



# Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form

This FAQ document is intended to provide local education agencies (LEAs), parents, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties with information regarding eligibility criteria for participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System that includes:

- The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for eligible students in Grades 3-8 and 11;
- The Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment for eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11; and
- The Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) for eligible English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) with the most significant cognitive disabilities in Grades K-12.

## 1. Where can I access the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form?

**Answer:** The [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form](#) is available for reference on the [Connecticut State Department of Education \(CSDE\) Alternate Assessment Webpage](#) and on the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal](#). However, the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) will determine if the student meets eligibility criteria by completing the form online using the Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS).

## 2. Who is responsible for completing the form?

**Answer:** The PPT or student's primary teacher can download the form from the state website or assessment portal and complete it as a draft prior to the student's annual PPT meeting. However, the official Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form must be completed within CT-SEDS by the PPT to determine eligibility for the current testing year.

**Note:** Once the form is completed and approved by the PPT, a copy of the eligibility form should be downloaded and printed from the student's Event History in CT-SEDS and provided to the Director of Special Education, the District Administrator for testing, and the following if applicable: the Connecticut SAT School Day Test Coordinator and the District English Learner Assessment Coordinator for necessary test planning and actions.

## 3. The PPT has determined that the student qualifies for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System. What are the next steps?

**Answer:** Once the eligibility form is completed in CT-SEDS and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is fully implemented, the student will be officially identified as qualifying for alternate assessments. The CSDE will work with appropriate program vendors to identify eligible students and populate the Alternate Assessment Indicator in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) on a nightly basis. **Please note, PPTs should plan early to identify student eligibility prior to the assessment deadlines.** These deadlines allow the CSDE and local school districts to develop and populate the various student test files for each unique testing system. Missing these deadlines will potentially result in test irregularities and may have accountability implications.

**4. Is the Data Entry interface (DEI) used to submit the Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form?**

**Answer:** The DEI is **no longer used** to submit the Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form. However, the DEI will continue to be used for the following tasks: submitting the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment Student Score Worksheet and transcribing/submitting student responses from Smarter Balanced and NGSS paper tests (Large Print and Braille).

**5. What are the deadlines for confirming student participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System using the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form?**

**Answer:** It is recommended that the **required** Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form be approved and verified in CT-SEDS as soon as the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) determines that the student meets eligibility criteria. This PPT determination of eligibility, as well as IEP implementation, should occur prior to the start of the applicable testing window(s) to ensure that the student’s Alt Flag Indicator is set in TIDE. Otherwise, the student will only have access to the standard statewide assessments. See recommended implementation dates below.

**Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form Verification in CT-SEDS**

CT-SEDS Implementation Date	Assessment
Fully Implemented IEP by December 29, 2023	Eligibility forms must be approved, verified, and implemented in IEPs in CT-SEDS for the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LAS Links/CAAELP (Grades K-12); and</li><li>• CT SAT School Day (Grade 11)</li></ul>
Fully Implemented IEP by February 1, 2024	Eligibility forms must be approved, verified, and implemented in IEPs in CT-SEDS for the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smarter Balanced (Grades 3-8)</li><li>• CTAA (Grades 3-8, 11); and</li><li>• NGSS/CTAS (Grades 5, 8, and 11)</li></ul>

The PPT must make every effort to meet these specified deadlines for each test and grade. The completion of the eligibility form in CT-SEDS registers a student for the alternate assessment system. Without the submission of the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form, the student will not have access to the alternate assessments and will be expected to participate in the applicable assessments: LAS Links, Next Generation Science Standards, Smarter Balanced, and the Connecticut SAT School Day.

**6. What happens once the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form is approved, verified, and implemented in CT-SEDS?**

**Answer:** Once the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form is implemented by the specified deadlines (see the response to [Question 5](#)), the Alternate Assessment Indicator in the student’s TIDE Test Setting account will be set to YES. Activation of the Alternate Assessment Indicator will provide the student with online access to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment for mathematics and ELA at the time of testing and the trained teacher will be able to submit scores for CTAS. If the student is identified as

EL/ML with significant cognitive disabilities eligible for the alternate assessments, then the student will have access to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAELP). Without this activation, the student will only have access to the LAS Links, Next Generation Science Standards, Smarter Balanced, and the Connecticut SAT School Day.

**7. Does an IQ score less than 70 assure eligibility for the alternate assessments?**

**Answer:** No. If the result from a full-scale IQ test is less than 70, data from the IEP for the other required components in the criteria for eligibility must be reviewed. These other evaluations include results documenting that the student's adaptive behavior skills are well below age-level expectations (composite/functional score must be more than 1.5 standard deviations below the mean score). There must also be evidence throughout the IEP that the student requires extensive, repeated instruction, support that is not of a temporary or transient nature, and that the student uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, demonstrate, and transfer skills.

**8. Cognitive assessments were not administered to my student. Can they still participate in the alternate assessments?**

**Answer:** Yes. However, in the absence of standardized cognitive assessments, there must be evidence to substantiate the presence of an intellectual impairment. Evidence might include, but is not limited to, curriculum-based assessment scores, detailed present levels of performance information, goals and objectives, and progress report data. Upon review of the evidence submitted, the CSDE may contact districts for additional information.

**9. What are the recommendations for administering adaptive behavior skill assessments if no scores exist on the student's IEP?**

**Answer:** There are a variety of adaptive behavior assessments that may be recommended by the PPT including, but not limited to, the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, the Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised, and the Adaptive Behavior Assessment System. Note: It is important that the PPT select a measurement that truly measures broad functional skills. It is not appropriate to use other types of assessments, such as language or behavioral assessments, in lieu of adaptive behavior skills assessments for this purpose.

**10. Should my student with a primary disability category of Intellectual Disability participate in the CT Alternate Assessment System?**

**Answer:** The PPT must review student specific evidence for all students, regardless of primary disability category, to determine if the student has barriers to access the standard summative assessments even if provided designated supports, accommodations, and assistive technology. The PPT must also ensure that the evidence explicitly documented throughout the student's IEP, in conjunction with the required data in the Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form, captures the student's intellectual impairment, adaptive behavior skills that are well below average level expectations, and the confirmation that the student receives extensive, repeated, individualized instruction, and academic support across all academic and non-academic areas.

**11. I have a student with a primary disability category of Learning Disability, SLD/Dyslexia, or Emotional Disability. Does this student qualify for the alternate assessments?**

**Answer:** Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are eligible for the Connecticut Alternate

Assessment System. For students to qualify for the alternate assessment, PPTs must provide evidence to support that the student:

- has an intellectual impairment;
- has adaptive behavior skills well below age level expectations; and
- requires intensive instruction and significant supports.

Sections 34 CFR 300.309 (3)(a)(1) and (2) and 300.8(c)(4)(i) of the IDEA requires that intellectual factors/impairments be ruled out to qualify for special education services under the categories of a specific learning disability or emotional disability. Therefore, students with these primary disability types typically would not participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System unless there is evidence to substantiate the presence of a significant cognitive disability (see the indicators outlined by the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form).

**12. Does the Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form apply to students dually identified as an English learner/multilingual learner with significant cognitive disabilities?**

**Answer:** Yes, students identified as EL/ML in the Public School Information System (PSIS) who are also students with significant cognitive disabilities receiving services under IDEA may be eligible for participation in the alternate assessment system. The PPT, including members with an understanding of English language development, must determine if the student meets eligibility criteria, including a significant cognitive disability. Once the PPT approves and verifies eligibility at the IEP meeting, and the IEP is implemented in CT-SEDS, the student will be able to access applicable alternate assessments including CAAELP. (Please see the recommended implementation dates in [Question 5](#).)

For more information, refer to the [Connecticut State Department of Education \(CSDE\) Alternate Assessment Webpage](#) and on the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal](#).