

2021

Rhode Island State Assessment Program

2020-21 IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessments



**Rhode Island
Department
of Education**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Design and Structure of the DLM Assessments	4
Accommodations and Accessibility.....	4
Assessment Design.....	4
Standards and Content	4
Assessment Administration	5
IEP Goals.....	5
When to Make Eligibility Decisions.....	5
Step 1: Understanding the Eligibility Criteria for Alternate Assessments	7
Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form (2020-21).....	9
Documentation of Evidence Form for Alternate Assessment Eligibility	10
Step 2: Gathering Evidence.....	11
List 1: Good Sources of Evidence and Data to Use for Eligibility Conversations	11
List 2: Do Not Use These Factors or Data to Inform an Eligibility Decision.	12
Step 3: Documenting the Decision.....	13
If Decision is <i>Yes</i>	13
If Decision is <i>No</i>	13
Disagreement with the Decision.....	13
Review of Eligibility Determinations	14
Graduation	14
Glossary.....	15

Participation in the Rhode Island Assessment Program is an important way of ensuring that each student has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills addressed in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSA) and have access to the general curriculum. The standards assessed in the DLM alternate assessments are the Essential Elements (EEs). The Essential Elements are aligned to the CCSS and the NGSS.

What is an “alternate assessment”? The majority of students with disabilities are able to participate in the general education curriculum, and will take the RICAS (which replaced the PARCC assessments in 2018) with accommodations and other supports. However, a small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities cannot participate in the general education assessments even with accommodations. These students require a different kind of test in order for them to show what they know and can do.

The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of participation in the statewide student assessment program. For a student to be considered as having a significant cognitive disability for purposes of participation in the alternate assessment, ALL of the criteria found in this document must be true as determined by the evidence collected and considered by all members of the student’s IEP team.

Alternate assessments are designed around the unique needs of students that take into account motor, hearing, vision, and other physical disabilities as well as cognitive disabilities. While these assessments assess the Essential Elements, which are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the level at which the content presented is less complex and students receive more scaffolding and supports than on the general education assessment. The number of standards assessed is also much less than what is assessed on RICAS.

What is the purpose of this document? This document is intended to help Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members decide whether the alternate assessment or the general education assessment with or without accommodations is the most appropriate test for a student. This document should be used to evaluate the evidence in the IEP to ensure that decisions are appropriate and in compliance with the entire IEP process.

IEP teams must consider a student’s individual characteristics when determining if a student should participate in the general assessments with or without accommodations, or in the alternate assessments. This document outlines two important steps that an IEP team should take to make that decision:

1. Review student records, data, and other important information across multiple school years and instructional settings (e.g., school, home, community), and
2. Determine whether, based on the evidence collected, the student meets all of the criteria for participating in the alternate assessments as outlined in this document.

What do the tests look like? Below are short introductions to the DLM assessments to help IEP team members understand the design, accommodations, and other supports embedded within the alternate assessments. If a student is found eligible for the alternate assessments and is also identified for EL services, the student must also participate in this assessment.

THE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF THE DLM ASSESSMENTS

English language arts and mathematics: grades 3-8 and 11

Science: grades 5, 8, and 11

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments are designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom general state assessments are not appropriate, even with accommodations. DLM assessments offer these students a way to show what they know and can do in mathematics, English language arts, and science.

DLM assessments also help parents and educators establish high academic expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Results from DLM assessments support interpretations about what students know and can do. Results will also inform teachers' instructional decisions and meet federal requirements for reporting student achievement.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY

DLM assessments are designed to maximize accessibility for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Assessments are built to allow multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understandings. At multiple points during the assessment development process, teams of educators review the testlets to ensure instructional relevance and to minimize barriers for students.

During assessment administration, students have access to various tools and test supports that teachers will select to fit each student's needs and preferences. Some of these tools and supports are delivered through the online assessment system while others are provided outside the system, by the teacher. IEP teams will need to review these tools and test supports and make decisions about which ones are appropriate for the student.

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

The Dynamic Learning Maps team uses a cyclical, multi-step process to develop assessments. DLM assessments are delivered as "testlets" – short, instructionally-relevant groups of items that share a common context. DLM testlets are developed using principles of evidence-centered design by subject-matter experts with additional expertise in instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Test items go through multiple rounds of review by DLM staff; internal item reviewers; editors; and educators in DLM states, who serve as external reviewers. Reviewers are carefully trained to look for potential problems with the test items' academic content and accessibility for students, as well as to identify potential bias or sensitive topics in the items. After testlets are reviewed, they are field tested in DLM states. Testlets that meet certain standards after field testing can then be included in DLM assessments.

» *Information on released testlets can be found at:* www.ride.ri.gov/dlm

STANDARDS AND CONTENT

The DLM Alternate Assessment System uses a learning map model to diagram the relationship among the knowledge, skills, and understandings necessary to meet academic content standards (the Essential Elements). The learning map model plots out individual concepts. The connections among these nodes show the multiple ways that students' knowledge, skills, and understandings develop over time.

By examining the learning map model and the relationships between its nodes, educators can better uncover reasons a student may be struggling with a particular concept and also see paths ahead for that student to continue to expand their knowledge and skills.

To connect the model's extensive content to real-world expectations for students, certain nodes within the model are associated with **Essential Elements (EEs)**. EEs are specific statements about what students should know and be able to do. They are linked to grade-level-specific expectations described in college- and career-readiness standards for students in the general population, and they provide a bridge between those standards and academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION

Dynamic Learning Maps assessments are delivered online through the Kite Student Portal. Member states may choose from one of two models of assessment: integrated and year-end. Rhode Island will administer the year-end assessments.

In the year-end model, all students are assessed each spring, with all students in a particular grade being assessed on the same Essential Elements.

The DLM assessments are adaptive tests. That means the students receive testlets of varying difficulty depending on their previous answers.

IEP GOALS

All IEPs for students taking the DLM must be aligned to the CCSS and NGSS using the Essential Elements. In order to create tests appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities that are also aligned to the Common Core and the NGSS, DLM created a "bridge" called the Essential Elements (EEs).

EEs may be used to align intermediate goals on IEPs. Teachers and IEP teams are encouraged to use the CCSS and NGSS along with the EEs to guide the development of appropriate academic goals that allow the student maximum engagement with the general curriculum and typical peers with appropriate adaptations, simplifications, and modifications to grade-level materials and content.

WHEN TO MAKE ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS

Grade 2

Since state assessments begin at grade 3, IEP teams should conduct a formal eligibility process at some point in grade 2. This would ensure that teachers and service providers have time to develop an instructional plan, IEP goals, etc., that will best position the student's teacher and the student for success in grade 3. Try to avoid waiting to make eligibility decisions at grade 3. It is important the students have as much instructional time as possible aligned to the Essential Elements before taking the DLM assessments.

Grades 3-8, 10, and 11

While there is no deadline for making eligibility determinations, it is important to do this as early in the school year as possible. Students found eligible at any point after the school year has started should take the DLM assessments for their designated grade level, however, if an IEP team reaches a decision two weeks or less before the start of the DLM tests, preparing for the DLM alternate assessments will be difficult.

In addition to all of the updates to the Enrollment and Special Education Censuses, registration must also happen in the DLM Kite Educator Portal. The First Contact Survey and Personal Needs Profile must be completed by the student's teacher *prior to the start of testing*. Please ensure that IEP team decisions

are made as far in advance of this date as possible. Teachers run the risk of not being able to complete the required steps to administer the DLM assessments if decisions are made after this date.

Grade 9, 12

State academic assessments are not administered in these grade levels. However, ACCESS for EIs and Alternate ACCESS for EL are. Most students at these grade levels will have an eligibility determination already. If the decision of the IEP team is that the student is eligible for the academic alternate assessments, then the student must take the Alternate ACCESS for EIs.

If a formal eligibility determination has not yet been made, then, even though there are not academic tests in these grade levels, a formal eligibility process must be conducted and the IEP Team must make a determination. If the IEP team determines that the student does meet the criteria, then the student must take the Alternate ACCESS for EIs.

STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

Required Assessments: If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible for the alternate assessments, then the student must participate in the appropriate DLM alternate assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science for their current grade level. If the student is an English learner, then the student must also participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELs for their current grade level.

The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of their participation in the state assessment program. For a student to be found as having a significant cognitive disability, each of the three criteria must be true as determined by the student’s IEP team:

1. **Student has a disability, or disabilities, that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.** Review of student records and other evidence indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that prevent the student from meaningful participation in the standard academic core curriculum or achievement of the standards at their enrolled grade level. Additionally, the student’s disability causes dependence on others for many, and sometimes all, daily living needs, and the student is expected to require extensive, ongoing support in adulthood.
 - a) Regardless of a student’s disability category, evidence collected should show that the effect of the student’s disability significantly impacts their ability to function cognitively and adaptive behavior.
2. **As documented in the IEP, the student’s present levels of academic achievement indicate their ability to make progress through the alternate achievement standards (EEs) and the short term objectives include skills and concepts reflected in the steps found in the alternate achievement standard (EEs) learning maps, and the annual academic goals are closely aligned to grade-level alternate achievement standards.** IEP teams should review the student’s present levels of performance, short-term goals and objectives, and the performance targets for the student to ensure that the concepts and skills the student is working on not only reflect the skills and concepts in the EEs but that the short-term goals closely align with the learning maps that will lead to grade-level performance targets.
 - a) The **present levels of performance** described in the IEP:
 - What formative and summative data (Aimsweb, WISC, Woodcock-Johnson, STAR, WIAT, etc.) did you use to support the selection of the EEs and the development of the IEP goals (short-term objectives and annual goals)? *List the data you used on the Documentation of Evidence Form.*
 - What are the levels of support (level of independence/levels and types of prompting and support) required by the student in order to make progress through the alternate achievement standards? *List the data you used on the Documentation of Evidence Form.*
 - b) The **short-terms goals and objectives** reflect the skills and concepts contained in the learning map steps.
 - c) The **annual academic goals** are closely aligned to the alternate achievement standards for the student’s current grade level.
3. **The student is unable to apply academic, life, and job skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple settings.** The student’s demonstrated cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior across these settings is significantly below age expectations, even with program modifications, adaptations, and accommodations. This covers the three aspects of learning:
 - a) *What the student needs in order to learn.* In other words, the student **requires** extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and supports from teachers and other professionals.

- b) *The types of materials required in order for the student to learn.* Materials are significantly modified, customized, and adapted in order to facilitate understanding.
- c) *How the student demonstrates their learning.* His or her need for substantial supports to achieve gains in the grade-and-age-appropriate curriculum requires substantially adapted materials and customized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA FOR ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS FORM (2020-21)

Directions: This form should be completed, signed, attached to the IEP, and placed in the student’s file at the time of the student’s annual IEP review.

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

State-Assigned Student ID (SASID): 1000-_____ IEP Meeting Date: _____

Participation Criteria	Decision*	
	YES	NO
CRITERIA 1: Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.		
CRITERIA 2: As documented in the IEP, the student’s present levels of academic achievement indicate their ability to make progress through the alternate achievement standards (EEs) <i>and</i> the short term objectives include skills and concepts reflected in the steps found in the alternate achievement standard (EEs) learning maps, <i>and</i> the annual academic goals are closely aligned to grade-level alternate achievement standards.		
CRITERIA 3: The student is unable to apply academic, life, and job skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple settings.		

**If any decision is no, the IEP team must follow the instructions on page 12, If the Decision is NO.*

IEP Team Assurance: The IEP team has thoroughly discussed the evidence gathered to determine eligibility, how that evidence aligns to the three criteria, it has used only the three participation criteria above, and no others, to reach that decision (*List 1 on page 11*). The IEP team has informed the parent(s) of the implications of their child’s participation in the alternate assessments, namely that:

- Their child’s academic progress towards achievement of the content standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science will be measured using the Essential Elements.
- They understand the graduation options for their child.

NOTE: LEAs may choose to award diplomas to students who qualify for the alternate assessment if the student demonstrates proficiency through their coursework using modified proficiency expectations for state-adopted standards (CCSS, NGSS, etc.). LEAs also have the authority to award a certificate of alternate recognition of high school accomplishment, in accordance with LEA-defined policies and criteria (*see page 12 of this manual for more information*).

- They have been informed of any other implications, including any effects of local policies on the student’s education, resulting from taking an alternate assessment.
- The IEP team *does / does not (circle one)* find this student eligible to participate in the alternate assessments.

Name of LEA Representative (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature of LEA Representative: _____

DOCUMENTATION OF EVIDENCE FORM FOR ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILITY

Directions: Please include this form along with the Participation Criteria form, in the student's IEP. This worksheet is designed to help IEP Teams evaluate evidence to make accurate eligibility decisions. While none of the evidence listed below is required, it would be difficult to make a defensible eligibility determination without it. Please ensure that any additional evidence used is **not included** on List 2. **This worksheet can be downloaded from www.ride.ri.gov/dlm**

CRITERIA 1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior.

EVIDENCE:

- Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test*
- Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment*
- Results of informal assessments
- Results of speech/augmentative communication evaluations (can the student communicate in an age-appropriate way that demonstrates their ability to stay safe and take care of themselves effectively?) *
- OTHER:

DIRECTIONS: Evidence with asterisks (*) will provide the strongest evidence toward making an eligibility decision. However, you can use additional evidence to support the eligibility decision (List 1 on page 10). For each piece of evidence with an asterisk, describe how the evidence shows that the student's disability, or disabilities, impact their cognitive function and adaptive behavior.

CRITERIA 2. As documented in the IEP, the student's present levels of academic achievement indicate their ability to make progress through the alternate achievement standards (EEs) *and* the short term objectives include skills and concepts reflected in the steps found in the alternate achievement standard (EEs) learning maps, *and* the annual academic goals are closely aligned to grade-level alternate achievement standards.

EVIDENCE: Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from current and past IEPs and the Essential Elements, and examples of student work.

DIRECTIONS: List the present levels of academic and functional performance and the Essential Elements and/or learning map steps they most closely align to. Essential Elements and learning map documents can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/dlm.

CRITERIA 3. The student is unable to apply academic, life, and job skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple settings.

EVIDENCE:

- Parent and guardian observations of the student in settings outside of school.*
- Examples of work samples from school in life skills, reading, mathematics, science, writing, etc.*
- Descriptions of community-based instruction (example: home-based therapy services).*
- Career Development Plan (CDP) or Person-Centered Planning.* *(As applicable, if the student is age 14 or older).*
- OTHER:

DIRECTIONS: Evidence with asterisks (*) will provide the strongest evidence toward making an eligibility decision. However, you can use additional evidence to support the eligibility decision (List 1 on page 10). For each piece of evidence, describe how the evidence shows the student's ability to apply academic and life skills and concepts in the home, school, and community.

STEP 2: GATHERING EVIDENCE

Using multiple pieces of evidence to inform this decision is important for two reasons:

- 1) it prevents decision-making that relies on one type of evidence (e.g., IQ score or disability category) and
- 2) it provides a complete picture of the student both academically and in social settings.

Below is a list of possible evidence that IEP teams should gather **before** using the Documentation of Evidence for to decide if the student meets the participation criteria. It is important to remember that no one piece of evidence should be used to make this decision and no one person should be making the decision; it must be a decision reached and agreed to by all members of the IEP team.

LIST 1: GOOD SOURCES OF EVIDENCE AND DATA TO USE FOR ELIGIBILITY CONVERSATIONS

- Curriculum, instructional, and classroom evidence:
 - Examples instructional objectives and materials
 - Work samples and data on progress from both school- and community-based instruction
 - Classroom work samples and data
 - Teacher observations
- Assessment data and evidence:
 - past state assessments to compare with classroom work (**NOTE:** poor performance on a past state assessment cannot be used to make a decision about eligibility).
 - district-wide alternate assessments
 - reading assessments
 - any other academic achievement tests
 - language assessments like ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
 - results of the initial or most recent evaluations of the student
 - observations by teachers and other service providers
 - observations by family members or guardians, such as the student's adaptive behavior, in settings outside of school.
- IEP information, including:
 - Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, goals, and short-term objectives or post-school outcomes from the IEP.
 - Considerations for students with specific communication needs or modes.
 - Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners).
- Evaluations, including:
 - Adaptive behavior assessments
 - Informal assessments
 - Psychological assessments and evaluations, including information associated with IQ tests. It is important to not use the IQ score as a qualifying measure but to use the descriptive information in the evaluation on what the student can and cannot do.
 - Speech and communication assessments

LIST 2: DO NOT USE THESE FACTORS OR DATA TO INFORM AN ELIGIBILITY DECISION.

The following factors are not appropriate to include in decision-making because they do not add to the IEP Team's understanding of what the student knows and can do. While some of the factors listed below make it difficult for a student come to school ready to engage and learn, these issues should be addressed with staff that have appropriate expertise and experience in these areas.

- **Disability category (or categories).** There is no disability category that is able to predict 100% of a student's cognitive potential. Disability categories alone are not sufficient evidence to determine eligibility for the alternate assessment.
- **Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason.** Some students have medical conditions that prevent them from attending school regularly enough to receive instruction. While this is recognized as a factor that inhibits a child's exposure to educational experiences, it is not evidence of a child's ability or their potential to learn and must be addressed through the appropriate school resources.
- **Poor performance on the general education academic assessments.** Most students receiving special education services can and do participate in general education assessments with accommodations and other supports. Poor performance on these assessments is not an appropriate factor to use when making an eligibility decision. To consider accommodations and supports available on other state assessments, please refer to the *RISAP Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual*: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/> or contact Heather Heineke (heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov).
- **English Language Learner (EL) status.** It is important to understand that a student's ability to learn and their knowledge of English are not connected. How well a student understands and speaks English has an impact on his/her ability to learn; however, it does not indicate a learning disability. Alternative methods of understanding what a student knows and can do may need to be investigated depending on the student's English proficiency level. Please contact your district EL Director for options.
- **Impact of the student's test scores on the accountability score of the school and/or district.** How well or poorly a student may perform on any state assessment may not be used as a deciding factor in determining which assessment is appropriate for a student.
- **Location of special education services in more restrictive settings.** The setting in which a student receives his/her education is not a factor in determining cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. Districts routinely utilize staff with expertise in the challenges of a specific disability, behavior, or mental health issue, either within the school, district, or in another setting. Regardless of where a student accesses specialized care or services, meaningful academic instruction should always be given to the student. Because of this requirement, the educational placement of a student is not to be used as factor for eligibility.
- **Amount of time receiving special education services.** Students receive special education services in a variety of ways and in varying degrees of intensity. It is more meaningful to consider the type and intensity of the structures and supports the student requires in order to participate academically and socially in their school than it is to consider the number of hours or days a student requires in order to receive appropriate special education services.
- **Variety of services a student receives.** Many students receive a variety of related services that address their physical, behavioral, or other challenges beyond their cognitive ability. The type of services a student receives does not indicate a significant cognitive disability.
- **Behavior issues, including test anxiety.** Behavior challenges can make learning difficult for some students and should be treated appropriately and professionally. Behavior challenges should not

be considered when deciding if a student meets the criteria for an alternate assessment as they are not indicators of cognitive ability.

- **Administrator decision.** Under no circumstances is it appropriate for a school, district, or program administrator to unilaterally make an eligibility decision without the full cooperation and consensus of the IEP team, of which the parents or guardians are equal participants, or without following all standard procedures regarding educational decision-making for a student.

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 *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form* 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 for students in grades K - 12.**

This must be done regardless of grade level. For example, grade 9 students do not take an alternate assessment but the *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form* 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 state assessments for their current grade level with appropriate accommodations as determined by the IEP team.
2. The student's instruction must be aligned to the CCSS and NGSS via the general education curriculum. Without access to the general education curriculum, students will not be able to be able to learn the academic skills and knowledge for their grade level which will be assessed through the state assessments.
3. Record of the decision must be recorded on the *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form*, attached to the IEP and placed in the student's file.

DISAGREEMENT WITH THE DECISION

If the parent or guardian of the student disagrees with the IEP team decision regarding eligibility for the alternate assessments, they have the right to request mediation or initiate a due process hearing as described within the procedural safeguards by visiting the Rhode Island Department of Education webpage "When Schools and Families Disagree" at the address below or by contacting the Rhode Island Department of Education Call Center at 401-222-8999.

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/SpecialEducation/WhenSchoolsandFamiliesDoNotAgree.aspx>

Additionally, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN), a nonprofit organization not affiliated with RIDE, also provides peer mentors to help parents through the IEP process. Any parent who would like access to a mentor can contact RIPIN's resource center at 401-270-0101. RIPIN does not provide advocates.

REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

To ensure that students are appropriately identified for the alternate assessments, and to ensure that guidance to the field from RIDE is clear and leads to appropriate identifications, RIDE will review data on eligibility determinations. RIDE will use this data to identify schools and districts that may need additional support and guidance to use the eligibility criteria to make valid and appropriate determinations.

GRADUATION

It is vital that students with severe cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction in order to be able to take advantage of all post high-school options available and to have as much independence as possible. LEAs have two options when considering graduation options for students who qualify for the alternate assessment:

1. **Diplomas:** Students who qualify for the alternate assessment may be eligible for a diploma by demonstrating proficiency through their coursework on modified proficiency expectations on state-adopted standards. The number and types of courses required for a diploma are the same for all students. LEAs may choose to award diplomas to students if the student meets this criteria.
2. **Certificates of alternate recognition of high school accomplishment:** To provide students who take the alternate assessment with meaningful documentation of their academic learning and other job and life skills, there are a variety of certificates that can be used by districts to show what a student knows and can do in a variety of areas. Example certificates and other information about these certification options can be found here:
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/RIPublicSchools/DiplomaSystem.aspx>.

LEAs are responsible for establishing clear policies regarding diploma eligibility for students qualifying for the alternate assessments, including the use of state assessments. No earlier than the class of 2017, LEAs may choose to include state assessment results or other standardized assessment as a graduation requirement in addition to the requirements in § 6.3(A) (1) and (2) of the *Secondary Regulations Reference Guide*, January 2017.

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.

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

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).

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.