

Language Assessments

Test _____ SS _____ Results _____

Comments/Summary _____

Test _____ SS _____ Results _____

Comments/Summary _____

* SS = standard score to be reported for all standardized tests.

Multilingual Learners (ML) Language Proficiency Assessments

Reading Test: Scale Score: _____ Proficiency Level: _____

Writing Test: Scale Score: _____ Proficiency Level: _____

Listening Test: Scale Score: _____ Proficiency Level: _____

Speaking Test: Scale Score: _____ Proficiency Level: _____

Comprehension: Scale Score: _____ Proficiency Level: _____

Composite: Scale Score: _____ Proficiency Level: _____

Home Language Survey Results _____

Comments/Summary _____

Other:

Specify: _____

Results: _____

Note: Students who are classified as Multilingual Learners with cognitive disabilities participate in an English language Proficiency Alternate Assessment beginning in first grade or age six and continue until exited.

Appendix B

*Review of Eligibility for Alternate Assessment
on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards
(AA-AAAS) Participation Checklist*



Review of Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Participation Check List

Name of Student:			
IEP Category of Disability:			
Enrolled Grade:		Date of Review:	

The student must meet all eligibility criteria descriptors in order to meet the criteria for alternate assessment.

Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Criteria Descriptors	Sources of Evidence
<p>The student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability and adaptive skills that result in performance that is substantially below grade-level achievement expectations even with the use of accommodations.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"> <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO </p>	<p>The student has significant limitations in intellectual functioning as evidenced by cognitive ability test scores on both verbal and non-verbal scales that are at least 2 ½ – 3 standard deviations below the mean.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student has significant deficits in adaptive behavior as evidenced by adaptive behavior scale scores that are at least 2 ½ – 3 standard deviations below the mean in at least two adaptive skill domains.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student has academic skills that are on the emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational level and/or functional (real life) application of the general curriculum.</p>	<p>Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</p> <p>Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p>Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</p> <p>Results of informal assessments</p> <p>Results of individual reading assessments</p> <p>Results of district-wide alternate assessments</p> <p>Results of language assessments including Multilingual Learner (ML) language assessments, if applicable</p>

Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Criteria Descriptors	Sources of Evidence
<p>The student accesses the state approved academic standards at less complex levels and with extensively modified instruction.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> YES</p> <p><input type="radio"/> NO</p>	<p>The student’s curriculum is based on extended academic standards in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student’s IEP has short-term objectives that focus on the extended content standards and/or pre-requisite skills. <i>Short term objectives are required for IEPs of students who participate in the SC-Alt.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Curriculum activities differ significantly from those of students who participate in the general education curriculum with accommodations. (e.g., different objectives, materials, and learning activities).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The content, learning objectives, and expected outcomes for the student are extended to focus on the emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational and/or functional (real life) application of the general curriculum.</p>	<p>Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</p> <p>Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</p> <p>Progress data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p>Progress monitoring data</p>
<p>The student has current adaptive skills requiring extensive direct instruction and practice in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of skills necessary for application in school, work, home, and community environments.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> YES</p> <p><input type="radio"/> NO</p>	<p>The student requires explicit and ongoing instruction in functional and daily living skills.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student has substantial deficits in adaptive behavior, such that the student has difficulty demonstrating independence in everyday living skills, including interpersonal and social interactions across multiple settings.</p>	<p>Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p>Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p>Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and the Transition Plan for students age 12 and older</p> <p>Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction</p>

Additional Considerations	Check each statement if agree
The decision for this student to participate in the alternate assessment is NOT based on a specific categorical label or educational placement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The student's inability to achieve state grade-level achievement expectations is NOT the result of excessive or extended absences or social, cultural, or economic differences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The decision for this student to participate in the alternate assessment is NOT due to the fact that the student has English as a second language.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The decision for this student to participate in the alternate assessment is an IEP team decision and is NOT being made for administrative purposes and/or in anticipation of impact on school or district accountability results.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The decision for this student to participate in the alternate assessment is NOT based solely on the fact that the student's instructional reading level is below the grade level of the general assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The decision for this student to participate in the alternate assessment is NOT based on the fact that the student is expected to perform poorly on the general assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>

*If the response is **NO** for any of the eligibility criteria or considerations, the IEP team should consider the student for participation in the general state assessment with appropriate accommodations, if necessary.*

*If the response is **YES** to all criteria and considerations, the IEP team should consider the student for participation in the alternate assessment.*

Review Committee

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

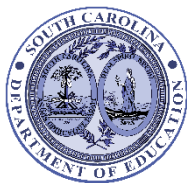
Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

I understand that participation in alternate assessment means that my child is participating in a curriculum that will **NOT** lead to a high school diploma.

Parent(s)/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

*Review of Eligibility for Alternate Assessment
on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards
(AA-AAAS) Participation Checklist
for Students Who are Multilingual (ML)
Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities*



Review of Eligibility for Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Check List

Guidelines for Kindergarten through Second Grade Students

NOTE: For students in grades 3–12, use the South Carolina Alternate Assessment criteria for determining eligibility for the Alternate ACCESS.

Name of Student:	
IEP Category of Disability:	
Enrolled Grade:	Date of Review:

Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Criteria Descriptors	Sources of Evidence
The student is classified as ML <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	The student’s SC English Language Proficiency score is 1-6 or A1, A2, A3.	Results from a Home Language Survey Results from the WIDA Screener
The student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability and adaptive skills that result in performance that is substantially below grade-level achievement expectations even with the use of accommodations. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	The student is exhibiting a significant cognitive delay as evidenced by scores on a comprehensive norm-referenced or criterion-referenced developmental evaluation that are at least two standard deviations below the mean in cognitive ability and/or communication. <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> The student has significant delays in adaptive behavior as evidenced by adaptive behavior scale scores that are at least 2 ½ - 3 standard deviations below the mean in at least two adaptive skill domains. <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> The student has academic skills that are on the emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational level and/or functional (real life) application of the general curriculum.	Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment Results of informal assessments Results of individual reading assessments Structured classroom observations A developmental history Results of a developmental evaluation that assesses all five areas (physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, and adaptive behavior development)

Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Criteria Descriptors	Sources of Evidence
<p>The student accesses the state approved academic standards at less complex levels and with extensively modified instruction</p> <p>_ YES</p> <p>_ NO</p>	<p>The student’s curriculum more closely reflects the Alternate Model Performance Indicators (AMPIs) than typical age or grade appropriate benchmarks.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Curriculum activities differ in complexity from those of students who participate in general education curriculum with accommodations (e.g., different objectives, materials, and learning activities).</p> <p>The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the acquisition, application and transfer of English skills.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The content, learning objectives, and expected outcomes for the student are extended to focus on the emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational and/or functional (real life) application of the general curriculum.</p>	<p>Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</p> <p>Progress data from significant research-based interventions</p> <p>Progress data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p>Progress monitoring data</p>
<p>The student has current adaptive skills requiring extensive direct instruction and practice in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of skills necessary for application in school, home, and community environments.</p> <p>_ YES</p> <p>_ NO</p>	<p>The student requires explicit and ongoing instruction in functional and daily living skills.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The student has substantial deficits in adaptive behavior, such that the student has difficulty demonstrating independence in everyday living skills, including interpersonal and social interactions across multiple settings.</p>	<p>Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p>Teacher collected data and checklists</p>

Additional Considerations	Check each statement if agree
The decision for this student to participate in Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is NOT based on a specific categorical label or educational placement.	
The student's inability to achieve state grade-level achievement expectations is NOT the result of excessive absences or social, cultural, or economic differences.	
The decision for this student to participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is NOT being made for administrative purposes and/or in anticipation of impact on school or district accountability results.	
The decision for this student to participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is NOT solely due to the fact that the student has English as a a d d i t i o n a l language.	

*If the response is **NO** for any of the eligibility criteria or considerations, the IEP team should consider the student for participation in the general state assessment with appropriate accommodations, if necessary.*

*If the response is **YES** to all criteria and considerations, the IEP team should consider the student for participation in the alternate assessment.*

Review Committee

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

I understand that participation in alternate assessment means that my child is participating in a curriculum that will **NOT** lead to a high school diploma.

Parent(s)/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

** The IEP team **must** revisit eligibility criteria when the student enters third grade to determine if the Alternate Assessment continues to be an appropriate assessment for the student.

Appendix D

*Description of Alternate Assessments on
Alternate Academic Achievement Standards
(AA-AAAS) in South Carolina*

Description of Alternate Assessments on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) in South Carolina

SC-Alt Alternate Assessment

The SC-Alt Alternate Assessment is an online computer-adaptive assessment that delivers all alternate assessment tests, including Science in grades 4 and 6; ELA and Math in grades 3-8; and High School End of Course tests in Biology, English, Algebra, and U.S. History and the Constitution. The assessment will adapt to the student's ability and allows students to respond in their typical mode of communication, such as pointing and eye gazing to a response, which can be made up of words or picture symbols that represent an answer choice. In the SC-Alt, students use Audio Recordings to hear the question, response option, and any associated stimulus.

The items across subjects in the SC-Alt are linked to the state academic standards through varying complexity levels in the SC-Alt Science, English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and U.S. History and Constitution Alternate Academic Achievement Standards(AAAS). The levels of complexity outlined in the SC-Alt Science, ELA, mathematics, U.S. History and Constitution AAAAS focus on determining the essential main ideas for students eligible for the alternate assessment.

The SC-Alt is scored against the South Carolina Academic Standards, but the expectations of performance are different from those for the general state assessments such as SC READY and the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP).

The SC-Alt only tests a student's achievement in academic subjects. IEP reports and other monitoring and assessment methods provide parents and teachers with information on how the student is progressing in the other areas in which he or she receives instruction.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

The Alternate Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) is an assessment of English language proficiency (ELP) for students in grades K–12 who are classified as English language learners (ELLs) and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent their meaningful participation in the ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

The ACCESS for ELLs is a large-scale test of English language proficiency based on the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards. The ACCESS for ELLs is designed to assess all ELLs in grades K-12. The ACCESS for ELLs is designed to assess students' English language proficiency in five areas: Social and Instructional Language, language of English Language Arts, language of Mathematics, language of Science and language of Social Studies. The test is divided into four language domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). The IEP team should consider whether the student can take this assessment with accommodations or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs consists of items that are less complex than the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assesses four English language proficiency areas: Social and Instructional Language, language of English Language Arts, language of Mathematics, and language of Science. Like the ACCESS for ELLs, the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is divided into four language domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is based on alternate model performance indicators. The model performance indicators provide the expectations for what the student should be able to do and produce at the English language proficiency level. Therefore, the expectations of performance on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs are different from the ACCESS for ELLs.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities in kindergarten should take the first grade version of the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

Guidance designed to assist IEP teams in collecting and reviewing evidence to determine if participation in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is appropriate for an individual student may be found in Appendix C. A person with expertise in second language acquisition must be involved in the IEP decision-making process for students with disabilities who are Multilingual Learners.