**Did you know?**

**Why should students with disabilities participate in State testing?**

**Test participation decisions may have unintended consequences.**

There is a risk that expectations for learning may be lowered, which leads to:

* less rigorous instructional programming
* diminished academic progress
* more limited post-school opportunities
* It allows children to show what they know and can do.
* It provides information to make sure that students with disabilities receive high-quality instruction aligned to standards.
* It reveals performance gaps across different groups of students in your school, and guides school strategies to address the educational needs of all students, including students with disabilities.

**What are the test options?**

* **General Assessment:** Most students with disabilities take the general assessment with or without accommodations.
* **Alternate Assessment**: A few students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

**There are ways to support and empower students with disabilities when they participate in tests.**

Accessibility features and accommodations can help students show what they know and can do on tests.

**What are the implications of participating in the alternate assessment**?

* A short-term implication is that the instruction of students who take the alternate assessment will be at less depth, breadth, and complexity than the instruction of other students.
* Long term implication are that students who take the alternate assessment may not be on track to meet the requirements for

a regular graduation diploma, or may not be eligible for some postsecondary training institutions, military service, or jobs.

**How can the IEP team confidently make State assessment participation decisions?**

* Use State participation guidelines and any district tools to

make participation decisions to ensure students who take

the AA-AAAS meet the state’s definition for participation,

and those who don’t benefit from accessibility features and accommodations as needed.

* Parents’ explicit consent ensures they understand how their children’s participation in the AA-AAAS can impact their future.

**The parent or guardian should sign off on test participation decisions, indicating they understand the consequences of the decisions.**

The test participation decision can have major implications for a student’s instruction. It may also have longer-term implications for whether a student will be on track

to earn a regular diploma, and the types of postsecondary and career opportunities open to the student.

It is vital that parents and guardians have a clear understanding of the implications of test participation decisions.

**Can instructional accessibility features and accommodations support the inclusion of students with disabilities in assessments?**

* Consider the student’s instructional needs and current instructional accessibility features and accommodations to discuss and decide on testing accommodations.
* Plan time for students to learn new accessibility features and accommodations.
* Plan for evaluation and improvement of students’ use of accessibility features and accommodations.

 **CONTACT**

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**IEP teams can help ensure that test results reflect actual student learning.**

* Use State participation guidelines and any district tools to make participation decisions.
* Ensure that students who take the AA-AAAS meet the State’s definition to participate in that assessment.
* Provide needed accessibility features and accommodations

*Add any SEA or LEA questions and answers, or links to resources in this box. Be sure to add links to the SEA website with state testing information. Also include a link to state accessibility manual.*