

# K-2 Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool

## Purpose and Use






IEP teams should begin this decision-making process with the understanding that all students, including students with disabilities, can achieve and should participate in the regular standards, curricula, and assessments to the maximum extent possible. The decision for a student to participate in alternate standards or assessments may limit a student's full exposure to grade-level content and may impact the K-2 student's readiness to participate in LEAP 2025 assessments beginning in 3rd grade if the student doesn't meet the [3-11 alternate assessment participation criteria](#). The *K-2 Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool* is intended to guide and support individualized education program (IEP) teams in annually determining whether a student in grades K-2 is most appropriately assessed with an alternate assessment. IEP teams must use this tool annually to consider participation in the alternate assessment for students in grades K-2. Least restrictive environment (LRE) is an important principle of IDEA requiring, to the maximum extent possible, that students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms with access to high-quality, grade level instruction.

Individualized education program (IEP) teams must use various data sets in review of a student's eligibility to take alternate assessments that could include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluation reports
- Benchmark academic assessment data
- Diagnostic assessments
- Assistive technology evaluation
- Speech and language assessments that determine expressive and receptive language communication status
- IEP progress data on goals and objectives
- Formative academic assessment data
- Adaptive skills checklists and inventories
- Progress on functional, daily living and life skill standards
- Sensory and/or motor assessments describing access modes for communication, fine and gross motor tasks

❖ **Part A – Determining initial eligibility**

Directions: Complete the first two questions to determine if the student may be eligible for participation in an alternate assessment.

1. Does the student have a current individual education plan (IEP)?		
No    <b>Stop here. The student is not eligible for an alternate assessment.</b>	Yes    <b>Proceed to the next statement.</b>	
2. Review the student’s Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) category on the IEP.		
Student meets state eligibility criteria under the following disability category designations:  <b>Specific Learning Disability, Emotional Disturbance, Speech/Language Impairment (only), or Orthopedic Impairment (only)</b> <b>Stop here.</b>    The student’s disability classification is not aligned with the federal definition for having significant cognitive disabilities.	Student meets state eligibility criteria under the following disability category designations:    <b>Deafness/Hearing Impairment, Autism, Other Health Impairment, Visual Impairment, or Developmental Delay</b>  A student identified with these disability categories <b>very rarely</b> will be a student with a <b>most significant cognitive disability</b> and therefore rarely, if ever, qualify for the alternate assessment.	Student meets state eligibility criteria under the following disability category designations:  <b>Deaf-Blindness, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury</b>    A student with any of these disabilities <b>may</b> have a significant cognitive disability.

❖ **Part B - Consideration of *Existing* Evaluation Data**

**Current Assessment Data:** *Within a PREVIOUS evaluation*, is there a documented, *full-scale cognitive score*\* that could be considered in the decision making process? Consult with pupil appraisal personnel for this data.

- **No full-scale cognitive score in an existing evaluation, PROCEED to PART C**
- Cognitive score is available and is \_\_\_\_\_ standard deviations below the mean

\*The Full Scale IQ is a score derived from administration of selected subtests designed to provide a measure of an individual's overall level of general cognitive and intellectual functioning. Examples of full-scale cognitive assessments include, but are not limited to, WISC, WPPSI, Stanford-Binet, and K-ABC. Developmental cognitive subtest scores may **NOT** be used.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cognitive score <1 SD below the mean.	Cognitive score between 1 and 2.2 SD below the mean.	Cognitive score between 2.3 and 2.9 SD below the mean.	Cognitive score ≥ 3 SD below the mean.

**Documenting Current Assessment Data:** If a student has a cognitive score, students who qualify for the alternate assessment must have data to support cognitive functioning and receive a check mark in column 4.

If the student has a cognitive assessment and the assessment data does **not** reflect cognitive functioning ≥ 3 SD below the mean.



**Stop here.**

**The student is not eligible for participation in an alternate assessment.**

The student has an existing cognitive score that indicates cognitive functioning ≥ 3 SD below the mean



**The student may be eligible for participation in an alternate assessment.**

**Proceed to Part C**

❖ **Part C – Determining if the student has adaptive skill deficits that are characteristics of a most significant cognitive disability**



Directions: Select the column in each of three adaptive skills domains (Conceptual, Social and Practical) that best describes the student’s daily functioning. After reviewing all available data, if the team is still struggling to decide between two columns, **presume a strengths-based approach and select the column to the left** (for example, if the team is trying to decide between Column 2 or Column 3, select Column 2).

<b>Conceptual Domain:</b> The Conceptual Domain covers skills and specific goals found in the IEP and evaluation that are needed to communicate, apply academic skills, manage and accomplish tasks.			
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the student’s IEP, he/she is on grade level academically in all content areas</li> <li>The student has age appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills, including conversation skills (verbally or through a communication device)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student has difficulty learning academic content aligned to <a href="#">Louisiana Student Standards</a> but is making progress with appropriate supports and interventions as specified in the IEP and found in Progress Monitoring results.</li> <li>The student has some age-appropriate receptive and expressive communication skills (verbally or through a communication device), uses and understands simple, nonverbal communication and can follow simple, age appropriate directions and routines with prompting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student has difficulty learning grade-level academic content across all subject areas and may require multiple tiers of intervention, as noted in the accommodations or modifications section of the IEP.</li> <li>The student may need instruction to include scaffolding of standards (as a means of support) using the <a href="#">Louisiana Connectors</a></li> <li>The student has difficulty communicating wants, needs, thoughts and ideas but receptively understands messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student requires significantly modified curriculum and instruction using <a href="#">Louisiana Connectors</a> and likely is unable to apply or generalize skills outside the classroom setting</li> <li>The student may be unable to clearly express wants and needs and may not seem to understand the messages. The student may also experience significant delays in receptive skills to include difficulty following one or two step directions, little or no response to stimuli as examples. The student likely requires maximum adult assistance to communicate.</li> </ul>

**Social Domain:**

The Social Domain covers behaviors needed to engage in interpersonal interactions, act with social responsibility and use leisure time found in social goals within the IEP and behavior descriptions. These behaviors include real-life skills such as social competence, avoiding danger, self-esteem, following/obeying school rules, and making friends.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student displays age-appropriate social, communication and leisure skills</li><li>• The student can initiate and maintain friendships, express and recognize emotions with peers who are the same age</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student may have difficulty with social interactions and may have challenges in regulating emotion and behavior in an age-appropriate manner.</li><li>• The student’s communication, language and conversation skills are more concrete or immature than peers who are the same age</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student is able to be understood but uses a mode for communication that is much less complex than peers who are the same age.</li><li>• The student often needs significant support to engage in social situations and/or use communication skills.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student often uses behaviors to communicate.</li><li>• The student’s communication skills are very limited in terms of vocabulary and grammar and may be in the process of developing a mode of communication to engage socially and interact with others, which may be described as nonverbal or uses very limited nonsymbolic communication.</li></ul>

<b>Practical Domain</b> The Practical Domain covers behaviors needed to address personal and health needs; take care of home, classroom or work settings; and function in a school or community. These needs are found within any self-care goals.			
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student is able to independently function in self-care activities, following rules in the community and classroom similar to age appropriate peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student often functions inconsistently in regard to age appropriate skills relating to self-care activities, following rules in the community and classroom.</li> <li>The student may need reminders about being mindful of safety hazards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student may need explicit support and prompting in regard to self-care activities and adherence to following rules in the classroom and community.</li> <li>The student requires intensive support to safely navigate the school and community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student requires significant support and direct instruction across all activities of daily living (meals, dressing, bathing, toileting needs) or may be dependent on others for all aspects of physical care, health and safety.</li> </ul>
<b>Determining Most Significant Cognitive Disability:</b> Students who qualify for an alternate assessment will have daily function descriptors only found in column 4.			
<p>The student’s adaptive skills (conceptual, social, and practical) are not only fours and <b>do not</b> align with the functioning of a student suspected of having the most significant cognitive disability. Stop here.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The student is not eligible for participation in an alternate assessment.</b></p>		<p>The student’s adaptive skills (conceptual, social, and practical) must be <b>only</b> fours to align with the functioning of a student suspected of having a significant cognitive disability.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Proceed to Part D.</b></p>	



❖ **Part D – Determining if the student requires extensive direct individualized instruction aligned to Louisiana Connectors and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.**

Directions: Select the column that best describes the student’s curriculum, instruction, supports, accommodations, modifications and assistive technology needs. After reviewing all available data, if the team continues to struggle with a decision between two columns, presume competence and select the column to the left (for example, if the team is trying to decide between Column 2 or Column 3, select Column 2).

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: This section describes the student’s daily learning needs as outlined in the IEP.			
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student’s present levels of performance on the IEP indicates that skills are closely aligned with grade level standards, concepts and skills with present-level data showing skill gaps represented within <a href="#">Louisiana Student Standards</a>.</li> <li>The student’s placement is inside the regular class 80% or more of the day.</li> </ul> <p>*5-year-old student data will need to be calculated using the minutes in the IEP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student’s IEP includes annual goals and objectives aligned to <a href="#">Louisiana Student Standards</a> and requires Specially Designed Regular Instruction to include explicit instruction in all content areas.</li> <li>Instruction and assessment are aligned to grade-level standards aligned to <a href="#">Louisiana Student Standards</a>.</li> <li>The student’s placement is inside the regular class 80% of the day.</li> </ul> <p>*5-year-old student data will need to be calculated using the minutes in the IEP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student’s IEP includes goals and objectives aligned to <a href="#">Louisiana Student Standards</a> along with intensive intervention support with foundation skills (i.e., specific programs and/or scaffold using the <a href="#">Louisiana Connectors</a>).</li> <li>Instruction and assessment are aligned to grade-level standards aligned to <a href="#">Louisiana Student Standards</a>.</li> <li>The student’s placement is inside the regular class between 40%-79% or more of the day.</li> </ul> <p>*5-year-old student data will need to be calculated using the minutes in the IEP.</p>	<p>The student’s IEP includes present level of performance statements that align learner data with grade-level standards through <a href="#">Louisiana Connectors</a>.</p> <p>The student requires extensive accommodations and modifications, and direct individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains.</p> <p>The student’s placement is inside the regular class less than 40% of the day.</p> <p>*5-year-old student data will need to be calculated using the minutes in the IEP.</p>

<b>Accommodations/Modifications:</b> This section describes the accommodations and modifications needed for the student to participate meaningfully in daily instructional and assessment activities.			
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's IEP utilizes minimal accommodation support in the classroom setting only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's IEP utilizes accommodations for classroom and assessment support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student requires additional individualized accommodations, modifications and scaffolds not allowed on LEAP tests. These also are provided during instruction and assessment to support access. Examples may include shortened assignments, word banks, cues, prompting, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's IEP utilizes accommodations that substantially modify the content expectation through a significant reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity of grade level standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Assistive Technology:</b> This section describes the use of assistive technologies needed for the student to actively engage and participate meaningfully and productively in daily activities in school, home, community and work environments.			
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's IEP team has determined the student does not need any assistive technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's IEP indicates the need for <b>low tech</b> assistive technology support and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's IEP indicates the need for <b>low tech/high tech</b> assistive technology supports and services, to support academic instruction, communication, daily living, seating/positioning, mobility, sensory and/or motor needs, etc., <b>and use these supports independently.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's IEP describes complex physical, sensory or medical needs that require multiple assistive technology supports and services across most of the assistive technology domains. It may be challenging to determine access for the use of assistive technologies.</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student currently requires person dependent supports or scaffolds that may be replaced with assistive technology once feature matching can be determined.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Determining whether the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports:</b> Students who qualify for the alternate assessment will have daily function descriptors found in column 4 only.</p>			
<p>The student’s daily learning needs are a combination of ones, twos, and threes and do not align with the functioning of a student suspected of having the most significant cognitive disability. Stop here.</p>  <p><b>The student is not eligible for participation in the alternate assessment.</b></p>		<p>The student’s daily learning needs must be <b>only fours</b> in order to align with the functioning of a student suspected of having a significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>The student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction with learning targets aligned to the Louisiana Connectors and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.</p>  <p><b>Proceed to Part E</b></p>	

❖ Part E – Assurances

**The decision to participate in an alternate assessment is made after reviewing the entire decision making tool and the collection of evidence used in parts A, B (if data exists), C, and D. The following criteria may not be the sole consideration in determining eligibility for alternate assessment participation.**

- The student's placement
- Excessive or extended absence
- Disruptive behavior
- English language proficiency
- Student's reading or academic level
- Student's disability according to Bulletin 1508 unless the disability, by definition, excludes the student from having a significant cognitive disability. These disabilities are: emotional disturbance, SLD, or speech/language impairment.
- Social, cultural, and/or economic differences
- Anticipated impact on school performance scores
- Administrative decision
- The expectation that the student will not perform well on the LEAP 2025 or other statewide assessments
- The student's previous need for accommodation(s) to participate in general, state, or district- wide assessments

**Based on the review of evidence and ensuring the decision is not based solely on any of the considerations above, does the student meet all criteria for participation in an alternate assessment?**

**Yes. The student meets all criteria and will participate in an alternate assessment.**

**No. The student does not meet all criteria in parts A, B (possibly if data exists), C, and D and is not eligible for participation in an alternate assessment.**

**ODR (Name/Date)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Education Teacher (Name/Date)** \_\_\_\_\_

**General Education Teacher (Name/Date)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pupil Appraisal (Name/Date)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian (Name/Date)** \_\_\_\_\_