



NCEO Tool 7

Start with the
End in Mind: An
Infographic to
Guide Decisions
about Student
Participation in
the Alternate
Assessment

1% Toolkit

Start with the End in Mind: An Infographic to Guide Decisions about Student Participation in the Alternate Assessment

Kate Nagle, Charity Funfe Tatah Mentan, Anthea Brady, Kathy Strunk, Martha L. Thurlow, and Sheryl S. Lazarus

A publication of:
NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

In collaboration with
NCEO's 2019 1.0% Peer Learning Group (PLG 3)

The Center is supported through a Cooperative Agreement (#H326G160001) with the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The Center is affiliated with the Institute on Community Integration at the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. The contents of this report were developed under the Cooperative Agreement from the U.S. Department of Education, but does not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the U.S. Department of Education or Offices within it. Readers should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Project Officer: David Egnor



All rights reserved. Any or all portions of this document may be reproduced and distributed without prior permission, provided the source is cited as:

Nagle, K., Mentan, C.F.T., Brady, A., Strunk, K., Thurlow, M. L., & Lazarus, S. S. (2020). *Start with the end in mind: An infographic to guide decisions about student participation in the alternate assessment*. National Center on Educational Outcomes.

<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool7Infographic.pdf>

This *Infographic* resource was developed through the work of Peer Learning Group (PLG) 3, “Building Capacity of IEP Teams and Parents in Making Decisions about Assessment Participation,” which took place from October-December, 2019.

In addition to the authors of this document, it took a team to ensure that PLG 3 was successful. Members of this team included, in addition to the authors (in alphabetical order): Sharon Hall, Maureen Hawes, Susan Hayes, Judy Lee, Travis Peterson, and Tanner Petry.

Staff from 45 states and the District of Columbia participated in the PLG 3 webinar calls. The participating states are listed here. This Guide would not exist had it not been for their active participation in PLG 3.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
North Carolina
North Dakota
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania

South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

Start with the End in Mind: An Infographic to Guide Decisions about Student Participation in the Alternate Assessment

The 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), includes a 1.0% cap on state-level participation rates in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). No limit was placed on district or school rates, but districts must provide justifications if they expect their rate to be above the 1.0% threshold. In addition, states are to provide oversight to districts. Furthermore, states and districts are to ensure that parents and guardians understand the implications of their child's participation in the AA-AAAS.

These requirements mean that states, districts, schools, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams need to think carefully about which students should be included in the AA-AAAS. Because parents need to understand the implications of their child participating in the AA-AAAS and educators need to be able to clearly communicate this information to parents, this infographic tool is presented in a concise and straightforward manner.

Purpose of this Infographic

This infographic is designed to provide guidance about decision making for a student's participation in the state's AA-AAAS, which is meant for a very small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities. *Start with the End in Mind* uses clear language to help explain how this important decision can affect the future opportunities available to a child with a disability. It may be given to teachers in IEP trainings, provided to parents and guardians to read before an IEP team meeting, reviewed by an IEP team during an IEP team meeting, and used to talk with parents and guardians to prepare for an IEP team meeting.

The infographic may be used as it is currently portrayed, or it may be used as a model for development of an infographic that is customized to meet the specific needs of a state, district, or school. The infographic is one of three tools developed by states and technical assistance centers working together in NCEO's 2019 1.0% Peer Learning Group 3. The two other tools that were developed can support the information presented here.¹ They include:

- *Who Should Participate in Your State's Alternate Assessment? A Slide Presentation Tool for Administrators* is a slide presentation that may be used by district and school administrators to provide clear and concise information about the alternate assessment to educators, perhaps in trainings or webinars. It may also be used to communicate with parents.
- *IEP Team Resource: Making Decisions about Participation in the Alternate Assessment* provides IEP team members (including teachers, school psychologists, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, paraprofessionals, parents, administrators, and others who may participate in the IEP team meeting) with supports to help with the decision about whether a student with a disability should participate in a general assessment or an AA-AAAS.

¹ All tools may be found at: <https://nceo.info/Resources/tools>

Start with the End in Mind

The state's alternate assessment, based on alternate academic achievement standards, is meant for a very small number of children with significant cognitive disabilities. Although life after school seems a long time away, taking the alternate assessment instead of the general state test can affect your child's future.



Graduation



Further Education
and Training



Military Service



Employment

Five things to consider when making state test decisions:

1. Disability

Only children with the most significant cognitive disabilities can take the alternate state assessment.

2. Yearly

Every year the IEP team should make the decision about which test your child will take.

3. Guidelines

IEP team members use the state's participation guidelines to decide whether your child should take the state alternate assessment or the state general assessment.

4. Agreement

Everyone on the IEP team should agree that your child meets each of the state's participation criteria for taking the alternate assessment.

5. Instruction

All children are taught academic content for their enrolled grade level. Students who take the alternate assessment may need content presented in reduced depth, breadth, or complexity.

For more information talk to your child's teacher or visit your state's alternate assessment website.

Start with the End in Mind Talking Points



Every year the IEP team makes an important decision about which state test a student with a disability will take.



IEP team members use participation guidelines to decide between the state alternate assessment and the state general test.

Start with the End in Mind uses clear language to help explain how this important decision can affect the future opportunities available to a student with a disability. Use this tool to begin the important conversation about state assessment decisions.

Start with the End in Mind can be.....



given to teachers during IEP trainings.



reviewed by IEP team members during an IEP team meeting.



provided to parents and guardians to read before an IEP team meeting.



used to talk with parents and guardians to prepare for an IEP team meeting.

Tips for Using *Start with the End in Mind*



Make sure you have enough time to explain the content of the infographic.



Provide opportunities for people to ask questions or seek clarification.



Avoid using unfamiliar jargon or acronyms when discussing the content.



Know your state's high school diploma options and specific requirements for graduation.