

# **Maryland Guidance for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments**

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services**

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# **Maryland Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments**

## **Introduction**

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This document is intended to help guide Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams as they determine whether the Maryland Alternate Assessments, assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards, are the appropriate assessments for individual students. These assessments were developed to ensure that all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, are able to participate in an assessment that is a measure of what they know and can do in relation to the grade level Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS), Maryland Standards State Curriculum (SC), and the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) Core Content Connectors (CCC). The Maryland Alternate Assessments are part of a system of curriculum, instructional, and assessment tools for students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in general assessments even with accommodations. 34 CFR § 300.160(c)(1). IEP teams must consider a student's individual characteristics when determining whether a student with a disability should participate in the general assessment with or without accommodations, or in the Maryland Alternate Assessments keeping in mind that students with a "significant cognitive disability" are represented by a small number of Maryland students. COMAR 13A.05.01.09A(1)(f) & (g).

This document outlines steps that an IEP team must take in determining whether the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for a student. These include (a) reviewing student records and important information across multiple school years and settings (e.g., school, home, community) and (b) determining whether the student fits all of the criteria for participating in the Maryland Alternate Assessments as outlined in this document.

A student who participates in the Maryland Alternate Assessments participates in all content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The likelihood of a student fulfilling graduation requirements to earn a diploma decreases as a student continues to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments. Therefore, it is critical for the IEP team to revisit assessment decisions in regards to student progress. A student's IEP must be reviewed at least once within a calendar year during the annual review. Additional IEP team meetings to develop, review, or revise the student's IEP may occur during the calendar year of the current IEP. During the IEP team meeting, as part of the IEP process, the IEP team is required to plan for the student's participation in assessments to be administered during the term of the current IEP.

## **Assessment Design and Administration in English Language Arts and Mathematics**

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The Maryland Alternate Assessments for English Language Arts (reading and writing) and Mathematics are given in grades 3 through 8 and 11. It is an online assessment (with paper and pencil option) of approximately 30 test items that assess approximately ten prioritized content

targets per grade level. These content targets were identified for each grade based on learning progressions and alignment to the grade level MCCRS. The assessment includes multiple-choice items and constructed response items. Each content target is assessed by items that have been carefully and intentionally designed to assess a range of ability and performance.

The assessment design includes allowances for flexibility in administration (for example, a student may respond to administrator-presented item stimuli rather than to the item stimuli on the computer). A trained testing administrator familiar to the student (e.g., the student's teacher) facilitates the administration, presenting items via paper or manipulatives as appropriate for the student. Items are administered over the course of one or more testing sessions as needed. Testing sessions are scheduled within a testing window of approximately two months, scheduled by the State.

The assessment uses an adaptive approach, meaning that each student answers questions that have been determined to be an appropriate level of challenge. Classroom data provided prior to the assessment help determine the test questions or items a student will be presented with. The administration script provides flexibility in the ways in which a student may interact with questions or items, so that what is being measured is not changed.

## Assessment Design and Administration in Science

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The Maryland Alternate Assessment for Science measures a participating student's progress on attainment of Science Mastery Objectives in grades 5, 8, and 10. The assessment is a portfolio assessment in which teachers select grade level Science content aligned and linked with grade-level Maryland Standards State Curriculum and Core Learning Goals. Students in grades 5 and 8 are assessed in five Science content standards: Earth/Space Science, Life Science, Chemistry, Physics, and Environmental Science. In grade 10, students are assessed in just one Science content standard: Biology.

At each grade level, students will be required to complete ten mastery objectives with an artifact for each aligned with Science. Once mastery objectives in Science have been established for each student, the student's instructional team teaches and assesses each student. When the student masters a mastery objective, the evidence of mastery is placed in a notebook or portfolio. To allow mastery objectives to be taught over time and to make instructional adjustments to support student learning in Science, the testing window for Maryland's Alternate Assessment in Science allows for four full months of instruction and assessment between November and February.

## Guidance for Participation Decisions

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***Maryland's Alternate Assessments Participation Criteria and Checklist*** is provided in Appendix A. IEP teams must use the guidelines to determine whether a student participates in Maryland's Alternate Assessments. As reflected in the guidelines, to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessment in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, a student must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and meet all three of the following criteria:

1. The student has a "significant cognitive disability."

**AND**

2. The student is learning content derived from the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the Maryland Standards State Curriculum and Core Learning Goals in Science.

**AND**

3. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized, and repeated instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in adapted and modified curriculum aligned with grade level content standards.

## Participation Descriptions

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The student has a “significant cognitive disability.” A review of student records indicates a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as a collection of behaviors, including conceptual, social, interpersonal, and practical skills, essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.

Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by just an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student. The term “significant cognitive disability” is a designation given to a small number of Maryland students with disabilities for purposes of their participation in the statewide assessment program. Students eligible to be assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards may be from any of the disability categories listed in the IDEA. 34 CFR 200.1(f)(2).

When IEP teams are making a decision as to whether a student is a student with a “significant cognitive disability” for participation in an alternate assessment, IEP teams must review and discuss multiple sources of information, including for example, psychological assessments, assessments of adaptive skills, classroom observations, formal and informal assessment data, curricular content for evidence of a significant cognitive disability, and the participation guidelines for the alternate assessment. The IEP team must also document why the general assessment is inappropriate even with accommodations; how the student will be assessed; and why the alternate assessment is appropriate. COMAR 13A.05.01.09A(1)(g).

The student is learning content derived from the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the Maryland Standards State Curriculum (SC) Content and Core Learning Goals in Science. The student’s disability or multiple disabilities affect how the student learns curriculum derived from the MCCRS and SC. The alternate academic achievement standards are derived from the MCCRS English Language Arts and Mathematics and are called the Core Content Connectors (CCC). A CCC is a representation of the essential “core” or big ideas of the content standard in the MCCRS. Each CCC was identified by examining hypothesized learning progressions, developed by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC), aligned with the MCCRS to determine the critical content for students with significant cognitive disabilities. For information on NCSC and the CCCs, visit the NCSC resource site at [https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/All Resources](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/All_Resources).

The student requires extensive, direct, individualized, and repeated instruction and substantial

supports to achieve measurable gains in adapted and modified curriculum aligned with grade level content standards. The student's need for extensive, individualized, repeated, and direct instruction is not temporary or transient. His or her need for substantial adaptations and supports in order to access and achieve linked grade and age-appropriate standards requires substantially adapted materials and customized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.

**The IEP team must annually consider the following information** to determine whether the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for an individual student:

- Description of the student's instruction, including data on progress
- Classroom work samples and data
- Examples of performance on assessment tasks to compare with classroom work
- Results of district-wide assessments
- Results of individualized English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science assessments
- IEP information including:
  - Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, goals, and short-term objectives.
  - Considerations for students with individualized and substantial communication needs or modes (from multiple data sources).
  - Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English Language Learners) that may interfere with an accurate assessment of his or her academic, social, or adaptive abilities.

## What Not to Use as Criteria for Participation Decisions

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In addition to the three criteria for determining participation, there are other issues that may affect a student's learning experience and his/her ability to learn that are **not** appropriate to consider during the decision-making process for the Maryland Alternate Assessments. These include:

- A disability category or label
- Poor attendance or extended absences
- Native language/social/cultural or economic differences
- Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- Academic and other services the student receives
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Percent of time receiving special education services
- English Language Learner (ELL) status
- Low reading and mathematics achievement level
- Anticipated disruptive behavior
- Impact of test scores on accountability system
- Administrator decision
- Anticipated emotional distress
- Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/augmentative and alternate communication devices) to participate in assessment

## Participation Tools

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There are several tools that may be helpful to IEP teams as they collect and organize evidence before making a decision about whether a student meets the eligibility criteria set forth in this document for participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments. Participation forms and other tools designed to assist teams in collecting and reviewing evidence to determine whether it is appropriate for an individual student to participate in Maryland's Alternate Assessments in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science are provided in the appendices.

- **[Appendix A Participation Criteria and Checklist](#):** This is a form that includes the participation guidelines and a way to indicate the evidence that was used in making decisions and the considerations that should not be the basis of making decisions.
- **[Appendix B Decision Flowchart for Participation](#):** This shows the sequence of decisions made by the student's IEP team when determining whether a student should participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments.

This manual and the tools are supported by a set of training materials that are available at [www.altmsa.org](http://www.altmsa.org). Included among the training materials are several sample student profiles, with explanation of how decisions were made about their participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments.

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Participation for the Alternate Assessments

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### 1. *Who decides whether a student should participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments?*

The IEP team makes the determination of how a student will participate in statewide assessments. The IEP team must follow Maryland Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments when determining a student's eligibility to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments. No one member of the IEP Team makes this decision. Parents, teachers, administrators, and the student (as appropriate) make the decision based on evidence and adherence to Maryland Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments. All participation decisions for statewide assessments must be made on an annual basis by the student's IEP Team.

### 2. *How do we know that a student has a "significant cognitive disability"?*

Maryland does not define "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. Furthermore, not all students with these disabilities are considered to have a "significant cognitive disability." Many students eligible to receive special education and related services under these categorical labels may be able to participate in general assessments, with or without accommodations. A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student learning across all content areas and in social and community settings. Students demonstrating academic deficits or difficulties solely due to specific learning disabilities, speech-language impairments, other health impairments and emotional-behavioral disabilities do not qualify for participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments. Students, however, may be from any of the disability categories listed in the IDEA. 34 CFR 200.1(f)(2). Performing three to four 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.

Determinations for student participation in statewide assessments must be evidence-based and made individually for each student by the IEP team using the criteria set forth in this document. A student who is eligible for the alternate assessment is one for whom the general assessment is inappropriate even with accommodations. Students demonstrating mild to moderate cognitive disabilities may be more appropriately placed in the general assessment system with or without accommodations. Anticipated or past low achievement on the general assessment does not mean the student should be taking the Maryland Alternate Assessments.

**3. *How do I know if the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for an English Language Learner (ELL) with an IEP whose language proficiency makes it difficult to assess content knowledge and skills?***

An ELL should be considered for the alternate assessments if his/her intellectual functioning indicates a significant cognitive disability using assessments in his/her spoken language as appropriate and he/she meets the other participation guidelines for the Maryland Alternate Assessments. Assessments of adaptive behavior and communication should take into account linguistic and sociocultural factors for valid interpretation of these assessments, alongside progress on goals and objectives 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 assessments, he/she should take the general assessment with or without accommodations as appropriate. ELL status alone is not appropriate to consider as a criteria for participation in the alternate assessment.

**4. *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 mode of communication with the student as soon as he or she is enrolled in school. If various approaches and technologies do not appear to demonstrate a consistent mode 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 competence as the base for student access to the MCCRS. Best practice is that students have a communication system in place that allows them to demonstrate an understanding of academic concepts prior to participation in statewide accountability assessments. However, students must still participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments with or without a communication system. Each IEP team should continue to provide the necessary supports in order to develop a communication system for a student.

**5. *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 criteria set forth in the Maryland Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments, can the student participate in the general assessment?***

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

**6. *Is it possible that a decision to participate in an alternate assessment based on alternate***



***academic achievement standards could change as a student gets older?***

Yes. Participating in the Maryland Alternate Assessments requires that the student has a significant cognitive disability and is instructed using 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 may be identified early, sometimes 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 students with significant cognitive disabilities participating in an alternate assessment in their early school years. When the level of support needed for the student to participate in the breadth of the MCCRS and the general assessment increases, the IEP Team may determine that participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments is appropriate.

**7. *What is the relationship between the Maryland Alternate Assessments and a Maryland High School Diploma?***

In order to earn a Maryland High School Diploma, a student must meet a number of requirements, including passing the standard State assessments (i.e. PARCC assessments) or completing the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation. COMAR 13A.03.02.09B. If a student with a disability cannot meet the requirements for a diploma, but has met other criteria, the student will be awarded a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion. COMAR 13A.03.02.09E. The vast majority of students with disabilities will participate in the PARCC assessments and/or Bridge Plan for Academic Validation, even if they are eventually unable to meet the requirements for a diploma and are awarded a certificate instead. For example, the student must pass all required courses, must pass the end-of-year assessment assigned to each required course, and must pass the required standard State assessments (PARCC or HSA). During this time of transition to the PARCC assessments, graduation criteria may change depending upon State Board decisions regarding graduation requirements and statewide assessments.

Assessment and instruction drive each other. Anytime an IEP team determines that the Maryland Alternate Assessments are appropriate for a particular student, the IEP team is determining that, during the current school year, the student requires instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards. A student with a significant cognitive disability may not meet the requirements for a diploma if the student participates in alternate State assessments and continues to receive instruction based on alternate achievement standards through high school. COMAR 13A.03.02.09E(4). Thus, the IEP team is also determining that the student is, during the current school year, pursuing a certificate rather than a diploma.

A student who is taking the Maryland Alternate Assessments could eventually earn a diploma by meeting all graduation requirements. The IEP team must continually monitor the student's progress to determine if and when that is a possibility, before making the final decision to award a certificate during the student's last year in high school. COMAR 13A.03.02.09E(3). Because the likelihood of fulfilling the requirements to earn a diploma decreases as a student continues to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments, however, it is critical for the IEP team to revisit its assessment decisions in light of student progress.

**8. *What process should be followed if the parent/guardian or student disagrees with the IEP Team's decision for the student to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessment?***

As a member of the IEP team, the parent/guardian, and student, as appropriate, participates in

the IEP decision-making process. Every effort should be made by the IEP team to resolve any disagreements. However, if a parent/guardian or student continues to disagree with the decision(s) of the IEP team and believes his/her rights under IDEA have been violated, his/her concerns may be resolved in a variety of ways, including advocacy and partnering with the school system. The parent/guardian or student should, however, be aware that there are several formal ways in which families and school systems can resolve their differences. There is mediation, due process hearings and formal complaints which may be filed with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). While disputes are in place, the current IEP should remain in effect. Mediation is a process where a trained mediator helps a parent/guardian and school system to reach an agreement. All parties must be willing to participate since the mediation process is voluntary.

A parent/guardian also has the right to file for a due process hearing. This is a more formal way to resolve disputes between families and school systems, and the hearing is conducted by an administrative law judge through the State Office of Administrative Hearings. A parent/guardian may request a due process hearing by submitting the request forms found on the MSDE website at [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org). A parent/guardian may also file a State complaint with the MSDE.

Should a parent/guardian decide to file a complaint, the complaint must be submitted to the Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, 9th Floor Baltimore, Maryland. 21201. A copy of the completed complaint form must also be sent to the Director of Special Education for the school system where the student is attending. Additional information concerning the filing of a State complaint, including the form for filing the complaint, can also be found by visiting the MSDE website, above. Please be aware that although there is not a requirement that the form be used, all of the information that is requested on the form must be provided in order for the MSDE, DSE/EIS to initiate a complaint investigation.

**9. Who may we contact with questions about the assessment and this important decision?**

Please contact the Maryland State Department of Education for additional information.

**Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services**

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## Glossary

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- **Alternate Academic Achievement Standards:** Performance standards which are based on a limited sample of content that is linked to grade-level content standard. This content, however, may not fully represent grade-level content and may include content, which is substantially simplified.
- **AAC:** Augmentative and Alternative Communication (e.g., communication generating devices such as text-to- speech communication aids, picture or symbol boards, etc.)
- **Accommodation:** A change in materials or procedures that facilitates access during instruction and assessment. Accommodations do not change the construct or intent of what is being taught or measured. Assessment accommodations are intended to allow the student to participate in the assessment and to produce valid results that indicate what a student knows and can do.
- **Adaptive behavior:** A collection of behaviors, including conceptual, social, interpersonal, and practical skills, defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.
- **Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS):** A set of content standards that define what students are expected to learn at each grade in order to leave school ready for college or careers. For information on the MCCRS, visit online at–  
<http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/index.html>
- **Communicative competence:** A consistent, meaningful, and reliable means of expressing thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas.
- **Constructed response item:** A type of question that asks students to compose their own answer to the question or prompt.
- **Content target:** Content standards that are the focus of the assessment. For the Maryland Alternate Assessment the content targets are defined by the Core Content Connectors in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- **Core Content Connector (CCC):** A representation of the essential “core” content of a standard in the MCCRS. Each CCC was identified by examining hypothesized learning progressions aligned with the MCCRS to determine the critical content for students with significant cognitive disabilities. For information, visit online at–  
[https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/All\\_Resources](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/All_Resources)
- **Participation criteria descriptor:** Information about the characteristics students possess in order to meet the participation criteria for the Maryland Alternate Assessments.
- **English Language Learner (ELL):** A student whose native language is a language other than English or 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.

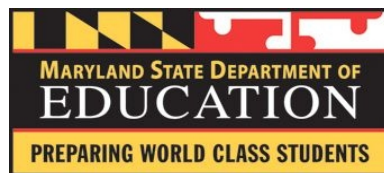
- **Evidence:** Specific and measurable sources of information being used to identify student characteristics that either meet or do not meet the participation criteria.
- **Extensive, individualized, repeated, and direct instruction:** Concentrated instruction designed for and provided to an individual 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 to apply knowledge and skills in multiple contexts.
- **Learning progression:** A description of the way in which typically developing students may develop and build academic competencies over time. Learning progressions are used by teachers to determine where a student is in the process of learning a specific skill or understanding a concept.
- **Modification:** A change in materials or procedures during instruction and assessment that changes the learning expectations of the grade level content. 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.
- **Selected response items:** Assessment items that are structured for students to respond by choosing an answer (e.g., multiple choice, true or false, etc.).
- **Substantial supports:** Support from the teachers and others (e.g., resource teacher, co-teacher, aide) and various material supports within the student's environment. Examples include adapting text for assessments and learning, and extensive scaffolding of content to support learning.
- **Substantially adapted materials:** 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. Examples include significantly shortening the length of passages, or using raised dots and hand-over-hand counting when identifying a matching number in math.

# Appendix A

## Participation Criteria and Checklist

### *Maryland Guidance for IEP Teams* on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services



Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Disability Code \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_  
 Residence School \_\_\_\_\_ Service School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Service County \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
 SASSID# \_\_\_\_\_ LEA Number \_\_\_\_\_

IEP Team Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Team Chair signature verifies that all established criteria were considered.)

**Team Members: Each participant should print name, provide title, and sign/date below:**

Name (Please Print)	Title	Signature	Date

*\*If the parent does not attend the meeting and does not sign this form, attach documentation of parent notification and informed consent for the meeting along with notification of the decisions of the IEP Team that were provided to the parent.*

**Parent Understanding:**

*I have been informed that if my child is determined eligible to participate in Maryland Alternate Assessments through the IEP Team Decision-Making Process:*

- 1. My child will be progressing toward a Maryland Certificate of Program Completion. If my child continues to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments, he/she may not be eligible for a Maryland High School Diploma. His/her continued participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments will not prepare him/her to meet the high school diploma requirements. \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian Initials)*
- 2. The decision for my child to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments must be made annually. \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian Initials)*

IEP Teams are encouraged to use this eligibility tool when identifying students with a “significant cognitive disability” for participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments. In order for the student to be eligible to participate in the alternate assessments, the IEP Team must answer **AGREE** to **ALL** of the criteria items. **If the IEP Team disagrees, responding with a DISAGREE for one or more questions, the IEP Team should stop using this form and consider the student eligible for participation in the general PARCC Assessment with or without accommodations.** The IEP Team must use multiple sources of information, such as the current IEP, results from formal and informal assessments, data gathered from classroom assessments, and information gathered from parent/student that document academic achievement to guide the decision-making process for participation in the appropriate statewide assessment.

**The student may participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science if the IEP Team answers AGREE to ALL participation criteria outlined below.**

Maryland Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria	Maryland Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Descriptors	Sources of Evidence [check if used]
<p>1. The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP).</p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
<p>2. The student has a significant cognitive disability.</p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Review of student records indicates a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.</p> <p><i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life. See Glossary, page 11.</i></p>	<p>___ Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</p> <p>___ Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p>___ Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</p> <p>___ Results of informal assessments</p> <p>___ Results of individual English Language Arts, Science, and Mathematics assessments</p> <p>___ Results of district-wide alternate assessments</p> <p>___ Results of language assessments including English Language Learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</p>
<p>3. The student is learning content derived from the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS).</p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Goals and objectives listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade-level MCCRS and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student. The grade level curriculum is significantly adapted in order for the student to access knowledge and skills that are appropriate.</p>	<p>___ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials, including work samples</p> <p>___ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</p> <p>___ Data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p>___ Progress monitoring data</p>

<p><b>4.</b> The student requires extensive, direct, repeated, and individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum.</p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of temporary or transient nature and (b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across academic content.</p>	<p>____ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community-based instruction</p> <p>____ Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p>____ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and the Transition Plan for students age 14 and older unless State policy or the IEP team determines a younger age is appropriate.</p>
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**The criteria for participation in the Maryland Alternate Assessments reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate in this assessment. A student who participates in the Maryland Alternate Assessments participates in this assessment for all content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.**

**Complete the following Evaluation Review of Cognitive/Adaptive Ability:**

**Individual Cognitive Ability Assessment:**

Name and Title of Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

Most Recent Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Score(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Educational Assessment:**

Name and Title of Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

Most Recent Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Score(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Adaptive Skills Assessment:**

Name and Title of Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

Most Recent Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Score(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Please use this space to include any additional assessment data/scores that guide the IEP Team discussion (optional):**

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\*All Standard and Composite Scores shall be considered when reviewing multiple sources of data. **If documentation in one of the requested areas is not available, a detailed explanation is required below.** Please include any medical or other information that may have prevented administration of the assessment in the requested areas.

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***Evidence shows that the decision for participating in the Maryland Alternate Assessments was not based on the list below.***

To consider a student eligible for participation in alternate assessments, the IEP Team must also answer **AGREE** to **ALL** of the items listed below. **NOTE:** A **DISAGREE** response indicates the student did not meet the eligibility criteria for Maryland Alternate Assessments and, therefore, the student will participate in the MSA or PARCC assessments with or without accommodations, as appropriate, based on his/her IEP. Please refer to the Maryland Accommodations Manual for more information about accommodations and Maryland assessments.

1. A disability category or label.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
2. Poor attendance or extended absences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic differences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
5. Academic and other services the student receives	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
6. Educational environment or instructional setting.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
7. Percent of time receiving special education services.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
8. English Language Learner (ELL) status.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
9. Low reading and mathematics achievement level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
10. Anticipated disruptive behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
11. The impact of test scores on accountability system.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
12. Administrator decision.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
13. Anticipated emotional stress.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
14. Need for accommodations, e.g. assistive technology/ACC to participate in the assessment process.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree

**IEP Team Statement of Assurance:** *Our decision was based on multiple pieces of evidence that, when taken together, demonstrated that the Maryland Alternate Assessments are the appropriate assessments for this student; that his/her academic instruction will be based on the CCCs linked to the MCCRS; that the additional considerations listed above were not used to make this decision; and that any additional implications of this decision were discussed thoroughly, including disqualification for a regular high school diploma. 34 CFR § 300.160.d.*

Name	Position		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree

**Eligibility Criteria:** As documented through the eligibility criteria and additional requirements listed above, it has been determined that the student is learning a sample of content that is linked to grade-level content standards, which does not fully represent grade level content as assessed on the MSA, HSA, or PARCC assessments. Therefore, the student cannot participate in general assessments even with the provision of accommodations.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

If the IEP Team checked Disagree above, the student **does not meet the eligibility criteria for the Maryland Alternate Assessments** as listed above and, therefore, the student will participate in the MSA, HSA, or PARCC assessment, with or without accommodations, as appropriate, based on his/her IEP. Refer to the Maryland Accommodations Manual for more information about accommodations and Maryland's assessments.

**Assessment Participation:** The IEP Team agreed that the student met all criteria listed on this eligibility tool; therefore, the IEP Team determined the student **eligible** to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments.

☐ Yes/Agree

☐ No/Disagree

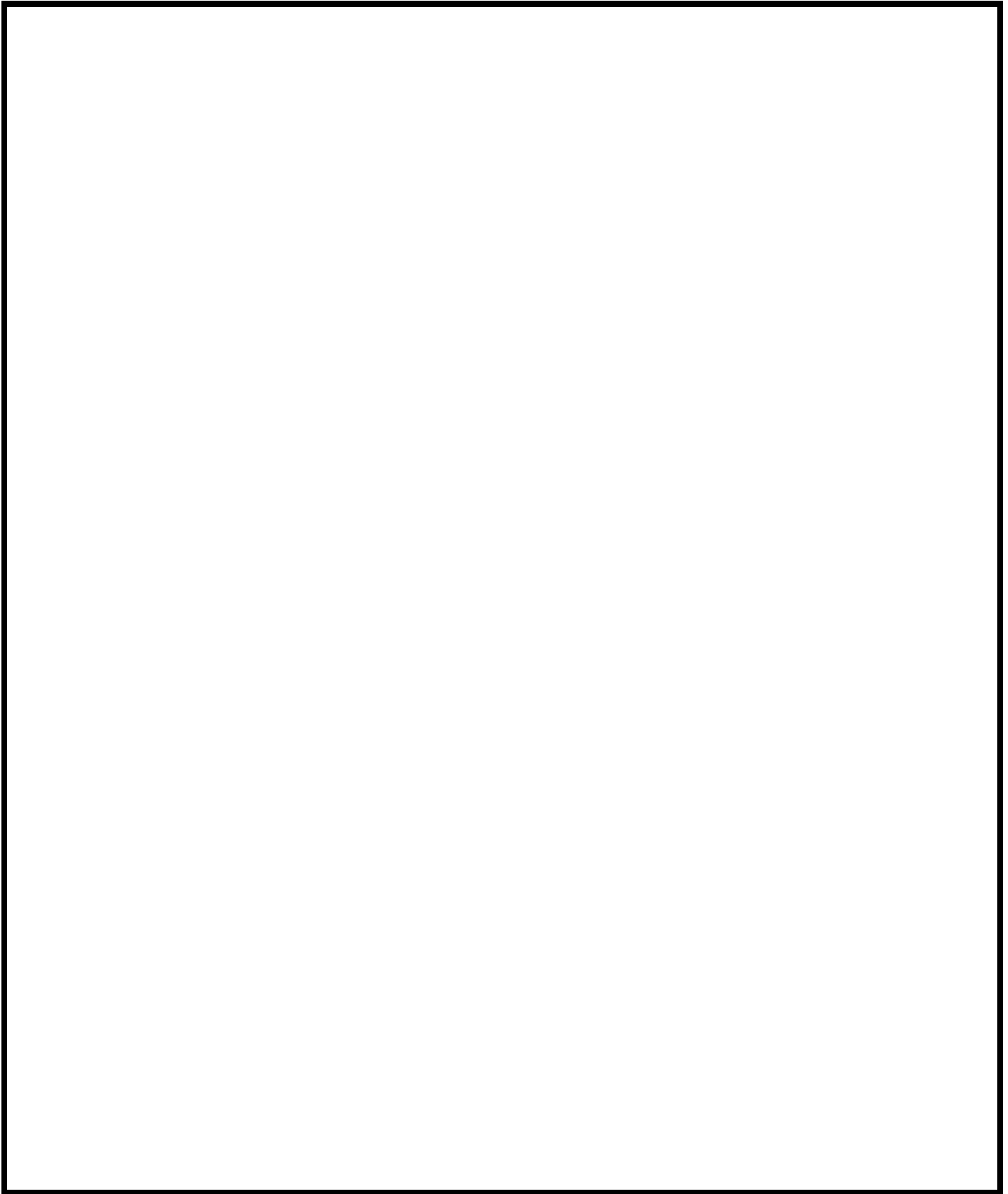
Do the historical data (current and longitudinal across multiple settings) justify the IEP Team's decision for the student to participate in the Maryland Alternate Assessments?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please use the space below to provide justification of the IEP Team decision.

Please use the space below to document any disagreement with this decision by any IEP Team member.



# Appendix B

## The Maryland Alternate Assessments Participation Decision Flowchart

*Maryland Guidance for IEP Teams  
on Participation Decisions for the  
Alternate Assessments*

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

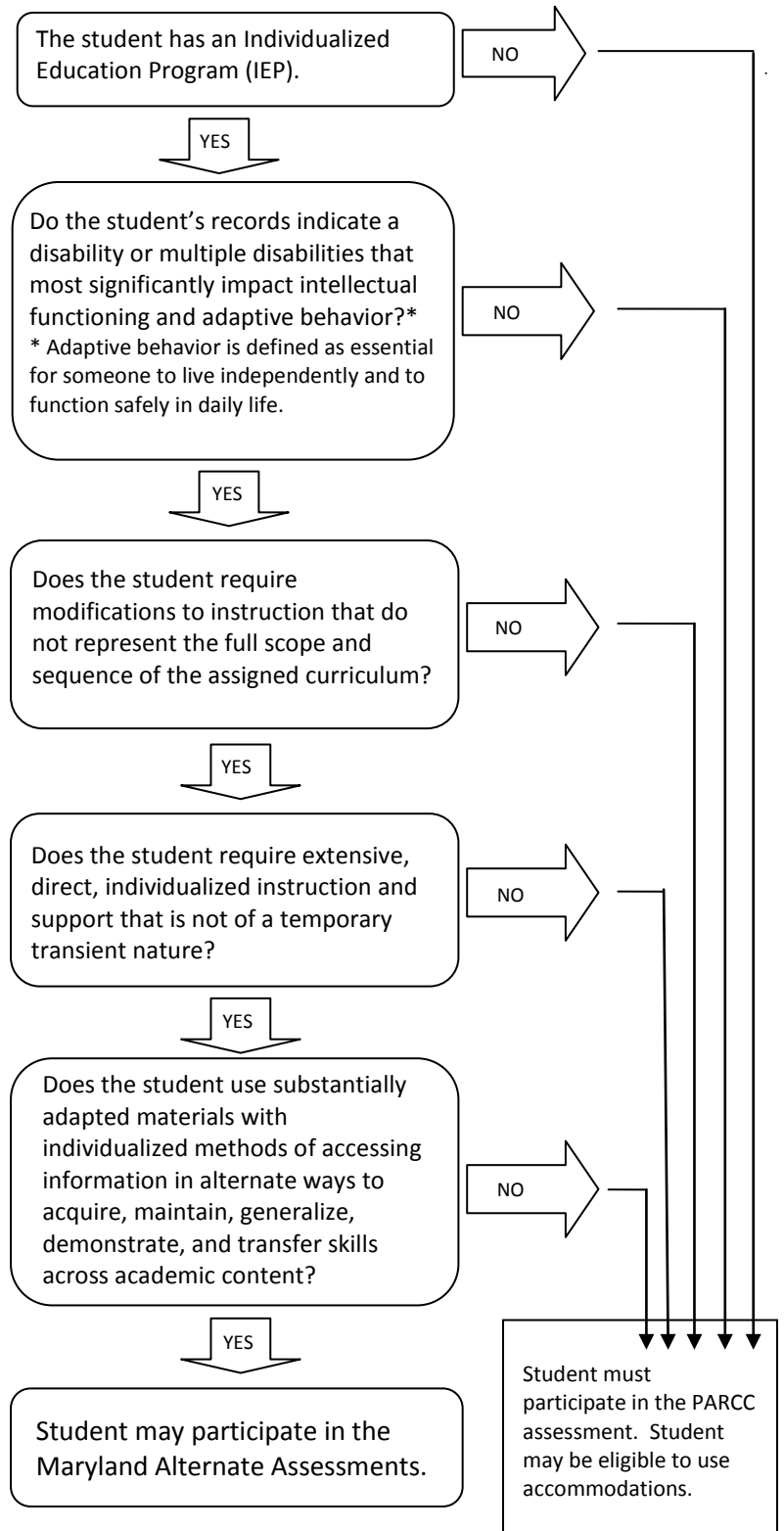


## Maryland Alternate Assessments Participation Decision Flowchart

### Consider These:

- Anecdotal parent input
- Individual Cognitive Ability tests
- Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment
- Individual/group administered achievement tests
- District-wide alternate assessments
- English language proficiency assessment (if applicable)
- Data from scientific research-based interventions
- Progress monitoring data
- Results of informal assessments
- Teacher collected data and checklists
- Examples of curriculum, instructional materials, and work samples from community-based instruction
- Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and Transition Plan

**This flowchart must be used in conjunction with Appendix A: *Participation Criteria and Checklist*.**



## **Maryland Guidance for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments**

### **Contact Information**

Please contact the Maryland State Department of Education if you have questions about participation decision making for the Maryland Alternate Assessments.

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**January 2016**

**Maryland Guidance for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments**

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