

Facts About the Florida Alternate Assessment

Information for Teachers



The Florida Alternate Assessment

The Florida Alternate Assessment is designed specifically to measure student mastery of the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Access Points*. Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

For more information on how to determine who should take the Florida Alternate Assessment, review the *Florida Alternate Assessment Participation Checklist* at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp>.

What are the Levels of Complexity?

Each Access Point has three levels of complexity.

**Less
Complex**



**More
Complex**

- The **Participatory** level of complexity focuses on skills at a beginning academic awareness level, such as recognizing parts of a whole or recognizing a letter or number.
- The **Supported** level of complexity focuses on skills that require identifying, recalling, or performing basic academic skills, such as reading words or solving simple math problems.
- The **Independent** level of complexity focuses on skills that require organizing, comparing, and analyzing, such as identifying the main idea of a story or solving more complex math problems.

For more information about the Access Points, curriculum resources, and tools, visit the *Curriculum Planning and Learning Management System (CPALMS) Web site* at <http://www.cpalms.org/>.

What are the Performance Levels?

There are a total of nine Performance Levels falling within three overarching performance categories: emergent, achieved, and commended.



- Students performing in the **Emergent** category (levels 1–3) are developing basic knowledge of specific academic skills derived from instruction and practice and may require cueing and/or prompting.
- Students performing in the **Achieved** category (levels 4–6) are acquiring specific academic skills derived from instruction and practice with moderate success.
- Students performing in the **Commended** category (levels 7–9) have mastered and generalized specific academic skills derived from instruction and practice.

What is the difference between Access Points and Performance Levels?

- Access Points identify *what* a student should know at each grade level and level of complexity.
- Performance Levels indicate *how much* of the content a student demonstrates on the assessment.

How were Performance Levels determined?

- Performance Levels were determined through the standard-setting process.
- Standard-setting panels, comprised of various stakeholders representing a diverse range of knowledge and expertise, were convened in order to determine the minimum raw score, or “cut score,” a student must achieve in order to attain a designated Performance Level.
- In order to determine cut scores, panelists reviewed the assessment, actual student scores, and discussed the Performance Level Descriptors, differentiating between the knowledge, skills, and abilities typically associated with each Performance Level.

For more information about the standard-setting process, review the Florida Alternate Assessment Technical Report at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp>.

How will the nine levels be used to report student growth?

- Students who score level 4 or higher on the prior year assessment and maintained their level or scored higher on the current year assessment are considered to have made growth.
- Students who scored in level 1, 2, or 3 on the prior year assessment and score at least one level higher on the current year assessment are considered to have demonstrated growth.
- Students who scored in level 1, 2, or 3 on the prior year assessment and maintain the same level on the current year assessment will have demonstrated growth if they increase their total score by 5 or more points.

What assessment results are provided to teachers and parents?

- Student Reports, with grade level information about student performance, are provided to schools to share with parents at the end of each school year. In addition, each school receives a school report that includes all students and their scores.
- Results are reported in terms of Performance Levels that describe students’ knowledge, skills, and abilities in relation to the established *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*. Separate Performance Levels are assigned for each academic area that was assessed.

How can teachers help parents understand assessment results?

A crosswalk with grade- and academic area-specific Access Points referenced in the Student Report can be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp>. To assist parents in understanding the Florida Alternate Assessment scoring system, please refer to the Administration and Scoring Process Flow Chart and the Scoring Rubric and Directions section in your Florida Alternate Assessment Test Administration Manual.

How can teachers use the assessment results?

Students' results can be used to:

- identify students' progression toward learning the knowledge and skills contained in the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Access Points*;
- assist the IEP team in writing the Present Level of Academic Achievement by examining the results in conjunction with other information—progress reports, report cards, and parent and teacher observations—to see what additional instruction is needed and in what areas; and
- improve instructional planning by determining if there is a need to adjust the curriculum or for students to be provided with additional supports and learning opportunities.

Are the Florida Alternate Assessment results included in the state's accountability system for my school/district?

- Yes, a student's alternate assessment score is included in the school and district's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculation. A student is counted as proficient if he/she:
 - attains a level 4 or higher; or
 - demonstrates growth as defined above.
- Since the 2009-10 school year, scores from students who take the Florida Alternate Assessment are included in the learning gains calculation of school grades.

For more information about the Florida Alternate Assessment, contact your Alternate Assessment Coordinator or District Assessment Coordinator.



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Commissioner of Education