

The Access Project supports statewide professional development, technical assistance, and products. This promotes the understanding of access points, modifications, data collection, present levels of academic and functional performance statements for individual education plans and alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.



“The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

– MICHELANGELO

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Florida's Access Points - Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

Florida state academic standards access points are alternate academic achievement standards developed from the general education standards that:

- award graduates, instructed via Access Points, a standard diploma via access points which may limit post secondary options
- offer an expectation of performance that is reduced in complexity from a grade-level achievement standard
- are aligned with general education state standards
- promote access to the general education curriculum and placement
- allow students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to engage in grade level content at their individual ability level, as documented in their individual education plan (IEP)
- are aligned to general education courses
- are assessed using the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA)

Mission Statement:

To provide resources that facilitate the teaching and learning of access points.

Vision Statement:

All students living independent and fulfilling lives.

Accommodations

Accommodations do not change the learning expectation of the student. Florida defines accommodations as “changes that are made in how the student accesses information and demonstrates performance” (Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(a), F.A.C.).

Modifications

Modifications are changes in what a student is expected to learn and may include changes to content, requirements and expected level of mastery. Changes that modify the requirements of the standard and lower expectations can limit progress of the student and their postsecondary opportunities (Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(z), F.A.C.).

Least Restrictive Environment

All academic achievement standards are placement neutral and can be provided to students in any educational placement or setting. Access courses are setting neutral. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities must be educated with students who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate. The individual education plan (IEP) team will determine the placement of the student based on the needs of the student. Access courses do not determine placement. For more information on the least restrictive environment, please visit: <https://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/>

Florida Alternate Assessment

The Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) has two versions: the FAA–Performance Task (FAA–PT) and FAA–Datafolio, which form a continuum of assessments to meet the needs of Florida’s students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The FAA–PT is designed to assess students at three levels of complexity and results are reported through achievement levels. The FAA–Datafolio is designed to address the needs of a small population of students who typically do not have a formal mode of communication and may be working at pre-academic levels. Regardless of the component with which a student is assessed, it is expected that the only eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will participate in the FAA assessment.

Start with the End in Mind



Graduation



Further Education
and Training



Military
Service



Employment

The state’s alternate assessment, based on alternate academic achievement standards, is meant for a very small number of children with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Although life after school seems a long time away, taking the alternate assessment instead of the general state test can affect your child’s future.

Instruction on Access Points (alternate achievement standards) impacts a student’s post secondary options after graduation.

Five things to consider when making state assessment decisions:

1. **Disability** – Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can take the alternate state assessment.
2. **Yearly** – Every year the IEP team should make the decision about what your student will take.
3. **Guidelines** – IEP team members use the state’s participation guidelines to decide whether your student should take the state alternate assessment or the state general assessment.
4. **Agreement** – Everyone on the IEP team should agree that your student meets each of the state’s participation criteria for taking the alternate assessment. Parent consent must be obtained.
5. **Instruction** – All students are taught academic content for their enrolled grade level. Students who take the alternate assessment may need content presented in a reduced depth, breadth, and/or complexity.

Adapted from a National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) publication

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