

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Illinois Alternate Assessment Participation Guidance

Students must participate in the state assessment through one of the following:

- the regular state assessment for the student's grade, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) or the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), without accommodations,
- the regular state assessment for the student's grade, the ISAT or the PSAE, with accommodations, or
- the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA).

Who is eligible to take the IAA?

The alternate assessment is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These students have intellectual functioning well below average (typically associated with an IQ below 55) that exists concurrently with impairments or deficits in adaptive functioning (i.e. communications, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-directions, functional academic skills, work leisure, health and safety). The reference to "typically associated with an IQ of below 55" is to help distinguish between students with cognitive disabilities and significant cognitive disabilities from students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This means that many students with cognitive disabilities will not qualify for the IAA. By default, they must take ISAT/PSAE with or without accommodations. The inclusion of the words "typically associated with" allows for some district/school flexibility. It is by no means an absolute requirement.

These students may be identified under a variety of educational categories, including cognitive disabilities (mental retardation), autism, multiple disabilities, and traumatic brain injury.

How IEP teams use the Participation Guidelines?

The participation criteria require the IEP team to review the classroom instruction of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to see if it is linked to grade level content, but narrowed in scope and reduced in complexity; to see if it is reflective of the critical functions found in the Alternate Assessment Framework; and to determine if the student requires more frequent and intensive instruction presented in incremental steps in order to apply and transfer skills across settings. If the IEP team can answer yes and provide reasons for their responses for all criteria, the IAA is the most appropriate assessment for the student.

Who is not eligible for consideration to take the IAA?

Students who strictly have academic, language, social/emotional, physical or sensory disabilities without co-occurring intellectual functioning well below average.

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As determined by the IEP, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take the IAA if participation in the state’s regular assessments – the ISAT or the PSAE – is not appropriate, even with accommodations, and they meet all of the criteria below.

Yes	No	Participation Criteria	Reason(s) for Yes or No Response
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The student has intellectual functioning well below average that exists concurrently with impairments or deficits in adaptive functioning (i.e. communication, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, work, leisure, health, and safety).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Due to the student’s significant cognitive disability, the student’s instruction is linked to grade level content, but is narrowed in scope and reduced in complexity. It is reflective of the critical functions found in the Alternate Assessment Framework.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When compared to other students with disabilities, the student requires more frequent and intensive instruction presented in incremental steps in order to apply and transfer skills across settings.	

IMPORTANT NOTE: The IEP team’s decision that a student will take the IAA cannot be based on the following factors; however, the existence of one or more of these factors does not prevent a student from taking the IAA if they meet the other participation criteria:

- The student’s achievement is significantly below that of same-age peers, even when compared to other students with disabilities.
- The student has an IEP.
- The student has a certain special education eligibility label or receives certain services.
- The student has excessive or extensive absences.
- The student has social, cultural, or economic differences.
- The student may not perform well on the regular assessment, which may affect the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status of the student’s home school and/or district.