

WHAT are the criteria for the North Dakota Alternate Assessment?

The North Dakota Alternate Assessment Criteria is as follows:

1. The student's cognitive ability and adaptive behavior prevent completion of part or all of the general education curriculum; AND
2. The student requires extensive, frequent and individualized instruction in multiple settings in order to maintain or generalize skills necessary to function in school, at home, in the community, and during recreation/leisure and vocational activities; AND
3. The students' curriculum is so individualized that the general assessment will not reflect what the student is being taught.

In other words: *The student must meet all three of the above criteria.*

WHAT accommodations can be used with the state assessment?

The State Assessment will have examples of accommodations listed in the Test Coordinators Manual. Other assessments may also include accommodations. Check each test manual. Typically accommodations will fall into four categories. These are:

1. **Timing or Scheduling**-giving the student more time or allowing more breaks.
2. **Method of administration**-using sign language, reading directions, underlining key words in the directions, using large print, increasing the space between test questions, using hearing or visual magnification devices, using markers to help students keep their place, or having fewer questions on a page.
3. **Method of response**- using a word processor, calculator, or marking answers in the test booklet.
4. **Location of test administration**-having the student take the test in a different place to reduce distractions.

In other words: *an accommodation should be used if it is based on the student's need and is typically used in his/her education program. If an accommodation is listed in a student's IEP it should be used in assessing that child.*

HOW will the student benefit from these assessments?

Your child will benefit because his/her teacher and IEP team will have a better understanding of his/her level of performance in general academic areas. Another benefit will be overall school improvement based on student performance data. There are also enhanced opportunities to participate in regular classroom settings and curriculum due to a greater understanding of what the student knows and is able to do in Math, Science, Social Studies, and English language arts. There will also be a better understanding of what he/she needs to learn next. The fact that the student is being measured by the State content standards for curriculum improves successful outcomes in general education settings with same age peers.

WHO can I talk to if I have more questions about the North Dakota Alternate Assessment (NDALT)?

- Your local Special Education Unit Office:
(701) _____
- ND Department of Public Instruction
Office of Special Education
Bismarck: (701) 328-2277
TDD: (701) 328-4920
Website: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/>
- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
Toll free: 1-800-695-0285
Website: <http://www.nichcy.org/>

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Students with Disabilities and the North Dakota State and District-Wide Assessments

Information for Parents and Educators



Department of Public Instruction
Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent
Office of Special Education
600 E Blvd Avenue, Dept. 201
Bismarck ND 58505-0440

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The Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 requires that all students with disabilities be included in state and district-wide accountability. The recent reauthorization of Title I legislation (Public Law 107-110) the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, further reinforces the need to include all students in accountability systems and includes efforts for higher levels of academic performance. North Dakota complies with both IDEA and No Child Left Behind requirements, which include standards based reform and promote greater accountability for all students.

The purpose of this brochure is to answer commonly asked questions and to provide parents with an understanding of how students with disabilities are included in State and district-wide accountability systems.



WHO needs to participate in state and district-wide assessments?

All students must be included. Public Law 105-17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (IDEA '97) requires that each state establish goals for the performance of students with disabilities that are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for all students established by each State.

Title I legislation in No Child Left Behind mandates that all students be included in accountability systems and that all students reach the level of proficient by the year 2014. Therefore, all students must be included in school-wide assessments with the provision of appropriate and necessary accommodations.



WHAT assessments does this include?

North Dakota currently requires the North Dakota State Assessment (The California Achievement Test- CAT/Terra Nova with state supplement) for all students in the grade levels mandated by the ND State Legislature. These are currently grades 3,4,5,6,7,8, & 11. All North Dakota Schools are required to give this assessment at these grade levels.

Some districts give additional tests for all students in additional grades. These would be considered to be district-wide tests. Students with disabilities would be required to participate in these assessments as well, if they are currently enrolled in the same grade that is being assessed.



What are the current assessment options in North Dakota?

North Dakota provides three options for participation in the State Assessment. These are:

1. Take the assessment without accommodations;
or
2. Take the assessment with accommodations;
or
3. Take the North Dakota Alternate Assessment (NDALT)



If my child took the North Dakota State Assessment or the Alternate Assessment last year, because they tested in his/her grade, does he/she need to take it again this year because they are testing the next grade?

YES, all students must participate in the state assessment along with their peers.



What if the IEP team decided to have him/her repeat the same grade for a second year? Does he/she take the test again?

YES, the recent Title I legislation requires that all students reach the level of "proficient" by the year 2014 and school districts will be held accountable for the performance of all students each and every year.



Why are State and district-wide assessments given? What are their purpose?

State and district-wide assessments are generally given for the purpose of school accountability. Individual results provide information to parents and teachers about what the child knows and is able to do, in reference to the State Content Standards. These standards are levels of expectations for what

all North Dakota students should know and be able to do.

School administrators and personnel use the information to look at how successful the school has been and where improvements need to be made. Statewide results assist districts in looking at how their schools are doing in comparison to other districts.



WHO decides how a student with disabilities is involved in these assessments?

The IEP team decides. Discussion about state and district-wide assessments must take place at your child's IEP meeting, with parent(s) present.



HOW does the IEP team make these decisions?

Several questions need to be asked in order to make an informed decision about what assessment needs to be given or what accommodations need to be made. These might be:

1. Can the student take the regular assessment with no accommodations?
2. Can the student take the regular assessment with accommodations?
3. If not, what accommodations need to be made?
4. If none of the above are appropriate, does the student need to take the North Dakota Alternate Assessment?
5. Does the student fit the criteria for the North Dakota Alternate Assessment?



WHAT is the North Dakota Alternate Assessment (NDALT) and is there more than one in the state?

The North Dakota Alternate Assessment (NDALT) is the only alternate assessment in the state of North Dakota. It was written by the ND Department of Public Instruction, Division of Special Education in conjunction with field personnel, based on the North Dakota Content Standards. It is intended to measure student performance against the ND Content Standards in the areas of Math, and English Language Arts. If a school is testing additional subjects, Social Studies and Science can also be assessed through the NDALT.