



**Guidance for IEP (Individualized Education Program)
Teams on Determining Participation in the SC-Alt
Assessments**

Office of Assessment and Standards

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South Carolina Department of Education

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Overview

Introduction to the Guidance for Determining SC-Alt Eligibility

This document is provided to assist individualized education program (IEP) teams in making decisions regarding whether Alternate Assessments on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) is appropriate for an individual student. The SC-Alt is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in a school curriculum that includes functional and life skills as well as academic instruction. Alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AAAS) are intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in general assessment even with accommodations.

Detailed explanations of the eligibility criteria and the steps to follow when determining if an alternate assessment is appropriate for a student are provided in the following sections of this document.

Legislation

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

[The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) \(2004\)](#) is the federal law that supports special education and related service programming for children with disabilities. In 1997 and again in 2004 additional amendments were passed to ensure equal access to education.

This federal legislation is designed to ensure that children with disabilities are granted a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Key IDEA elements also ensure that:

- all students with an identified disability receive special education and related services to address their individual needs.
- students with disabilities be prepared for employment and independent living.
- the rights of students with disabilities and their families are protected under the law.
- assesses and ensures the efforts of institutions providing services to persons with disabilities.
- provides assistance to states, localities, federal agencies, and educational service agencies in providing for the education of children with disabilities.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

[The Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) is a federal law that reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, aiming to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. ESSA replaces the No Child Left Behind Act, shifting the focus from a

uniform federal accountability system to a more flexible, state-led approach. Key aspects include increased state and local control over education, a greater emphasis on student success measures beyond standardized tests, and the importance of supporting at-risk students.

Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AAAS)

Section E of ESSA outlines the requirements for Alternate Academic Achievement Standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Key elements require that the standards:

- are aligned with the challenging the state’s academic content standards;
- promote access to the general education curriculum, consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);
- reflect professional judgment as to the highest possible standards achievable by such students;
- are designated in the individualized education program developed under section 614(d)(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)) for each such student as the academic achievement standards that will be used for the student; and
- are aligned to ensure that a student who meets the alternate academic achievement standards is on track to pursue postsecondary education.

As indicated in the ESSA legislation, alternate achievement standards must be aligned with the state’s academic content standards and must show a clear link to the content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. Well-written and developed alternate standards represent high academic standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities even though the grade-level content of the alternate standards is reduced in complexity. The use of alternate achievement standards ensures that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are included in state accountability systems but also ensure that schools receive credit for the achievement of these students.

Description of Significant Cognitive Disability

Significant cognitive disability is characterized by ability scores on both verbal and nonverbal scales that are at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ –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 to acquire and generalize knowledge. The student's instruction should be based on the South Carolina's Alternate Academic Achievement 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 Criteria for Entry into Programs of Special Education for Students with Disabilities](#) (S.C. code Regs. § 43–243.1), 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 these criteria.

Also, while some students determined as eligible under the categories of Other Health Impaired (OHI), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), and Autism may have concomitant cognitive impairment, oftentimes they do not. Such students would not meet the necessary criteria for participation in an alternate assessment.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team

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. 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 the participation criteria for alternate assessment.

The IEP team should be aware that participation in alternate assessments on alternate academic achievement standards means that the student is participating in a curriculum that does not lead to a high school diploma. The achievement

expectations for the alternate assessments 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 assessments, 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.

Information IEP Teams Can Use to Determine Eligibility

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.

Individual Or Group Administered Achievement 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.

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.

Findings of Communication or Language Proficiency Assessments

The IEP team should consider special considerations related to communication or Multilingual learners. Collect and review information on communication modes from multiple data sources (e.g., classroom, homework, observations of expressive, receptive, written, and pragmatic language). Review descriptions of adaptations or modifications that have been used to assist the student with communication.

Review results of English language proficiency assessments if the student is also classified as an Multilingual learner (ML).

Teacher Collected Data From Classroom Observations

The IEP team should also examine the 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.

Progress Monitoring Data

It is important to review the 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.

IEPs

When reviewing IEPs, the team should consider present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), goals, and short-term objectives.

[The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 \(IDEA\)](#) Section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(I)(cc)) requires short-term objectives for IEPs of students who participate in alternate assessment. The IEP should review the 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 support.

Performance Level Descriptors for the Alternate Assessments

The team should determine if the alternate descriptors more appropriately capture the student's performance than the descriptors for the general assessments. These can be found on the [SCDE web site](#).

Additionally, examine 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 [SC Alt Portal site](#).

Eligibility Criteria

To participate in Alternate Assessments 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.

Required Documentation

Worksheets and a checklist 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 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>	YES (Agree)	NO (Disagree)
The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). YES 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). YES NO		
Note: 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.		Stop Here
If the response is YES to <u>both of these</u> 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.	Continue to Next Section	

**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*:
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Three Lowest Area/Domains:

Area/Domain:	SS:
Area/Domain:	SS:
Area/Domain:	SS:

Teacher Scale:

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

Informal Assessment Results:	
Measure:	Results:
Measure:	Results:
Measure:	Results:
Measure:	Results:

Individual or Group Achievement Level Scores (all available):

MAP Reading:

Date:	RIT Score:	Percentile:	SS*:	GE:
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MAP Math:

Date:	RIT Score:	Percentile:	SS*:	GE:
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SCREADY ELA:

Grade:	Achievement Level:	Scale Score:	Lexile Range:
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SCREADY Math:

Grade:	Achievement Level:	Scale Score:
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District Alternate Assessment

Test:	SS*:	Results:
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Comments/Summary:

Individual Reading Assessments

Test:	SS or Stanine	Results:
Test	SS or Stanine	Results :

Comments/Summary

Language Assessments

Test:	SS*:	Results:
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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 Checklist

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.

<i>Eligibility Criteria</i>	YES (Agree)	NO (Disagree)
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.		
<i>Eligibility Criteria Descriptors</i>		
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. AND		
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. AND		
The student has academic skills on the emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational level and/or functional (real life) application of the general curriculum. AND		
Note: If the response is NO to any 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.		Stop Here
If the response is YES to <u>ALL of these</u> statements, select sources of evidence used by the IEP Team below and then continue to the next section.	Continue to Next Section	

Sources of Evidence	YES	NO
Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test		
Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment		
Results of individual and group administered achievement tests		
Results of informal assessments		
Results of individual reading assessments		
Results of district-wide alternate assessments		
Results of language assessments including Multilingual Learner (ML) language assessments, if applicable		

The student must meet all Eligibility Criteria Descriptors in order to meet the criteria for alternate assessment.

Eligibility Criteria	YES (Agree)	NO (Disagree)
The student accesses the state approved academic standards at less complex levels and with extensively modified instruction.	YES	NO
Eligibility Criteria Descriptors		
The student's curriculum is based on extended academic standards in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies. AND	YES	NO
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> AND	YES	NO
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). AND	YES	NO
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.	YES	NO
Eligibility Criteria		
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.	YES	NO

Eligibility Criteria Descriptors		
The student requires explicit and ongoing instruction in functional and daily living skills. AND	YES	NO
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. AND	YES	NO
Note: If the response is NO to any 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.		Stop Here 
If the response is YES to <u>ALL</u> of these statements, select sources of evidence used by the IEP Team below	Select Sources of Evidence	

Sources of Evidence	YES	NO
Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples.	YES	NO
Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives from the IEP.	YES	NO
Progress data from scientific research-based interventions	YES	NO
Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment Teacher collected data and checklists	YES	NO
Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and the Transition Plan for students ages 12 and older.	YES	NO
Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community-based instruction.	YES	NO
Progress monitoring data	YES	NO

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.	
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.	
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.	
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.	
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.	
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.	

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:
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Appendix C: Review of Eligibility for WIDA Alternate ACCESS 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 WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

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

Prior to the WIDA ACCESS Assessment

This information is to be used prior to the determination of WIDA Alternate ACCESS participation. Please note the WIDA Alternate Screener should only be administered if the student has previously met this eligibility.

Is the student classified as a multilingual learner (ML)?	Yes No
Provide the responses to the required South Carolina Enrollment Survey (ES)/Home Language Survey (HLS).	1. What is the language(s) that the student first acquired? 2. What language(s) is spoken most often by the student? 3. What is the primary language(s) used in the home, regardless of the language(s) spoken by the student?
Has the student been administered a WIDA Screener? If so, which screener was administered?	WIDA Screener WIDA Alternate Screener No Screener Administered
What is the student's English Language Proficiency (ELP) Score? *Note: The student's ELP score can be found on the SC Student Information page, English Proficiency Level field in PowerSchool.	WIDA Screener : 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, 6.0 WIDA Alternate Screener: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 WIDA ACCESS: 1., 2., 3., 4., 5., 6.0 (include the decimal progression) WIDA Alternate ACCESS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Eligibility Criteria

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. The three criteria below must be met to be eligible to be administered the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

- 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.
- 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.
- The student has academic skills that are on the emerging, readiness (prerequisite), foundational level and/or functional (real life) application of the general curriculum.

Curriculum

The WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment is for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed against alternate achievement standards, as they are unable to participate in the general assessment program even with appropriate accommodations.

- The student's curriculum more closely reflects the Alternate Model Performance Indicators (AMPs) than typical age or grade appropriate benchmarks.
- 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). The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the acquisition, application, and transfer of English skills.
- 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.

Additional Considerations	If the team agrees, check each applicable statement
The decision for this student to participate in WIDA Alternate ACCESS 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 WIDA Alternate ACCESS 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 WIDA Alternate ACCESS is NOT solely based on the student's level of English proficiency.	

Review Committee:

Review committee must consist of at least the following stakeholders: administrator, special education case manager, multilingual learner program specialist/teacher, and content-area teacher.

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

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 I, English II, Algebra I, 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 the Constitution Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AAAS). The levels of complexity outlined in the SC-Alt Science, ELA, mathematics, U.S. History and the 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 Multilingual learners (MLs) 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.