

Documentation of Evidence Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help IEP Teams match evidence to the specific criteria in order to help make decisions. It is not a required part of the decision-making process. If used, attach to the Eligibility Form.

Eligibility Criteria	Write Description of Documentation and Evidence Below	Sources of Evidence (check if used)
<p>1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior*</p> <p>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test <input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests <input type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the South Dakota Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples <input type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP <input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<p>3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists <input type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP <input type="checkbox"/> Transition Plan for students age 16 or younger, if

		necessary <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
The student is eligible to participate in alternate assessment if ALL responses above are marked YES		

Step 3: Documenting the Decision

If Decision is Yes

If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible, they must document their decision using the *South Dakota Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines* and include it with the IEP. An IEP team LEA representative must sign the completed form and a copy must be attached to the IEP and placed in the student's file. **This must be completed each year at the time of the IEP annual review.**

This must be done regardless of grade level. For example, grade 9 students do not take an alternate assessment but the *South Dakota Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines* should be completed and kept with the student's IEP.

If Decision is No

If the IEP team decides that the student is not eligible, then three things must happen:

1. The student must participate in the Smarter Balanced and South Dakota Science assessments with appropriate accommodations as determined by the IEP team.
2. The student's instruction must be aligned to the State Standards via the general education curriculum. Without access to the general education curriculum, students will not be able to learn the academic skills and knowledge assessed on the Smarter Balanced assessments.
3. Record of the decision must be recorded on the *South Dakota Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines*, attached to the IEP and placed in the student's file.

Review of Eligibility Determinations

The conversation around determining whether or not a student meets the criteria for eligibility is an important one. It drives the daily and long-term instruction a student receives as they prepare for options after high school. As such, it is paramount that students be engaged in the general education curriculum with appropriate modifications and the highest and most rigorous instruction appropriate. If we fall short of this goal, we risk shortchanging and second-guessing a student's ability to achieve academically as well as in other areas such as life and job skills.

With the 1% State-level cap on alternate assessment participation included in ESSA, States are required to specify a plan to support LEAs who consistently show a disproportionality in students who take the alternate assessment that contributes to putting the State over the 1% allowed limit. While the State cannot prohibit an LEA from assessing more than 1%, it must require an LEA to submit information justifying their need to assess more than 1% of its assessed students with the alternate assessment. The information provided by the LEA must be made publically available in such a way that does not reveal personally identifiable information about individual students. ESSA also requires States describe how they will monitor and evaluate LEAs over the 1% cap to ensure the LEA provides sufficient training for school staff who participate as members of an IEP team or other placement team so they understand and implement the guidelines established by the State so that all students are appropriately identified and assessed. To ensure that students are appropriately identified for the alternate assessments, and to ensure that guidance to the field from SD DOE is clear and leads to appropriate identifications, SD DOE will review data on eligibility determinations. SD DOE will use this data to identify schools and districts that may need additional training, support, and guidance to use the eligibility criteria to make valid and appropriate determinations.

Appendix A: Student Examples

Several student examples are provided here to show how evidence may be used to determine whether or not the three criteria are met.

Student Example A

Student A is 13 years old and uses an augmentative communication device with voice and print output to take part in classroom discussions and activities, as well as to participate in assessments. His primary disability diagnosis is autism.

READING: He reads using large print version of text and can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading. He prefers to be read to, rather than to read on his own. He can read simplified text and text at the 3rd grade level.

WRITING: This student can write simple stories with a beginning, middle, and end. His use of details is limited; fast/slow, light/dark, tall/short, loud/soft, etc. Because of his visual impairments, it takes him much longer than his classmates to complete writing assignments and this causes him to become frustrated at times.

MATHEMATICS: He requires a calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following step-by-step directions; however, he requires being reminded often about some basic numeracy concepts such as multiplication and division.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: He is very adept at using a computer and/or iPad to download videos and to play games and music. He has severe anxiety and requires extensive coaching, prompting, and breaks. Any testing requires several days to complete and due to severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), many times testing cannot be completed. Because of this, test results may not reflect this student's true knowledge and abilities.

Eligibility Criteria	Write Description of Documentation and Evidence Below	Sources of Evidence (check if used)
1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and behavior YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<i>He can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading. He prefers to be read to, rather than to read on his own. He can read simplified text.</i> <i>This student can write simple stories with a beginning, middle, and his use of details is limited; fast/slow, light/dark, tall/short, loud/soft, etc.</i> <i>He requires a calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test <input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group Administered achievement tests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments

	<p><i>formulaic directions</i> <i>Due to severe OCD, many times testing cannot be completed. Test results may not reflect this student's true knowledge and abilities.</i> <i>He is very adept at using a computer and/or iPad to download videos and to play games and music.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments Including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the South Dakota State Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>He can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading.</i> <i>He requires a calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following formulaic directions; however, he requires being reminded often about some basic numeracy concepts such as multiplication and division.</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP <input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<p>3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>He can get the correct answer by following step-by-step directions and requires being reminded often about some basic numeracy concepts around multiplication and division.</i></p> <p><i>He requires extensive coaching, prompting, modeling, and breaks.</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP <input type="checkbox"/> Transition Plan for students age 16 or younger, if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

The student is eligible to participate in alternate assessment if ALL responses above are marked YES

Student A is not eligible for alternate assessment.

Student Example B

Student B is 9 years old. Her primary disability diagnosis is autism. She speaks using two- and three-word phrases after hearing answers modeled for her; she exhibits echolalia. Most of her speech consists of “yes/no” answers. She does not use an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device but is involved in a program to develop conversational speech skills and is showing some improvement. IQ test result score is 60.

READING: Student B is able to identify familiar pictures and picture symbols and has emerging sight word vocabulary of about 25 words. She can read somewhat independently, as long as the texts are at the Kindergarten or pre-K level, include pictures and picture symbols, and she has intensive support from her teacher. Student B can understand texts closer to her grade level (not on grade level) with supports such as picture symbols and having the text read aloud by an aide or teacher and are about subjects she enjoys; animals, especially baby animals. She enjoys books that have tactile supports embedded in the text. She will only read if her teacher provides intensive supports like prompting, cueing, refocusing, in a one-on-one environment and with frequent breaks and the text is a subject she enjoys. Historical or informational texts are not interesting to her.

WRITING: She can independently write her first and last name and can copy text but in most cases when she copies text, it is not clear if she understands what she is writing. She can write Subject-Verb sentences using word cards with picture symbols. She does not enjoy writing.

MATHEMATICS: Student B can count same-color blocks up to ten. She does not understand the concepts of subtraction or addition; she must re-count the blocks to arrive at an answer. “More/less” is a difficult concept when using numerals but she can tell which group of things is more or less than another group of the same things but not when the groups are different (group of pencils and group of erasers).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: On a computer, she can click and drag using an adapted mouse, but only when provided a model and a clear objective (like playing a simple game). Student B has difficulty when activities change from a set schedule; sometimes has difficulty sharing with other students in the class but not always. She understands sequences of events (first, next, last, etc.) but not the idea that something is scheduled to happen at 2:00, for example. She enjoys being outside.

Eligibility Criteria	Write Description of Documentation and Evidence Below	Sources of Evidence (check if used)
<p>1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and behavior</p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>She speaks using two- and three-word phrases after modeling answers. She can independently write her first and last name and can copy text but in most cases when she copies text, it is not clear if she understands what she is writing.</i></p> <p><i>Student B can count same-color blocks up to ten. She does not understand simple subtraction or addition; she must re-count the blocks to arrive at an answer. "More/less" is a difficult concept when using numerals.</i></p> <p><i>She has difficulty with understanding when activities change from a set schedule. She understands sequences of events but not the idea that something is scheduled to happen at 2:00.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</p>
<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the South Dakota State Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors.</p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>She is 9 years old and can read somewhat independently, as long as the texts are at the Kindergarten or pre-K level, include pictures and picture symbols, and she has intensive support from her teacher.</i></p> <p><i>She can understand texts closer to her grade level (not on grade level) with supports such as picture symbols and having the text read aloud by an aide or teacher and are about subjects she enjoys; animals, especially baby animals</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</p>
<p>3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the</p>	<p><i>She can read somewhat independently, as long as the texts are at the Kindergarten or pre-K level, include pictures and picture symbols, and she has intensive support from her teacher.</i></p> <p><i>She can understand texts closer to her grade level (not on grade level) with supports such as picture symbols and having the text read aloud by an aide or teacher and are about subjects she</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of</p>

grade-and age-appropriate curriculum YES ● NO ○	<i>enjoys; animals, especially baby animals. She will only read if her teacher provides intensive supports like prompting, cueing, refocusing, in a one-on-one environment and with frequent breaks.</i>	academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP <input type="checkbox"/> Transition Plan for students age 16 or younger, if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<p>The student is eligible to participate in alternate assessment if ALL responses above are marked YES</p>		

Student B is eligible for alternate assessment.

Student Example C

Student C is 17 years old and in the 10th grade. His primary diagnosis is autism and he has some vision impairment that requires some adapted materials. He is in a self-contained classroom. He can vocalize but does not use words; he is essentially non-verbal. He has a new AAC device that both the student and the staff are learning. His fine motor skills are poor; however he enjoys finger painting along with other art projects. He enjoys music as well. So far, things seem to be improving in the area of communication for this student. The lack of a consistent mode of communication has made it difficult to determine his cognitive functioning. However, learning his new AAC device has provided motivation as he is learning that people will respond to him. In addition, he has a health condition that has led to many absences. Even though he is learning how to communicate with his new device, it is clear that his content knowledge and basic skills are far below his typical peers and instruction will remain at a remedial level for the foreseeable future; because of this the CCSS are far beyond his current ability.

READING: He can understand and recognize most of the pictures in his AAC device. He enjoys being read to (especially picture books about trucks, cars, and other automotive equipment and dogs). He takes a long time to look at the pictures. If you ask him to identify a type of car or a part on a car (e.g. tire, wheel, door, tractor, etc.) he can point to it accurately. During times when a movie is played in the classroom, he can order the events of the movie if they are in pictures. He can tell you if an event did not take place in the movie. He can mimic parts of the dialogue even though most of it is unintelligible; he mimics the sounds and inflection of people talking but cannot form the words.

WRITING: He does recognize his name and uses a name stamp that includes his entire first name and a separate stamp with his last name. His teacher has begun to use individual letter stamps to help him learn how to recognize the individual letters of his name. He can order events very well and reorder the events to produce a different ending/answer an open-ended question.

MATHEMATICS: Unknown at this time. His teacher has noticed that he understands when things are supposed to happen during his day (arriving at school, lunch, breaks, etc.) but it is not clear if he is reading the clock on the wall or if he is recognizing a pattern to his school day. Numbers are programmed in to his AAC device but have not been introduced; however, he did request that the teacher read three books to him one day and he used the number "3" on his AAC device. He is not interested in math.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: It is clear that he can understand the pictures displayed on his AAC device. There are no words matched with the pictures.

Eligibility Criteria	Write Description of Documentation and Evidence Below	Sources of Evidence (check if used)
<p>1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and behavior</p> <p>YES ● NO ○</p>	<p><i>So much is unknown about this student's true ability. However, given his reaction to his new AAC device and other observations, it is clear that while he may have some kind of cognitive disability, the extent is not known. His disabilities however, do impact his adaptive behavior significantly and his level of learning is far below that of his typical peers. As the year progresses more formal and informal assessments will be given</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the South Dakota State Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core</p>	<p><i>Yes. While it is largely unknown what this student knows and can do, it is clear that he is far below his typical peers. He can understand basic concepts of more/less (snacks), basic pictures both on his AAC device and in picture books. He can point out the correct picture when you ask "where is the tire, truck, door, dog, etc." after you read the book aloud.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP <input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions

<p>Content Connectors.</p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</p>
<p>3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum</p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>	<p><i>Materials are adapted because of his vision impairment. Because of his lack of communication and largely nonverbal status, much was done for this student. His student work samples are largely classroom observation.</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transition Plan for students age 16 or younger, if necessary</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</p>
<p>The student is eligible to participate in alternate assessment if ALL responses above are marked YES</p>		

Student C is eligible for alternate assessment.

Appendix B: Glossary

AAC: Augmentative and alternative communication (e.g., speech-generating devices such as text-to-speech communication aids, picture or symbol boards, etc.)

Accommodation: A change in materials or procedures that provide access during instruction and assessment. Accommodations do not change what is being taught or measured. Assessment accommodations are intended to produce valid results that indicate what a student knows and can do.

Adaptive behavior: Behavior defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.

Core Content Connector (CCC): A CCC is a representation of the essential “core” content of a standard in the CCSS. Each CCC was identified by examining hypothesized learning progressions aligned with the CCSS to determine the critical content for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Extensive direct individualized instruction: Concentrated instruction designed for and directed toward an individual student. This type of instruction is needed by students with significant cognitive disabilities to acquire knowledge and skills in content. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are likely to need this extensively to apply knowledge and skills in multiple contexts.

English Language Learner (ELL): An ELL is a student 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. An ELL’s difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be a barrier to learning in classrooms instructed in English and to performance on assessments presented in English.

Learning progression: A learning progression is a description of the way that student learning of skills may develop and build over time.

Modification: A change in materials or procedures that may provide access during instruction and assessment, but that also changes the learning expectations in instruction and what an assessment measures. Modifications during instruction may

be appropriate on a temporary basis for scaffolding the student's understanding and skills. Assessment modifications result in invalid measures of a student's knowledge and skills and thus should be avoided.

Pervasive: Present across academic content areas and across multiple settings (including school, home, and community).

South Dakota State Content Standards: These are a set of content standards for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and other subjects that define what students are expected to learn at each grade in order to leave school ready for college or careers. The state standards were developed by teachers, school administrators, and experts, with support from the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Substantial supports: Substantial supports include support from the teachers and others (e.g., aide) and various material supports within the student's environment. Examples of substantial supports in instruction include adapting text, using manipulatives and other concrete objects, and extensive scaffolding of content to support learning.

Substantially adapted materials: Substantially adapted materials include various classroom and other materials that have been altered in appearance and content from the materials that peers without disabilities use for instruction or assessment.

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Who decides that a student should participate in the alternate assessments?*

The IEP team makes the determination of how a student will participate in statewide assessments. The IEP team must follow the *South Dakota Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines* if they are to assign a student to participate in the MSAA or Science Alt. No one member of the IEP team makes this decision. Parents, teachers, and administrators make the decision based on evidence and adherence to the *South Dakota Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines*.

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

SD DOE does not define a “significant cognitive disability” in terms of a “cut off” IQ score. Most students with significant cognitive disabilities have intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, or autism, but not all do. And, not all students with these disabilities are considered to have a “significant cognitive disability”. Students demonstrating academic deficits or difficulties due to learning disabilities, speech-language impairments, and emotional-behavior disabilities do not qualify for participation in alternate assessment. Performing 3-4 grade levels below peers without disabilities is not, by itself, evidence of a significant cognitive disability. Academic deficits or difficulties alone do not indicate that a student has a significant cognitive disability. Further, a significant cognitive disability will be pervasive, affecting student learning across content areas and in social and community settings.

Students with autism or intellectual disabilities should be carefully considered for alternate assessment, but they should not automatically be assigned to the alternate assessment based on their identified disability category. Not all students with autism or intellectual disabilities have a significant cognitive disability. Many students eligible to receive special education and related services under these categorical labels are able to participate in general assessments, with accommodations.

Students receiving special education services who are identified as having orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, or traumatic brain injuries, do not necessarily have a significant cognitive disability. Determinations for student participation in statewide assessments must be evidence centered and made individually for each student by the IEP team.

Students demonstrating mild to moderate cognitive disabilities may be more appropriately placed in the general assessment system with accommodations. Anticipated or past low achievement on the general assessment does not mean the student should be taking the MSAA or Science Alt.

3. *How do I know if the alternate assessment is appropriate for an ELL with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills?*

An ELL should be considered for the alternate assessment if (a) their intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in their home language as appropriate, and (b) they meet the other participation guidelines for the alternate assessment. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments, alongside the information on goals and instruction in the student's IEP used to determine what may or may not be a significant cognitive disability. If an ELL with an IEP does not meet the criteria for the alternate assessment, he/she should take the general assessment with accommodations as appropriate.

4. *Why is it important to indicate that a student, participating in alternate assessment, is receiving instruction on content linked to the South Dakota Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science and their performance measured against alternate achievement standards?*

The decision to align a student's academic program to the Core Content Connectors that are linked to the South Dakota Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science and participation in the alternate assessment limits a student's direct contact with the breadth of the South Dakota Content Standards for the grade level in which they are enrolled. This limited or modified exposure to the grade level standards may have significant impact on academic outcomes and post-secondary opportunities.

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

All attempts should be made to find a route of communication with the student as soon as they are enrolled. If various approaches and technologies do not appear to demonstrate a route of communication, then consider that all behavior that the student exhibits is a form of communication, and use this as

the starting point. A critical element in assessing all students is a focus on communicative competency as the base for student access to the South Dakota Content Standards. Best practice would indicate that students should enter Kindergarten with a communication system that allows them to demonstrate an understanding of academic concepts prior to entering the third grade. However, with or without a communication system, students must still participate in the MSAA or Science Alt.

6. *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 South Dakota Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines, can the student be assigned to the general assessment?*

Yes. The IEP team must ensure that the student receives appropriate instruction on the South Dakota Content Standards and participates in the required general assessments for their current grade level with or without accommodations.

7. *Is it possible that a decision to participate in an AA-AAS could change as a student gets older?*

Participating in the alternate assessment requires that the student has a significant cognitive impairment and interacts with content that has been significantly modified from that which is provided to the student's typically developing peers. Even though students with significant cognitive disabilities often are identified early, prior to starting school, they may be able to participate in the general assessment during their elementary grades. IEP teams should be especially cautious about assigning students with significant cognitive disabilities to an alternate assessment in their early school years. When the level of support needed for the student to participate in the breadth of the South Dakota Content Standards and the general assessment increases, the team may determine that participation in the alternate assessment is appropriate.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities are likely to continue to need supports to live as independently as possible throughout their adult lives after high school. Students who did not need early intervention services, or who are unlikely to need substantial daily supports in their adult lives, probably do not have a significant cognitive disability and would not be appropriately placed in the alternate assessment.

8. *Who can we ask if we have questions about this important decision?*

Contact SD DOE if you have any questions about participation decision making for the alternate assessment.

For information about the alternate assessments or assistance with instructions for students who participate in the alternate assessments contact:
<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/instructionalSCD.aspx> or call Office of Special Education Programs at 605-773-3678.

Appendix D: Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines

South Dakota's Participation Guidelines

The criteria for participation in the Alternate Assessment reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate in this assessment. Thus, a student who participates in the Alternate Assessment participates in all content areas.

In addition, evidence for the decision for participating in the Alternate Assessment is **NOT BASED** on:

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 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 accountability system
12. Administrator decision
13. Anticipated emotional duress
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process)

Participation Criteria	Participation Criteria Descriptors	Agree (Yes) or Disagree (No)? Provide documentation
1. The student has a significant cognitive disability	Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. <i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i>	Yes / No
2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade level CCSS and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.	Yes / No
3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum	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 multiple settings.	Yes / No

The student may participate in alternate assessment if all responses above are marked Yes

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

SSID: _____ IEP Meeting Date: _____