New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) Participation Decision-Making Flowchart

Students with severe disabilities in New York State (NYS) may be determined eligible by the committee on special education (CSE) to participate in the NYSAA. Consistent with the provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), NYSAA is an appropriate assessment for a very small number of students with the most severe cognitive disabilities. In conjunction with guidance provided in NYSED’s Eligibility and Participation Criteria – NYSAA, this flowchart should be used in the decision-making process to ensure that only those students with the most severe cognitive disabilities are taking the NYSAA.

1. **Has the student been identified as a student with a disability?**
   - **YES**
   - **NO**

2. **Does the student have a severe cognitive disability?**
   - The CSE has determined, after considering qualitative and quantitative information related to the student’s skills (e.g., evaluative information, classroom data, anecdotal information) that the student has limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and requires highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment.
   - **YES**
   - **NO**

3. **Does the student meet the following criteria?**
   - The student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and significant deficits in adaptive behavior; **AND**
   - The student requires a highly specialized educational program that facilitates the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school, community, and/or workplace); **AND**
   - The student requires educational support systems, such as assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, or behavioral intervention.
   - **YES**
   - **NO**

4. **The student is eligible to participate in the NYSAA.**

In addition, the CSE’s decision regarding participation in the NYSAA was **not** based on the student’s:
- category of disability;
- language differences;
- excessive or extended absences;
- cultural or environmental factors;
- previous low academic achievement; or
- previous need for accommodations to participate in State or districtwide assessments.

The student must participate in the general NYS Assessment Program under standard administration procedures.

The student must participate in the general NYS Assessment Program with or without testing accommodations.

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The student’s IEP must:
- provide a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment, and why the particular alternate assessment is appropriate for the student;
- include short-term instructional objectives and/or benchmarks; and
- provide a statement of any individual testing accommodations to be used consistently by the student in the recommended educational program and in the administration of the NYSAA.

The student’s parent(s) must be informed that:
- Their child’s performance will be measured based on alternate standards that are below the expectations needed to earn a regular high school diploma in New York State (NYS); and
- Their child will not be able to earn a NYS high school diploma if they continue to participate in the NYSAA for one or more subjects in high school.