

2023-24 Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Early Stopping Rule

Connecticut Alternate Assessments measure the knowledge and skills of students with significant cognitive disabilities as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These assessments are designed to support student independence to the greatest extent possible by making academic and language content accessible and the expected achievement levels appropriate. The Connecticut Alternate Assessment System is comprised of the following assessments:

- The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA)—aligned to the same Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) used to instruct and assess all of Connecticut’s public school students. It is upon these standards that summative assessments in Grades 3-8 and 11 in Math and English language arts were developed.
- The Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment—aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and administered to students in Grades 5, 8, and 11.
- The Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP)—aligned to and derived from the Connecticut English Language Proficiency Standards. This alternate assessment is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades K-12 who are dually identified as English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) receiving services under IDEA. The test measures skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Connecticut’s Alternate Assessments vary in test design, format, and administration procedures. The CTAA and CAAELP are online, while the CTAS is a paper, performance task-based assessment. Each assessment may be accessed in a variety of formats based the diverse needs of the student. Generally, **students may access the test items by:**

- Listening to the trained teacher read the test;
- Reading the test question independently if the trained teacher determines this is appropriate;
- Having the test question signed by a qualified trained educator; or
- Listening to a recorded voice read the test question (applicable to the online CTAA only).

Students may respond to test items while the trained teacher records responses by:

- Verbalizing the answer;
- Gesturing, signing, or pointing to the answer;
- Using an eye gaze system to select the answer;
- Using assistive technology (AT) to indicate the answer;
- Circling or marking the answers on a paper copy of the test for educator transcription; or
- Using the mouse to select the answer online (applicable on the online CTAA only).

Most students eligible to participate on alternate assessments will be able to complete the assessments because they can access the test questions and communicate their responses when provided supports and accommodations that mirror those provided during instruction. However, a small percentage of students with the most significant cognitive and adaptive behavioral needs are reported by their teachers to have no observable way to communicate responses to participate in classroom or large-scale assessments. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) developed a method for identifying those students prior to the testing window who might qualify for a special test code status called the Early Stopping Rule (ESR). Students that qualify for this status will not take the CTAA, CTAS, or CAAELP (if the student is identified as EL/ML) during the assessment window because they are not able to demonstrate an observable mode of communication. Instead, the ESR special code status counts these students as test participants with the understanding that they meet specific eligibility criteria through the ESR identification processes outlined in

Appendix C of this document. Requests must be approval by the Connecticut State Department of Education (see [Appendix C](#)).

The process for the ESR is outlined in this document. Teachers and District Administrators should follow the steps outlined in this resource to determine eligibility for the ESR and its submission to the CSDE to ensure the appropriate designation for testing and participation.

What is the process for the ESR?

- The process for the ESR begins prior to the 2023-24 summative assessment window. Between **December 1, 2023, and February 1, 2024**, trained TEAs educating students who qualify to participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System, who do not have an observable mode of communication demonstrated in response to instruction, will administer the three-item **Student Response Check (SRC)**. Refer to [Appendix A](#). The SRC is a content-neutral screener for all tested grades (Grades 3-8, and 11; or in the case of CAAELP, Grades K-12) that confirms the observation of the student’s mode of communication. The SRC must be administered individually to the student a total of three times on three different days, at various times of the day prior to February 1, 2024.
- The purpose of the SRC is to determine if the student can indicate a response using their preferred method of communication. Students are not required to respond correctly to any of the items but must demonstrate the ability to respond.
- If the trained TEA observes the student communicating any response during any of the three SRC administrations, the trained TEA will discontinue the SRC administration because the student does not qualify for the ESR. This student will participate in the Alternate Assessment System during the testing window.
- If the student does not show any response using an observable mode of communication for each of the three SRC administrations, the TEA should review the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) to verify that the IEP documents goals that support the student’s *development of communication*. If documented as such, the TEA will complete the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Early Stopping Rule Request and Attestation Form (located in [Appendix C](#) of this document) and submit it to their District Administrator (DA) for testing no later than **February 1, 2024**.
- The DA will submit the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Early Stopping Rule Request and Attestation Form using the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) system before **March 1, 2024**, to attest that, for the purposes of the summative assessments, the student has “No Observable Mode of Communication.”. The CSDE will then assign a special status code to the student record indicating that the student qualifies for the ESR for all subject areas (math, ELA, and science) and on the CAAELP (if applicable) per the student’s grade of enrollment in the Public School Information System (PSIS). Once this is form is submitted by the DA by **March 1, 2024**, no further action or testing is required by the TEA or DA on behalf of the student.

If the student becomes disruptive, aggressive, or refuses to respond to the SRC, mirror strategies used during instruction. The teacher can pause and resume the SRC when the student is more receptive or consider an alternate environment and/or additional staff and supports. If personal safety is a concern for the staff or the student, discontinue SRC administration. If the student is not able to complete the SRC due to refusal, the student **does not qualify for the ESR** and will be considered a non-participant for summative testing unless the student participates in the grade-appropriate alternate assessments.

If the DA or CSDE determines the student does not qualify for the ESR, the TEA will schedule and administer all components of the alternate assessment system based on the grade of the student, using appropriate supports, accommodations, procedures specified by the student’s IEP, and CSDE per the required TEA



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Alternate Assessment System Training and CAAELP Training (if applicable). When examining the student's IEP, consider looking for evidence and goals that support the student's development of communication as described in the [National Center and State Collaborative Communication Tool Kit Workbook](#).

For more information, contact [Deirdre Ducharme](#) , [Janet Stuck](#), [Katherine Seifert](#), or the [Office of Student Assessment](#). You may also visit the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal's [Alternate Assessment System](#) page for details.

Appendix A: The Student Response Check (SRC)

How to administer the Student Response Check

The three-item Student Response Check (used to determine eligibility for the ESR) must be administered *three times* unless the student demonstrates a response during any of the three SRC administrations. Each administration *must be on a different day and during a different time of day* to ensure the student has multiple opportunities to demonstrate an observable communicative response.

To qualify, the SRC must be administered between December 1, 2023, and February 1, 2024, and the Early Stopping Rule Request and Attestation Form (see [Appendix C](#)) must be completed, signed, and returned to the District Administrator (DA) for Testing no later than February 1, 2024.

1. Present **Student Response Check Card Item #1** to the student in paper form or on a device.
 - Using the following potential communication modes, ask the student to “Select A”. The student should respond using one or more of the following communication modes:
 1. Verbalizing, gesturing, signing, or pointing to the answer
 2. Using the mouse/touchscreen to select the answer on a device
 3. Using assistive technology (AT) to indicate the answer
 4. Using an eye gaze system to select the answer
 5. Circling or marking the answer on the Student Response Check Card Item #1
 - Use [Appendix B](#) to note the communication behaviors of the student.
2. Present **Student Response Check Card Item #2** to the student in paper form or on a device.
 - Using the following potential communication modes, ask the student to “Select C”. The student should respond using one or more of the following communication modes:
 1. Verbalizing, gesturing, signing, or pointing to the answer
 2. Using the mouse/touchscreen to select the answer on a device
 3. Using assistive technology (AT) to indicate the answer
 4. Using an eye gaze system to select the answer
 5. Circling or marking the answer on the Student Response Check Card Item #2
 - Use [Appendix B](#) to note the communication behaviors of the student.
3. Present **Student Response Check Card Item #3** to the student in paper form or on a device.
 - Using the following potential communication modes, ask the student to “Select B”. The student should respond using one or more of the following communication modes:
 1. Verbalizing, gesturing, signing, or pointing to the answer
 2. Using the mouse/touchscreen to select the answer on a device
 3. Using assistive technology (AT) to indicate the answer
 4. Using an eye gaze system to select the answer
 5. Circling or marking the answer on the Student Response Check Card Item #3
 - Use [Appendix B](#) to note the communication behaviors of the student.
4. **Repeat these SRC administration steps on two more occasions on two different days and times of day, noting the student’s communication behaviors in [Appendix B](#).**



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Student Response Check Item #1

Select A.

A

B

C



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Student Response Check Item #2

Select C.

C

B

A



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Student Response Check Item #3

Select B.

A

B

C



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Appendix B: SRC Administration Behavioral Notes

For each administration of the Student Response Check (SRC), please use this form to note the student's behavior. Please be as detailed as possible in noting your observations for each administration on the SRC. This form should be kept with the student's file for future reference.

SRC Administration 1

Date Administered: _____

Notes: _____

SRC Administration 2

Date Administered: _____

Notes: _____

SRC Administration 3

Date Administered: _____

Notes: _____



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Appendix C: Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Early Stopping Rule Request and Attestation Form

This form should be submitted in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) system by the District Administrator for Testing (DA in TIDE) indicating that for the purposes of summative testing this student does not demonstrate an observable mode of communication. This form should only be submitted if the following is true:

1. The trained TEA conducted **three separate administrations** of the three-item Student Response Check (SRC) between **December 1, 2023, and February 1, 2024.**
2. The student did not show any response using an observable mode of communication during **any** of the three administrations of the SRC.
3. The student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents goals that support the student’s *development of communication.*

Directions:

The trained TEA who administered the Student Response Check must:

1. Complete the table and check boxes (below) and include all specified signatures.
2. Provide a completed copy to the DA for Testing **no later than February 1, 2024.**
3. Maintain the original form locally for record retention purposes.

The DA for Testing must submit this form in TIDE for processing **no later than March 1, 2024.**

Ten-Digit State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID): _____	Student Response Check	Date Conducted (mm/dd/yyyy)	Name of Trained TEA
	SRC Administration 1		
	SRC Administration 2		
	SRC Administration 3		

- Based on the TEA’s administration of the Student Response Check (for the purposes of the Alternate Assessment System), the student did not demonstrate an observable mode of communication.
- The student’s IEP documents goals that support the student’s *development of communication.*

Trained TEA Signature: _____ Date: _____

TEA’s Ten-Digit Educator ID Number (EIN): _____

Special Education Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

District Administrator for Testing Signature: _____ Date: _____

No further action on behalf of the student is required by the TEA or DA unless notified by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Forms submitted by DAs on or before **March 1, 2024**, will be processed by the CSDE and Cambium Assessments Incorporated (CAI). These qualified students will count as participants and their tests will be processed internally. A special code indicating that the student qualifies for the Early Stopping Rule will be applied to the student’s alternate assessments for math, English language arts, and science (if applicable) and the CAAELP (if applicable). This status can be reviewed by TIDE users when selecting various reports under the Monitoring Test Progress option in TIDE. Refer to the [Monitoring Test Progress: Test Status code Report and Test Completion Rates](#) brochure and the [TIDE User Guide](#) for details.