

### Appendix B-3: DeSSA-Alternate Decision-Making Tool

Student Last Name:	Student First Name:	Student ID#
School District or Charter School:	School:	
Student Age: _____	Student DOB: _____	Student Grade Level _____

#### Delaware's Definition of a Most Significant Cognitive Disability

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are those whose school records indicate their disabilities pervasively impact their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior across settings. Significant deficits in intellectual functioning result in the students requiring extensive individualized direct instruction and substantial supports in order to make measurable educational gains. Significant deficits in adaptive behavior often result in the student being unable to develop the skills needed to live independently or to function safely in their daily life at home, in school and in the community. The student cannot show learning on the general assessment. As a result, the student is learning academic content that is reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity.

#### Background

This tool is meant to guide and support individualized education program (IEP) teams in determining whether a student is most appropriately assessed with an alternate assessment. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law. ESSA limits the number of students who may take such assessments to 1% of all tested students in a given subject. While many states have been able to meet the 1% limit, Delaware has exceeded the 1% cap. Eventually, if Delaware cannot lower the rate of students taking the alternate assessment, the U.S. Department of Education could withhold Title I Part A State administrative funds.

#### Instructions

This tool must be completed **yearly** for all students being considered for the alternate assessment, even if that student has participated previously. Throughout the tool, IEP teams must review multiple sources of information, including the student's IEP, Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) and other data, such as results from formative assessments, evidence-based interventions, assistive technology assessment and the student's cumulative folder documenting supports and services.

**Note: The decision-making team must agree on all ratings. Therefore, the team must honor the results of the tool and plan for the student accordingly.**

Section A: Determining Initial Eligibility		
Does the student have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is eligibility being considered for participation in ALL content areas?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If you answered <b>NO</b> to any of the above questions, The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment.	If you answered <b>YES</b> to both questions Proceed to Section B	
Section B – Determining if the Student has a Most Significant Cognitive Disability		
The student has a disability or multiple disabilities that <i>pervasively</i> impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior (Adaptive behavior- essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life- DLM definition).		
<b>Conceptual Domain:</b> Covers skills that are needed to communicate, apply academic skills, and manage and accomplish tasks		
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Little or No Evidence	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partial or Inconsistent Evidence	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and Consistent Evidence
The student's cognitive disability does not interfere with learning grade level skills and concepts across academic areas.  Data provided show the student is able to participate in all general state assessment with accessibility supports.  With additional time, the student will be able to develop the skills needed to live independently or to function safely in their daily life at home, school and community.	The student's cognitive disability interferes with learning grade level skills and concepts across some academic areas.  Data provided show the student is able to participate in one or more general state assessment with accessibility supports.  With additional time, the student may be able to develop the skills needed to live independently or to function safely in their daily life at home, school and community.	The student's cognitive disability interferes with learning grade level skills and concepts across all academic areas.  Data provided show the student is not able to participate any general state assessment even with accessibility supports.  Even with additional time, the student is unable to develop the skills needed to live independently or to function safely in their daily life at home, school and community.

<p><b>Social Domain:</b> Covers behaviors needed to engage in interpersonal interactions, act with social responsibility and use leisure time. This includes social competence, self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté (wariness), social problem-solving</p>		
<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Little or No Evidence</p>	<p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partial or Inconsistent Evidence</p>	<p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and Consistent Evidence</p>
<p>The student displays age-appropriate social, communication and leisure skills.</p> <p>The student can initiate and maintain friendships, express and recognize emotions with peers who are the same age.</p> <p>The student engages in play and recreational activities without additional support; OR The student may have difficulty with social interactions (for example, may misinterpret peers' social cues or others may consider the student's actions as immature).</p> <p>The student's communication, language and conversation skills are more concrete or immature than peers who are the same age.</p> <p>The student may have challenges in regulating emotion and behavior in an age-appropriate manner, and these challenges may be noticed by peers and adults.</p>	<p>The student has social, behavior and communication skills markedly different from peers who are the same age.</p> <p>The student is able to be understood but uses a mode for communication that is much less complex than peers who are the same age.</p> <p>The student may use behaviors to communicate. The student may not perceive or interpret social cues accurately.</p> <p>The student often needs significant support to engage in social situations and/or use communication skills.</p>	<p>The student often uses behaviors to communicate.</p> <p>The student's communication skills are very limited in terms of vocabulary and grammar.</p> <p>The student may be in the process of developing a mode of communication, may be described as nonverbal or uses very limited non-symbolic communication.</p> <p>The student requires significant adult assistance to communicate with peers or adults and may require layers of support (simple speech, visuals, gestures, etc.) to communicate.</p> <p>The student may not yet show understanding of symbolic communication with speech or gesture.</p>
<p><b>Practical Domain:</b> Covers behaviors needed to address personal and health needs; take care of home, classroom or work settings; and function in a school or community.</p>		
<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Little or No Evidence</p>	<p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partial or Inconsistent Evidence</p>	<p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and Consistent Evidence</p>
<p>The student is able to follow rules and functions in the community and classroom setting similarly to peers who are the same age.</p> <p>The student independently performs self-care activities such as eating, dressing and taking care of personal hygiene.</p> <p>The student displays recreational skills typically on the same level as peers, although some additional support may be needed.</p> <p>The student may need support in navigating the school and community and may need reminders about being mindful of safety hazards.</p>	<p>The student may need support to care for personal needs (for example, eating, dressing, toileting needs), may have needed an extended period of explicit teaching in these areas and may require prompting or cues.</p> <p>The student often requires additional support and learning opportunities for recreational skills.</p> <p>The student often requires intensive support to safely navigate the school and community.</p>	<p>The student requires significant support and direct instruction across all activities of daily living (meals, dressing, bathing, toileting needs) or may be dependent on others for all aspects of physical care, health and safety.</p> <p>The student requires intensive teaching and ongoing support for recreational and navigation skills, not because of physical ability but because of significant cognitive needs.</p> <p>The student requires supervision at all times.</p>
<p><b>Score 8 and below:</b> The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment</p>		<p><b>Score 9:</b> Proceed to Section C</p>
<p>THE TEAM AGREES WITH THIS SCORE. If no, discuss until consensus is reached.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>

**Section C – Determining if the Student requires Extensive Direct Individualized Instruction**  
The student requires specialized direct instruction and/or a wide range of supports to acquire and transfer skills to school, home, work, and community environments.

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Little or No Evidence	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partial or Inconsistent Evidence	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and Consistent Evidence
<p>Instruction and other skills provided in small groups and other settings lead to the best student gains.</p> <p>The student requires little or no support to acquire and transfer skills.</p> <p>The student requires repeated exposure to acquire and transfer skills to school, home and community environments.</p>	<p>Instruction and other skills provided in small groups and other settings lead to the best student gains.</p> <p>The student requires some support to acquire and transfer skills.</p> <p>The student requires extended time and repeated exposure to acquire and transfer skills to school, home and community environments.</p>	<p>Individualized instruction or a low student-to-teacher ratio for instruction (ex. 1:1, 1:2) leads to the best student gains.</p> <p>Instruction and other skills provided in one-on-one student instruction lead to the best student gains.</p> <p>The student must receive a wide range of complex supports to acquire and transfer skills.</p> <p>Even with extended time and repeated exposure, the student is unable to acquire and transfer skills to school, home and/or community environments.</p>

**Accessibility Supports:** This section describes the accessibility supports needed for the student to participate meaningfully in daily instructional and assessment activities.

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Little or No Evidence	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partial or Inconsistent Evidence	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and Consistent Evidence
<p>The student's IEP does not include accessibility supports presented in Delaware's Accessibility Guidelines.</p>	<p>The student's IEP outlines accessibility supports presented in Appendix A-1 of Delaware's Accessibility Guidelines which are provided during instruction and assessment to support access.</p>	<p>A student with a most significant disability uses almost all of individualized supports, accommodations and modifications, materials outlined in Appendix B-1 of Delaware's Accessibility Guidelines and beyond to meet the cognitive and physical task demands of instruction and assessment.</p>

**Assistive Technology:** This section describes the use of assistive technologies needed for the student to actively engage and participate meaningfully and productively in daily activities in school, home, community and work environments.

**Required but not scored.**

<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP team has determined the student does not need any assistive technology.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student currently is learning to use or is independently using assistive technology as a scaffold to access learning in his or her environment.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's IEP describes complex physical, sensory or medical needs that require multiple assistive technology supports and service. The student currently requires adult or peer dependent supports or scaffolds.
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<b>Score of 5 and below:</b> <b>The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment</b>	<b>Score of 6</b> <b>Proceed to Section D</b>
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THE TEAM AGREES WITH THIS SCORE. If no, discuss until consensus is reached.  Yes

**Section D – Curricular Outcomes**  
The student requires extensively modified instruction with less complex and depth of skills and uses the Delaware Alternate Achievement Standards to access the Delaware Content Standards.

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Little or No Evidence	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partial or Inconsistent Evidence	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and Consistent Evidence
<p>The student receives instruction to learn grade level academic content that may be reduced in depth and/or breadth.</p> <p>The student is able to meet general curricular demands with or without accessibility supports.</p> <p>The student is receiving instruction on grade level general content standards.</p>	<p>The student receives targeted instruction to learn academic content that is reduced in depth and breadth.</p> <p>The student is able to meet general curricular demands using accessibility supports, even if they are performing below grade level expectations.</p> <p>The student is receiving instruction on adapted general education curriculum using the general content standards.</p>	<p>The student receives intensive instruction to learn academic content that is reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity.</p> <p>The student is unable to meet general curricular demands even with accessibility supports.</p> <p>The student receives instruction on modified curriculum using the Delaware Alternate Achievement Standards (EEs).</p>

<b>Score of 2 and below:</b> <b>The student is not eligible for the alternate assessment.</b>	<b>Score of 3</b> <b>Proceed to Section E</b>
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THE TEAM AGREES WITH THIS SCORE. If no, discuss until consensus is reached.  Yes

Section E – Additional Considerations		
<b>Exclusions:</b> The decision to include the student in the DESSA-Alt should NOT be based on the following:		
1. existence of an IEP; 2. specific categorical label; 3. educational placement r setting;	4. English language learner status 5. socio-economic or cultural differences; 6. excessive or extended absences;	7. disruptive behavior; 8. student’s reading level; or 9. the expectation that the student will not perform well on DeSSA Gen Ed assessments
<b>Parent/Guardian Assurances</b> (must not be pre-checked)		
I understand that my child’s participation in the DeSSA-Alternate Assessment <i>may</i> lead to a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards, which may not be accepted by colleges and technical/trade schools.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I understand that the standards assessed in the DeSSA-Alternate Assessment are less complex than the Delaware Content Standards assessed in the DeSSA general assessments.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I participated in the discussion on the decision for my child to participate in the DeSSA-Alternate Assessment.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I was provided informational flyers about the DeSSA-Alternate Assessment.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> The parent/guardian attended in-person <input type="checkbox"/> The parent/guardian attended virtually or by phone	Parent/Guardian Initials: _____	
Section F – PARTICIPATION DECISION - The IEP team must honor the results of the tool.		
<b>Based on the review of evidence in Section A through D and ensuring the decision is not based solely on any of the considerations outlined in Section E:</b>		
The student meets <u>all</u> the criteria in Section A through E and will participate in the alternate assessment.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The student meets all the criteria for participation in the alternate assessment but the parent has declined therefore the student will participate in the general content area assessment.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments, if any:	_____	

*Team signatures.*

_____	(Parent/Guardian)	_____	(Date)
_____	(Parent/Guardian)	_____	(Date)
_____	(Student)	_____	(Date)
_____	(Administrator/Designee)	_____	(Date)
_____	(Special Education Teacher)	_____	(Date)
_____	(Other – please specify name and position)	_____	(Date)
_____	(Other – please specify name and position)	_____	(Date)