



Parent/Family Guide to the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Alternate

What is the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Alternate?

The *ACAP Alternate* is a standards-based assessment designed specifically to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are provided access to the state academic content standards and given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, concepts, and skills as set forth in the *Alabama Alternate Achievement Standards*. The primary purpose of the *ACAP Alternate* is to determine the level at which Alabama students are meeting the standards.

What are the Alabama Alternate Achievement Standards?

The *Alabama Alternate Achievement Standards* guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The *Alabama Alternate Achievement Standards* are aligned to the Alabama Course of Study Standards and represent a reduction in the breadth and depth of the standards that is appropriate for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Who takes the ACAP Alternate?

Federal law requires the use of an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who cannot participate in the state assessment program. Each state is required to establish its own definition of “significant cognitive disabilities.”

What is the definition of “most significant cognitive disability”?

In Alabama, the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability is a student with an intelligence quotient (IQ) of three standard deviations below the mean, which is an IQ of 55 or below, which significantly impacts intellectual functioning and that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive functioning (defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life).

- The definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities references students who require intensive or extensive levels of direct support that is not of a temporary or transient nature.
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities also require specially designed instruction to acquire, maintain, or generalize skills in multiple settings in order to successfully transfer skills to natural settings, including the home, school, workplace, and community.
- For students with an IQ measured in the 55–70 range, additional factors related to the severity and impact of the disability must be taken into account.



How will the ACAP Alternate be administered to students?

Tests are administered individually to students by their special education teachers or other certified staff members. Every professional who administers the ACAP Alternate must be certified and trained in how to administer the ACAP Alternate.

The content areas to be assessed are English Language Arts (ELA) and math in grades 2 through 8, 10, and 11; and science in grades 4, 6, 8, 10, and 11. There are various item types appearing on the assessment such as standalone multiple choice and passage-based multiple choice (ELA only). In addition, there are two performance tasks per grade, per content, which are scored based on how the student responds using a rubric and include the options “No Response” and “Off Topic.” The test administrator may stop a content-area test when a student provides no response to the first five consecutive items.

Test items are designed to be meaningful and engaging to students. The test items provide students with the opportunity to show what they know across multiple content areas.

The ACAP Alternate is an untimed assessment which allows for multiple breaks. The assessment can be completed over several days at the test administrator’s discretion, taking into account specific student needs.

When will the ACAP Alternate be administered?

The ACAP Alternate will be administered once a year in the spring.

What supports will be available to a student taking the ACAP Alternate?

Accommodations and supports consistent with daily classroom instruction will be used for the ACAP Alternate, including:

- Assistive technology devices for students with visual impairments, students with hearing impairments, students with limited physical ability and/or mobility, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.
- Use of the student’s communication modality (e.g., sign language, pointing, eye gazing, assistive technology).
- Braille materials available with teacher notes. Test administrators may describe the pictures to the student for English language arts, math, and science if needed or supported in the student’s IEP.
- Accommodations are built into the assessment; for example, the assessment is administered individually and may be completed over several days. However, in order for some students to access the assessment, teachers may need to provide a student with real objects or enlarge a graphic image.