

Rhode Island State Assessment Program

**IEP Team Guidance on Determining Eligibility for
Alternate Assessment for 2026-2027**



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

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INTRODUCTION

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 Rhode Island Core Standards (RICS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and have access to the general curriculum. Students who take the alternate assessment are instructed and assessed on Essential Elements (EE). These are grade-specific statements about what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should know and be able to do. The EEs are linked to the grade level expectations of the RICS and the NGSS.

What is an “alternate assessment”? The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, states that the purpose of special education is to allow students with disabilities to access and make progress in the general curriculum in order to master the standards that apply to all students. Most students with disabilities can participate and make progress in the general education curriculum and will take the state assessments with accommodations and other supports. However, the federal government recognizes that a very small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities cannot effectively master and make progress on grade level standards. Therefore, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), allows states to assess the progress of **up to 1.0%** of their students using an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards that are aligned to grade-level standards but with reduced breadth, depth, and complexity. These students require a different type of instruction and test for them to show what they know and can do.

The term “most significant cognitive disability” is not a separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for the purpose of identification for alternate assessment. The most significant cognitive disabilities are pervasive and affect learning across all content areas and have a significant impact on adaptive behavior. For a student in Rhode Island to be considered as having “the most significant cognitive disability” evidence collected must show that the student meets **ALL** the criteria for eligibility to receive instruction and be assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards.

Alternate assessments are designed around the unique needs of students and consider motor, hearing, vision, and other physical disabilities as well as cognitive disabilities. While these assessments assess the Essential Elements, which are aligned to the Rhode Island Core Standards, the level at which the content is 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 the general assessment (RICAS, NGSA, SAT, and PSAT)

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, either with or without accommodations, is the most appropriate test for a student and to outline the required process and evidence that LEAs and IEP Teams must use to make an eligibility decision.

To help LEAs and IEP Teams make the most accurate decisions possible, this document contains the following:

- RIDE policy around when *to* make eligibility determinations.
- RIDE policy around when *not* to make eligibility determinations.
- Required rubrics, tools, and documentation form that every student must have in their IEP at the completion of the eligibility process.
- An outline of the process LEAs and IEP Teams must follow to ensure that the decision to include or exclude a student from the alternate assessment is defensible.

OVERVIEW OF THE ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The IEP team's decision about whether a student's learning should be measured against alternate academic achievement standards allowing them to participate in the alternate assessment is often one of the more difficult decisions that the team makes. This high-stakes decision must be made intentionally and keep legal, instructional, and equity implications in mind. To help IEP teams in this decision, several tools have been developed. These are based on a synthesis of the many tools that states may be using as they strive to provide relevant information to IEP teams so that the best and most accurate decisions are made for each student. It requires the consideration of many factors.

They were identified and developed by NCEO 2019 PLG 3 and NCEO to help states meet the assurances they must provide to the U.S. Department of Education:

- IEP teams in the state are adhering to the state's alternate assessment participation guidelines and the state's definition of a "student with the most significant cognitive disabilities".
- IEP teams (and their LEAs) in the state inform parents of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities of the implications of participation in the alternate assessment.

This document outlines the process that should be followed to make eligibility decisions for students. Each step is explained and covered in detail in this document. The steps to the eligibility process are:

Step 1: Learn about the alternate assessments

Step 2: Understand the eligibility process

Step 3: Use the tools to make an eligibility determination

Step 4: Document the decision

WHEN TO MAKE ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS

For MLL students with significant cognitive disabilities (K-2)

Although RICAS and DLM are first administered at grade 3, the state assessments of English language development (WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) are administered beginning in kindergarten.

MLL students' participation in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS in K, first, or second grade **does not indicate** eligibility for DLM. Once the MLL student reaches the end of second grade or beginning of third grade, the IEP Team must make a formal eligibility decision using the processes and rubrics outlined in this guidance document.

Grade 2

IEP teams must conduct a formal eligibility process at some point in grade 2. This ensures 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 in grade 3.

Grades 3-8, and 11

Eligibility determination must be conducted annually. 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 test window, preparing for the assessments will be difficult.

In addition to 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 administering DLM*. If eligibility decisions are not made early, teachers run the risk of not being able to complete these steps with enough time to administer the DLM assessments

Grades 9, 10, and 12

Eligibility determinations must be conducted annually for students in non-tested grades. State academic assessments are not administered in these grade levels, but the WIDA Alternate ACCESS is.

STEP 1: LEARN ABOUT THE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

The basis for making decisions about which assessment is most appropriate for an individual student comes from having a solid foundation of knowledge about the state's assessment system, including the purpose of the general assessment and the alternate assessment. This knowledge should be demonstrated by all IEP team members, which may include parents or guardians, teachers, school psychologists, English language development specialists, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, paraprofessionals, administrators, and others who may participate in the IEP team meeting. Below is an overview of the general and alternate state assessments available in Rhode Island.

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS

The English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science assessments are part of the federal elementary and secondary education legislation. The assessment program does the following:

- Measures specific claims related to the Rhode Island Core Standards in grades 3-8 and 11 in ELA and mathematics.
- Measures specific claims related to the Next Generation Science Standards in grades 5, 8, and 11 in science.
- Reports individual student scores along with each student's performance level.
- Provides subscale and total scores that can be used with local assessment scores to assist in improving a school's or district's programs in ELA, mathematics, and science.
- Learn more about the [Rhode Island Core Standards](#) and the [Next Generation Science Standards](#).

ALTERNATE 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 the most 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 on the DLM

DLM assessments are designed to maximize accessibility for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Assessments are built to allow multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. 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.

Standards and Content

The DLM alternate assessments use a learning map model to diagram the relationship among the knowledge, skills, and understandings necessary to meet academic content standards. The learning map model plots individual concepts in nodes. The connections between these nodes show the multiple ways that students' knowledge, skills, and understanding develops over time.

By examining the learning map model and the relationships between its individual concepts (nodes), educators can better uncover reasons a student may be struggling with a particular concept and 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, and they provide a bridge between those standards and academic expectations for students with **the most** significant cognitive disabilities.

Assessment Administration

Rhode Island administers the DLM alternate assessments 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. The level of the first testlet given to the student is based on the information provided in the First Contact Survey. Completion of this survey is an important step in this process.

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION FOR IEP TEAM MEMBERS

There is a wealth of information available to assist IEP team members in making decisions about which instruction and assessment is most appropriate for a student to take. Unfortunately, local IEP teams may not know about this information unless it is provided to them. This tool includes information specifically designed for Rhode Island educators, as well as nationally available information from NCEO.

Information for Administrators, Teachers, School Psychologists, and Related Services Specialists

Alternate Assessment Information

- [Video *Who Are Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities?*](#) (video and supporting materials)
- [Rhode Island Eligibility Guidelines](#)
- [Essential Elements](#)

General Assessment Information

- [RIDE Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual](#)
- [RICAS assessment overview](#)
- [Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA and mathematics](#)
- [Next Generation Science Standards](#)

Information for English Language Development Specialists

- [State Assessment Decision-making Processes for MLLs with Disabilities](#)
- [Participation of Multilingual Learners with Disabilities](#)
- [WIDA Alternate ACCESS for MLLs](#)
- [Accessibility and Accommodations WIDA](#)

Information for Parents

- [Parent Information Brochure about DLM](#)
- [Resources for Families](#) (RIDE web page)
- [Alternate Assessment Explanation and Information for Parents and IEP Teams](#)

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND IEP TEAMS

Academic Achievement Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment is designed for those students identified with the **most** significant cognitive disability who require instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards.

The decision to qualify a student to take the Alternate Assessment plays a pivotal role in the student's access to a variety of post-secondary opportunities. The longer the child participates in the instruction and assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards, the fewer post-secondary opportunities may be available.

The Essential Elements are descriptions of what students with **the most** significant cognitive disabilities are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level from kindergarten through 12th grade. They are essential skills that are linked to the Rhode Island Core Standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, and the Next Generation Science Standards. For students who qualify for the alternate assessment, the annual goals and short-term objectives in the students' IEP must be aligned to an Essential Element. Each Essential Element that is part of the student's goals must be clearly written in the IEP.

Alternate Achievement Based on Alternate Achievement Standards for K, 1, and 2 Students

The disability category of developmental delay is reserved for learners under the age of 8 and Rhode Island does not allow teams to make the decision for Alternate Assessment for learners under this age. It is understood that learners under the age of 8 should be instructed in the Rhode Island Core Standards using the High-Quality Curriculum adopted by their school. Since students under the age of 8 years old are unable to qualify for the Alternate Assessment, the use of the kindergarten through 2nd grade Essential Elements should only be used as an instructional progression reference as appropriate and not as the students' goal.

Differences Between Assessments Based on Grade-level Academic Achievement Standards and Those Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

All students with a disability and an IEP have a right to a free appropriate public education. This right includes the opportunity for students with **the most** significant cognitive disabilities to be involved in and make appropriate progress in the same general education curriculum as other students. Sometimes, students with **the most** significant cognitive disabilities are not able to achieve the standards in a meaningful way or to the same degree as other students. These standards are at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. These alternate academic achievement standards are called the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Elements (EE) in English language arts (ELA), mathematics and science.

The Rhode Island State Assessment Program (RISAP) provides parents, educators, and policymakers with one piece of information about student learning. The DLM is used to test academic achievement for students with the **most** significant cognitive disabilities. It is an individualized test designed so that students can show what they know and can do in English language arts, mathematics, and science. The assessment is given over multiple testlets, which include an activity to help students engage in the content and then followed by 4-5 questions. Each testlet is administered to the student by the teacher in a one-to-one setting. The DLM allows many accommodations and test supports to make it as accessible to students as possible.

The Impact of State and Local Policies for Students Who Take the DLM Alternate Assessments

Instructing students based on Alternate Academic Achievement standards and assessing their learning using the DLM alternate assessment can place a student on a different trajectory. These students are measured using performance standards at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity which can result in fewer post-secondary opportunities. Teachers of students with **the most** significant cognitive disabilities use the Essential Elements to plan what is taught and how it is taught so that their students can learn as much as possible. The EEs may also be used to help teachers develop ways to measure student progress. They answer the question “What should my child be learning?”

If a student qualifies to be instructed based on alternate academic achievement standards and will participate in the DLM alternate assessment, IEP teams need to consider the EEs when developing the student’s IEP. The EEs help the teacher identify the student’s needs and plan grade level instruction and assessment for students with **the most** significant cognitive disabilities. Information regarding the students’ performance is included in the IEP under Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. More information and copies of the EEs are available online at: www.ride.ri.gov/dlm.

Participation in the Alternate Assessment May Affect Completion of a Regular High School Diploma

Students whose instruction is based on alternate academic achievement standards will not be exposed to curriculum at the same depth, breadth, and complexity as their grade-level peers. For these reasons, participation in the alternate assessment may affect a students’ completion of the requirements for a high school diploma.

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. 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. Rhode Island Department of Education establishes the minimum requirements for all students; however, LEAs can implement additional requirements that go above and beyond RIDE’s minimum expectations. Therefore, the number and types of courses required for a diploma can vary by LEA.

STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The decision about which assessment is most appropriate for an individual student can best be supported by preparing information directly relevant to the assessment participation decision before the meeting. This information should reflect considerations that are included in the state's guidelines for participation in the alternate assessments.

According to ESSA regulations, states' guidelines and definition must address "factors related to cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior" (Sec 200.6(d)(1)). The regulations also clarified that a specific disability category or being an English learner does not determine whether a student has a significant cognitive disability (Sec 200.6(d)(1)(i)), nor does a student's "previous low academic achievement, or the student's previous need for accommodations to participate in general State or districtwide assessments" (Sec 200.6(d)(1)(ii)). The regulations state:

A student is identified as having **the most** significant cognitive disabilities because the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. (Sec 200.6(d)(1)(iii)).

WHEN TO USE THESE ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

LEAs are required to use the eligibility guidelines and tools for the following students:

- Students who are in tested grades and previously qualified for alternate assessment.
- Students who are in non-tested grades and previously qualified for alternate assessment.
- Students who are being considered for alternate assessment.

LEAs are not required to apply eligibility guidelines and tools to the following students:

- Students without IEPs.
- Students with IEPs who are not being considered for alternate assessment
- Students in grades K-2 who may qualify to take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS

LEA REPRESENTATIVE AND TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that the LEA representative understand their role and responsibilities during the eligibility process. It is not the responsibility of the student's teacher to conduct the eligibility decision making process on their own. The lists below outline the responsibilities of the LEA representative and the teacher.

LEA REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Meet with the teacher before the IEP Team meeting to ensure that the teacher understands the process and what data they need to gather.
- Ensure that the most current evaluations and evidence are available to the team.
- Ensure the draft rubrics are complete.
- Review how the evidence and recommendations will be communicated to the family.
- Review how the IEP Team Assurances Form will be explained to families.
- Ensure that the families provide input on the eligibility decision.
- Make sure that the completed rubrics, Tool C (the Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation form), and the IEP Team Assurances Form are attached to the student's IEP.

- Ensure that the family also receives copies of the completed rubrics, assessment sheet, and the signed IEP Team Assurances Form.
- For students that are found eligible for the alternate assessment, ensure the annual goals and short-term objectives are aligned to an Essential Element.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Read this document.
- Meet with the LEA and/or special education director to clarify any questions regarding the process and data needed.
- Collect and analyze the appropriate evidence and data about the student.
- Complete a draft of the Intellectual Functioning Rubric, the Adaptive Rubric, and the Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation form with input from team members as needed.

GATHERING EVIDENCE FOR THE ELIGIBILITY DECISION

Using multiple pieces of evidence to inform this decision is important because it prevents decision-making that relies on one type of evidence (e.g., IQ score or disability category) and because it provides a complete picture of the student both academically and in social settings.

Below is a list of possible evidence that should be gathered **before** using Tools A, B, and C. It is important to remember that no one piece of evidence should be used to make an eligibility decision and no one person should be making the decision; it must be a decision agreed to by all members of the IEP team.

APPROPRIATE SOURCES OF EVIDENCE AND DATA TO USE FOR ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS

- Curriculum, instructional, and classroom evidence:
 - Examples of 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 assessment results to compare with classroom work
 - **NOTE:** Poor performance on state- or district-wide assessments cannot be used to make decisions about eligibility for the alternate assessment.
 - Reading assessments
 - Other academic achievement tests
 - Language assessments like ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
 - **NOTE:** qualifying for WIDA Alternate ACCESS in grades k-2 **does not** automatically qualify a student for the DLM alternate assessments.
 - Results of the initial or most recent evaluations of the student (all evaluations must be within 6 years)
 - 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
 - Functional behavior assessments
 - Informal assessments
 - Psychological assessments and evaluations, including information associated with cognitive tests
 - Speech and communication evaluations

NOTE: If any of the evaluations are over six years old, the team must complete a new assessment in that area before proceeding with determining eligibility.)

RHODE ISLAND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

The term “most significant cognitive disability” is not a category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for the purpose of providing appropriate instruction and assessment. For a student to be found to have the most significant cognitive disability, each of the three criteria must be true as determined by the student’s IEP team:

1. The student meets the definition of having the most significant cognitive disability.
2. Formative and summative evaluations and data show that the Essential Elements will be challenging for the student.
3. The student is unable to generalize daily living and community skills consistently in home, school, and community settings without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports.

STEP 3: USE THE TOOLS TO MAKE ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

This section contains three tools that IEP teams must use to guide their eligibility decisions. They must look at the evidence collected and use the rubrics and the assessment table to help them understand the data and evidence they collected.

NOTE: *If the necessary evaluations and assessments are not available **or** the student demonstrated substantial changes in their cognitive abilities since the evaluations and assessments were last completed, or the evaluations are more than 6 years old, the IEP team may **not** continue with the eligibility process until the evaluations and assessments are complete.*

DIRECTIONS FOR USING TOOL A: INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING TOOL

Measuring intelligence and intellectual functioning is a common approach to trying to quantify cognitive functioning. Cognitive functioning is a general term that is broad in scope. It generally includes a number of mental abilities, including “learning, thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, decision making, and attention” (Fisher, Chacon, & Chaffee, 2019). A single measure of intelligence should not determine cognitive functioning, nor should it determine the potential for grade-level academic performance (McGrew & Evans, 2004). Nevertheless, documentation of information on intellectual functioning is one element of determining if a

student may appropriately participate in the alternate assessments. Please keep in mind the following as the rubric is completed:

- Teams need to remember that approximately 1% or fewer of the assessed students in the state meet the criteria for the most significant cognitive disability and are eligible to take the alternate assessments.
- Teams also need to remember that the following information **should not be used for determining eligibility for participation in the DLM Alternate Assessments**. Definitions and descriptions of this information can be found in Appendix A.
 - Disability category (or categories)
 - Physical capabilities and/or medical needs
 - Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason
 - Poor performance on the general education academic assessments
 - English Language Learner (EL) status
 - Impact of the student's test scores on the accountability score of the school and/or LEA
 - Location of special education services in more restrictive settings
 - Amount of time receiving special education services
 - Variety of services a student receives
 - Behavior issues, including test anxiety
 - Administrator decision

Directions: The Intellectual Functioning Tool is designed to help IEP Teams determine if a student has the most significant cognitive disability. Circle the description in each row that most closely matches the student's measured intellectual information. Which column you circle in each row may be different because a student's skills and knowledge can vary.

For a student to be eligible for the alternate assessments as a student with the most significant cognitive disability, cognitive evaluation results should be in columns 3 and 4 with the overall verbal and nonverbal IQ being 2 ½ standard deviations below the norm (63). Follow the guidelines below for using evaluations:

- **Initial evaluations:** You cannot continue to determine if a student is eligible for the alternate assessment until you have the initial set of evaluations: a cognitive evaluation, functional evaluation, and any other evaluations needed for special education services.
- **Three-year or tri-annual reevaluations:** Unless there are substantial changes to a student's disability or cognitive functioning, teams may opt to use previous cognitive and functional evaluations. However, if the student has not had a three-year or triannual evaluation for more than six years (two cycles of reevaluations), then new evaluations must be completed before continuing with the eligibility process.

However, if the student has not had a three-year or triannual evaluation in more than six years and there are extenuating circumstances preventing evaluations from being completed, LEAs should contact RIDE to discuss options for moving forward with the eligibility process.

- **Conflicting results from multiple evaluations:** In this case, it's important to consider the other evidence to see if it supports one result or the other. For example, if a teacher's functional evaluation of the student is high and the parents' evaluation is low, does other evidence confirm the teacher's evaluation results or the parents'? As another example, if multiple evaluations were conducted in a short amount of time but have different results, does additional evidence confirm one set of results over the other?

- **A student cannot or will not complete a section of the evaluation.** First, it is important to understand why the student was unable to complete the full evaluation.
 - *If the reason is because of the student's behaviors, then finding the ideal setting and person to perform another evaluation should be the next step.*
 - *If a student is unable to complete the evaluation because they do not speak English, then finding find a different evaluation that better suits the student or supplement the missing portions of the evaluation with other evidence to ensure that you have a complete picture of the student.*
 - **NEW for 2026-27:** *If a student is unable to complete the verbal section of the evaluation because they are nonverbal, then using a cognitive evaluation for nonverbal children is the next step. There are several evaluations suggested on the *Documentation for Students with Unobtainable Verbal Score* form in Appendix D of this document. Please note that the evaluations listed are not all inclusive – LEAs should always use the most appropriate cognitive evaluation available.*

Using one of the evaluations for nonverbal children changes how the IEP team completes *Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric* and the *Documentation Form*; instructions are embedded in both documents. Additionally, IEP teams must complete the *Documentation for Students with Unobtainable Verbal Score* form located in Appendix D (page 29) of this document, which must be completed before continuing with Tool A and attached with all other eligibility documentation. Please read all instructions carefully and contact the Alternate Assessment Team at alternate.assessment@ride.ri.gov with questions.

TOOL A: INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING TOOL

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Fill in the names, dates, and results of each evaluation done. The completed rubric must be included in the student's special education record and provided to the family along with the IEP. Be sure to add additional comments or documentation as necessary to justify a team's decision as needed.

Type of Evaluation	Name of Evaluation(s)	Date	Results
Individual Cognitive Ability Evaluation <i>FSIQ Score:</i>			Nonverbal Score:
			Verbal Score*:
			Visual/Spatial Score:
			Fluid Reasoning Score:
			Working Memory Score:
Speech Evaluation			Receptive Score:
			Expressive Score:
AAC Evaluation			
OTHER			

Average Cognitive Ability		Most Significant Cognitive Disability	
1	2	3	4
Verbal Intelligence/Cognition (related to language skills)* ☐ Verbal score unobtainable. See attached <i>Documentation of Unobtainable Verbal Score</i> documentation form in Appendix D.			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Verbal intelligence in average range or above (85 or above).	Verbal Intelligence 1 to 2 standard deviations below the mean (between 84 and 76).	Verbal Intelligence 2 to 2.5 standard deviations below the mean (between 75 and 64).	Verbal Intelligence 2.5 standard deviations or more below the mean (63 or lower).
Nonverbal Intelligence/Cognition (related to nonverbal reasoning, visual/spatial, nonverbal memory)			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Non-verbal intelligence in average range or above (85 or above).	Non-verbal Intelligence 1 to 2 standard deviations below the mean (84-76).	Non-verbal Intelligence 2 to 2.5 standard deviations below the mean (75 – 64).	Non-verbal Intelligence 2.5 standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower).
Thinking/Reasoning/Problem-Solving			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Reasoning and problem-solving skills at age-level or within average range on an assessment.	Minimal assistance (e.g., general education interventions/supports) needed to carry out reasoning and problem-solving tasks.	Requires moderate assistance, interventions, and supports to support learning and completing cognitive tasks involving thinking,	Requires intensive and consistent assistance, interventions, and supports to support learning and completing cognitive tasks

		reasoning, and problem solving.	involving thinking, reasoning, and problem solving.
Executive Function/Attention/Memory			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Cognitive planning and working memory at age-level or within average range on an assessment.	Minimal assistance (e.g., general education interventions/supports) needed to support cognitive planning and working memory.	Requires moderate modifications and levels of scaffolding to support cognitive planning and working memory.	Requires intensive modifications and substantial levels of scaffolding to support cognitive planning and working memory.
Learning			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Learning RI Core Standards as part of the general education curriculum with minimal to no support provided.	Learning RI Core Standards as part of the general education curriculum with maximum support provided and making progress.	Learning RI Core Standards as part of the general education curriculum with maximum levels of support and no progress. OR Learning Essential Elements and mastering the Target linkage level with moderate to maximum levels of support.	Learning Essential Elements and making progress through linkage levels with maximum levels of support. OR Learning Essential Elements and not making progress through linkage levels even with maximum levels of support.

*In the case a verbal score is not obtainable, please review *Documentation for Students with Unobtainable Verbal Score* guidance in Appendix D of this document for instructions before continuing.

DIRECTIONS FOR USING TOOL B: ADAPTIVE FUNCTIONING TOOL

Adaptive functioning, sometimes referred to as adaptive behavior, is defined as “coping with everyday environmental demands and includes daily living skills that people perform to care for themselves and to interact with others” (Mitchell, 2018). It is recommended that information for formal or informal assessments of adaptive behavior be collected from people who regularly interact with the student, including family members, educators, and other professionals.

Teams need to remember that approximately 1% or less of the assessed students in the state would meet the criteria for the alternate assessments. Please keep in mind the following as the rubric is completed:

- Teams need to remember that the following information **should not be used for determining eligibility for participation in the DLM Alternate Assessments**. Definitions and descriptions of this information can be found in Appendix A.
 - Disability category (or categories)
 - Physical capabilities and/or medical needs
 - Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason
 - Poor performance on the general education academic assessments
 - English Language Learner (EL) status
 - Impact of the student’s test scores on the accountability score of the school and/or district
 - Location of special education services in more restrictive settings
 - Amount of time receiving special education services
 - Variety of services a student receives
 - Behavior issues, including test anxiety
 - Administrator decision

Directions for using the Adaptive Functioning Rubric: Teams should circle the cell in each row that most closely matches the student’s measured adaptive behavior information. Which column is marked for each row may be different. This is to be expected because students can vary in their skill levels or exhibit splinter skills that impact their adaptive functioning.

Behavior skills assessments should reflect skills and knowledge expected for a typical peer and be appropriate for the student’s physical capabilities and communication skills. For a student to be eligible as a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities in adaptive functioning, most data should appear in column 4. Follow the guidelines below for using evaluations:

- **Initial evaluations:** You can’t continue to determine if a student is eligible for the alternate assessment until you have the initial set of evaluations: a cognitive evaluation, functional evaluation, and any other evaluations needed for special education services and qualifications for alternate assessment.
- **Three-year reevaluations:** Unless there are substantial changes to a student’s disability or cognitive functioning, teams may opt to use previous cognitive and functional evaluations. However, if the student has not had an evaluation for more than six years (two cycles of reevaluations), then new evaluations should be completed before continuing with the eligibility process.
- **Conflicting results from multiple evaluations:** There may be instances when the validity of the evaluation results fall into question, such as:

- *when a student cannot or will not complete a section of the evaluation.* In this case, it is important to understand why the student wasn't able to complete the full evaluation. If the reason is because of the student's behaviors, then finding the ideal setting and person to perform another evaluation should be the next step. If a student is unable to complete the evaluation because they are nonverbal or do not speak English, then finding a different evaluation that better suits the student or supplementing the missing portions of the evaluation with other evidence to ensure that you have a fuller picture of the student, is important.
- *when multiple evaluation results conflict.* In this case, it's important to consider the other evidence to see if it supports one result or the other. For example, if a teacher's functional evaluation of the student is high and the parents' evaluation is low, does other evidence confirm the teacher's evaluation results or the parent's? As another example, if multiple evaluations were conducted in a short amount of time but have different results, does additional evidence confirm one of the results, but not the other?

TOOL B: ADAPTIVE FUNCTIONING RUBRIC

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Fill in the names, dates, and results of each evaluation done. The completed rubric must be included in the student's special education record and provided to the family along with the IEP. Be sure to add additional comments or documentation to justify the team's decision as needed.

Type of Evaluation	Name of Evaluation	Date	Results
Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment*			Teacher Report: Parent Report:
Speech Evaluation			Receptive Score: Expressive Score:
AAC Evaluation			
OTHER			

**Behavior skills assessments should reflect the skills and knowledge expected for a typical peer and be appropriate for the student's physical capabilities and communication skills.*

Average Adaptive Ability 				Most Significant Disability
1	2	3	4	
Adaptive Behavior Scale (If the teacher and parent report do not match, please see the section on conflicting scores)				
<i>Comments:</i>				
Overall adaptive behavior score in average range or above (standard score 85 or above).	Adaptive behavior 1 to 2 standard deviations below mean (standard score between 84 and 71).	Adaptive behavior 2 to 2.5 standard deviations below mean (standard score between 70 and 64).	Adaptive behavior 2.5 standard deviations or more below mean (standard score of 63 or lower).	
Conceptual (Do not consider communication mode but rather how proficient and independent the student is in using their communication system).				
<i>Comments:</i>				
Has appropriate age and grade level expressive and receptive communication skills.	Has expressive and receptive communication skills that requires minimal prompting or assistance.	Beginning communicator. Minimal expressive and receptive communication skills. Communication is limited to wants, needs, and preferences.	Has limited to no reliable communication system.	
Social and Interpersonal Skills				
<i>Comments:</i>				
No instruction is needed on age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.	Instructional needs addressed through general education interventions for age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.	Systematic, direct instruction in age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.	Intensive, systematic, and direct instruction in age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.	

Daily Living Skills – Instruction			
<i>Comments:</i>			
No instruction needed on age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	Minimal instruction needed for student to learn age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	Requires frequent, individualized instruction, and supports across multiple settings to learn age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	Requires intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple settings to learn and apply age and grade appropriate daily living skills.
Daily Living Skills – Application Across Multiple Settings			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Student is independently able to generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	Student requires minimal supports to successfully generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	The student's ability to successfully generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills is inconsistent and they routinely need support.	The student is unable to successfully generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills without intensive support.
Community Living Skills			
<i>Comments:</i>			
No instruction needed on age and grade appropriate community living skills.	Minimal instruction needed for student to learn age and grade appropriate community living skills.	Requires frequent, individualized instruction, and supports across multiple settings to learn age and grade appropriate community living skills.	Requires intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple settings to learn and apply age and grade appropriate community living skills.

TOOL C: PREVIOUS TEST PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

Whether a student participated in the alternate assessments in the past should not be a definitive indication that a student should continue to participate in the alternate assessments. Similarly, participation in the general assessment does not necessarily mean that the student should continue to take the general assessment. With extreme caution, then, IEP team members should look at data on test participation and performance.

For every year in which the student was in a tested grade, the IEP team should document and review which test the student took and how the student performed on the test. In cases where a student, year after year, consistently achieves the Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on DLM alternate assessments, it may be necessary to consider whether the alternate assessments, and the limited content assessed in the Essential Elements, is truly appropriate for the student. In these cases, it may be necessary to transition the student to the general assessment in order for the assessment to be challenging (Andrew F.).

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Enter the student's proficiency level or score for each test the student took. Once complete, place a copy in the student's special education records. **For grade 2 students** who do not have state assessment scores, use their universal screening scores instead.

Grade	Reading/Language Arts		Mathematics		Science	
	DLM/ Alternate Assessment	General/ Universal Screening	DLM/ Alternate Assessment	General/ Universal Screening	DLM/ Alternate Assessment	NGSA/ Science Assessment
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
10						
11						

STEP 4: DOCUMENT THE DECISION

IEP Team Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Documentation Form

Directions: This form should be completed, signed, and attached to the IEP at the time of the student's annual IEP review along with completed copies of the Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric, Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric, and Tool C: The Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation sheet, and the Unobtainable Verbal Score Documentation form, as necessary. The family should be provided with copies of this form and the tools along with their copy of the IEP.

Is this the student's first eligibility determination for alternate assessment (including eligibility determinations made in other RI districts)?	YES	NO <i>See next step.</i>
If No: - Date of IEP meeting when the first eligibility determination was made: _____ - New diagnostic testing does not need to be completed unless the evaluation does not meet the requirements found on page 12 of this document. - Tools A, B, and C must be completed before filling out this Documentation form.		

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

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

What is the disability that is impacting the student's cognitive functioning? _____

Participation Criteria			
CRITERIA 1: Student meets the definition of having the most significant cognitive disability.			
Check one of these boxes:		YES	NO
☐ In Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric , is the student's verbal and non-verbal scores 2.5 or more standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower)?			
☐ For a student who was administered a language-free cognitive evaluation (TONI, WNV, etc.) for a nonverbal student, in Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric , is the student's score 2.5 or more standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower)? <i>Unobtainable Verbal Score Documentation Form must be completed and included with all other eligibility forms.</i>			
In Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric is the majority of evidence in column 4?		YES	NO
In Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric , is the student's adaptive behavior scale score 2.5 or more standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower)?		YES	NO
CRITERIA 2: Formative and summative evaluations and data show that the Essential Elements will be challenging for the student.			
In Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric , <i>Learning</i> section, is the majority of evidence in columns 3 and 4?		YES	NO
Does the Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation Form Tool C , show that the student is making progress toward the Essential Elements and/or that the Essential Elements are (or will be) challenging to the student?		YES	NO

CRITERIA 3: The student is unable to generalize daily living and community skills consistently in home, school, and community settings without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports.		
In Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric , is the student's adaptive behavior scale score 2.5 or more standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower)?	YES	NO
In Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric , is the majority of evidence in columns 3 and 4?	YES	NO
In Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric , <i>Daily Living Skills</i> and <i>Community Skills</i> sections, is the majority of evidence in columns 3 and 4?	YES	NO

If any decision is no, the IEP team must follow the instructions on page 22, If the Decision is NO.

If no verbal score was obtained, Documentation for Students with Unobtainable Verbal Score must be attached and reviewed by IEP Team.

IEP Team Assurance: The IEP team has thoroughly discussed the evidence gathered to determine eligibility, completed the Intellectual Functioning Rubric, Adaptive Functioning Rubric, and the Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation sheet and affirms that they followed the processes and procedures outlined in this document.

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.
- 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.
- Copies of this form, the rubrics, and the test participation documentation sheet have been provided to the family with their copy of the IEP.
- The IEP team *does / does not (circle one)* find this student eligible to participate in the alternate assessments.

Name of LEA Representative (print)	Signature of LEA Representative	Date
Name of Parent (print)	Signature of Parent	Date

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, placed in the student's file, and a copy provided to the family. **This must be completed each year at the time of the IEP annual review for students in grades 3 – 11 unless the student is also an MLL student. If the student may be found eligible for the first time, the annual goals and short-term objectives must be rewritten to align to the EEs. If a student was already found eligible in the previous year, their goals should also be reevaluated to ensure they are sufficiently aligned to grade-level Essential Elements and continue to be challenging for the student. All goals in the IEP must include the Essential Element they are aligned to.** If the student is also an MLL student, then this form would need to be completed in grades K-12 for the student to take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS. See page 4 of this manual for more details on when eligibility decisions should be made.

IF DECISION IS NO

If the IEP team decides that the student is not eligible, then four 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 based on the Rhode Island Core Standards and NGSS via the general education curriculum with accommodations and modifications as appropriate. Without access to the general education curriculum, students will not be able to learn the academic skills and knowledge for their grade level and which will be assessed through the state assessments.
3. The student must receive instruction in their least restrictive environment.
4. 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 or email at ridecallcenter@ride.ri.gov.

<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 and ripin.org. 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.

APPENDIX A: 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 to 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 predicts 100% of a student's cognitive potential. Disability categories alone are not sufficient evidence to determine eligibility for the alternate assessment.
- **Physical capabilities and/or medical needs.** Many students who take the alternate assessments have physical disabilities in addition to cognitive disabilities and some have ongoing and serious medical conditions. Determinations around eligibility for the alternate assessment must be based on the student's *cognitive* ability, not physical ability or medical issues.
- **Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason.** Some students have medical conditions that prevent them from attending school regularly. 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 appropriate 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*: www.ride.ri.gov/accommodations.
- **Multi-lingual Learner (MLL) 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 but is not an indication of a learning disability. Depending on the student's English proficiency level, other methods of understanding what a student knows and can do may need to be investigated. Please contact your district MLL 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 to participate academically and socially than it is to count the number of hours or days a student receives 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.

APPENDIX B: FAQ ON COGNITIVE EVALUATIONS

Below are some of the questions around how to handle cognitive evaluations for students who either haven't had any completed or it is difficult to obtain a full-scale IQ.

- **What do we do if we can't get a cognitive score for a student?** Follow these additional guidelines if you have trouble obtaining a cognitive score for a student:
 - You must have norm-referenced evaluations.
 - You can use raw scores from subtests of the norm-referenced evaluations.
 - You can use raw scores from subtests from multiple norm-referenced evaluations to arrive at a complete picture of the student's cognitive ability.
 - The evaluations must meet the recency criteria outlined in our guidance and in the Eligibility Training Course (less than six years old).
 - You **may not** use informal observations, checklists, or parent interviews to complete the cognitive sections of the rubrics.
- **If I use the standard error provided on the evaluations, the student falls below the 63 required for Tool A: Intellectual Functioning rubric. Can I use the standard error to qualify the student for DLM?**
No, you cannot apply the standard error. Standard error (or confidence interval) is the range of scores that are possible if the student was evaluated multiple times. This means the student could score lower or higher than the score reported on the evaluation. In other words, the student could move farther away from the required 63.
- **What additional evidence or comments are required for a team to justify the decision?**
 - For Tool A:
 - Excerpts from the psychological report
 - Data collected over time from previous IEP progress reports
 - Scores from additional tests that were completed
 - Historical assessments results
 - For Tool B:
 - Data collected over time from previous IEP progress reports
 - Scores from additional tests that were completed
 - Historical assessment results
- **How do I complete Tool A: Intellectual Functioning, for a nonverbal student?**
 - **Tool A:** For nonverbal students, follow the instructions in the *Guidance for IEP Teams: Unobtainable Verbal Score* document in Appendix D (page 29) of this document.
- **What cognitive tests are available for nonverbal students?** There are many options available for nonverbal students. Here are *some* of the evaluations that were either designed with nonverbal students in mind or that have nonverbal components built in. If your district uses a different test, there is no need to change unless it is inappropriate for the student. If, after using an appropriate cognitive test, a score still cannot be obtained, contact Heather Heineke or Mary Ann Mello to discuss the data you gathered.

- **Reynolds Adaptable Intelligence Test – Nonverbal (RAIT-NV)** - Created for use with individuals who do not speak English, those with hearing impairments, individuals unwilling to communicate verbally, or populations with minimal language capabilities.
- **Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Second Edition (CTONI-2)** This is a nonverbal test tool that allows an evaluator to measure general intelligence when that child has barriers in verbal communication. It can be used to evaluate individuals from age 6 to 89 years.
- **Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Fourth Edition (TONI-4)** – Requires no reading, writing, speaking, or listening on the examinee’s part. It is completely non-verbal. Can be used from ages 6 to 89 years of age. Can be administered in 15 to 20 minutes.
- **Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Second Edition (KABC-II)** - This tool measures general intelligence and can be used for students from 3 to 18 years of age. It takes anywhere from 25-55 minutes to administer the core battery or 35-70 minutes for the core plus additional subtests. A nonverbal option can be used to assess a child whose verbal skills are significantly limited.
- **Leiter International Performance Scale, Third Edition (Leiter-3)** - Offers a completely nonverbal measure of intelligence that is ideal for use with those who are cognitively delayed, non-English speaking, hearing impaired, speech impaired, or on the autism spectrum. This tool can be used for ages 3-75 years to measure intelligence and cognitive abilities. It takes 20-45 minutes to administer.
- **Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test, Second Edition (UNIT2)** – This nonverbal intelligence test can be used for ages 5 years to 21 years. The abbreviated test battery takes only 10 – 15 minutes and there is a standard battery that has an administrations time of 30 minutes. All subtests are nonverbal and require a nonverbal response.
- **Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition (WPPSI-IV)** has nonverbal components.
- **Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Fifth Edition (SB-5)** - This tool is used to assess levels of intelligence across several age spans and ability levels. It takes approximately an hour to complete and looks at 5 areas. Each of the subtests are given in a verbal or non-verbal method to accommodate very young children, even two-year-olds, and non-readers.

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

Accommodation: A change in materials or procedures that provide access during instruction and assessment. Accommodations do not change what is being taught or measured. Using assessment accommodations do not change what a student is expected to learn and do not lower student expectations for learning.

Adaptive behavior: Behaviors that are essential for someone to be independent and function safely in daily life.

Rhode Island Core State Standards (RICSS): The Core Standards 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 Core Standards 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 order in which students learn skills and the way those skills may develop and build over time.

Modification: Any change in materials or procedures that changes the learning expectations during 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 the school, home, and community.

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

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

APPENDIX D: GUIDANCE FOR IEP TEAMS, UNOBTAINABLE VERBAL SCORE

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This form provides a way for IEP Teams to document the reason(s) why a verbal score cannot be obtained for a student being considered for participation in the alternate assessments. A verbal score may be unobtainable for a variety of documented reasons, including but not limited to:

- The student is nonverbal or has severely limited expressive language to the degree that verbal test administration is not possible or would yield invalid results.
- The student uses an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) system that precludes standard verbal administration.
- The student does not speak English and no appropriately normed instrument in their home language is available.
- A documented sensory or motor impairment (e.g., significant hearing loss, dysarthria) prevents valid verbal responses.

IMPORTANT: The absence of a verbal score does not automatically qualify or disqualify a student for the alternate assessment. IEP teams must still gather and evaluate all other required evidence as described in the full Guidance for IEP Teams document. A verbal score cannot be estimated, assumed, or extrapolated from other data.

Per Rhode Island guidance (Appendix B, FAQ on Cognitive Evaluations): When a verbal score cannot be obtained, the IEP team must document the specific reason and use an evaluation appropriate for the student, such as the CTONI or WNV, etc., before continuing with the eligibility process.

Informal observations, checklists, and parent interviews **may not** substitute for norm-referenced evaluation data in the cognitive sections of Tools A and B.

DOCUMENTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH UNOBTAINABLE VERBAL SCORE

Complete this section before proceeding with completing Tool A of the eligibility process. Depending on the reason the student is nonverbal, there may be multiple attempts and multiple evaluation tools that were used to get a cognitive score. It is important to document all attempts at obtaining a cognitive score as this is further documentation that the student is nonverbal.

Once this form is complete, then the IEP team can continue with the eligibility process, as outlined in the *IEP Guidance* document, by checking off *verbal score is unobtainable* on Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric.

As with all eligibility forms, a copy of this form must be provided to the parents along with the other eligibility documents and the IEP.

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

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

Completed By (Name/Role): _____

Student's Primary Disability: _____

Home Language: _____

AAC Device, if using: _____

SECTION 1: REASON VERBAL SCORE IS UNOBTAINABLE

Reason Verbal Score is Unobtainable (check all that apply):

- ☐ Student is nonverbal; does not use spoken language as a primary communication mode.
- ☐ Student uses an AAC device or system that does not permit standard verbal test administration.
- ☐ Student has a documented hearing impairment that prevents valid verbal responses.
- ☐ Student has a documented speech/motor impairment (e.g., dysarthria, apraxia) preventing verbal responses.
- ☐ Student does not communicate in English and no appropriately normed instrument in the home language exists.
- ☐ Evaluator made repeated attempts and verbal responses were inconsistent or absent despite optimal conditions. Explain below:

Intelligence Tests That Allow for AAC Devices During Administration*

TONI-4 (Test of Nonverbal Intelligence) ○ **CTONI-2** (Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Second Edition)
○ **PTONI**** (Preschool Test of Nonverbal) ○ **Leiter-3** (Leiter International Performance Scale) ○ **WNV** (Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability) ○ **MSEL** (Mullen Scales of Early Learning)

**The evaluations listed are not inclusive. **This test may be appropriate for students up through age 11.*

SECTION 2: ATTEMPTED EVALUATIONS

When a verbal score cannot be obtained, the IEP team must document the specific reason and use an evaluation appropriate for the student, such as the CTONI or WNV, etc., before continuing with the eligibility process.

Directions: If you attempted a cognitive evaluation that included a verbal section, and were unable to obtain a verbal score, record those attempts here. ***You are not required to try to obtain a verbal score. However, if you did, record the results here.***

Provide the type, name, date, results of each evaluation attempted.

Attempt 1:

Name of Evaluator	Title	Location of Evaluation	Date
Evaluation Name		Results (by subtest)	

Attempt 2:

Name of Evaluator	Title	Location of Evaluation	Date
Evaluation Name		Results (by subtest)	

Attempt 3:

Name of Evaluator	Title	Location of Evaluation	Date
Evaluation Name		Results (by subtest)	