

Statewide Alternate Assessment

Decision Making Guidance



Statewide Assessments in Oregon

The Oregon Department of Education is committed to developing a balanced approach to our assessment system, including support for formative assessment practices, interim/benchmark assessments, and summative assessments. Oregon's Statewide Assessment System (OSAS) currently includes summative assessments administered annually by subject matter and grade. Pursuant to federal and state accountability requirements, Oregon public schools test students in English language arts and math in grades 3 through 8 and 11 and science in grades 5, 8, and 11. Additionally, schools are required to administer English language proficiency assessments for all students with English learner status in grades K-12. These summative assessments, used for accountability, are customized for the needs of Oregon students; test development for these assessments has included Oregon teachers in all feasible aspects. To learn more about the Oregon Statewide Assessment System, visit the [ODE Student Assessment webpage](#).

Oregon's Alternate Assessments

Federal law allows states to develop alternate academic achievement standards and alternate English language proficiency standards for students experiencing the most significant cognitive disabilities. These alternate standards must be aligned to the state's challenging academic content and English language proficiency standards, but are significantly modified in depth, breadth, and complexity. States who develop these standards are also required to develop alternate assessments based on these alternate standards. Oregon's alternate academic assessments are known as the [Oregon Extended Assessments \(ORExt\)](#) and alternate English language proficiency assessment is known as the [Alt ELPA](#).

Alternate assessments allow for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to access and participate in statewide summative assessment and have their academic progress included in required district and state accountability measures. This inclusion honors the progress and educational gains achieved by students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and appropriately recognizes the exceptional education provided to them by educators and their families.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are typically characterized by significantly below average general cognitive functioning. This commonly includes a student with intelligence test scores two or more standard deviations below the mean on a standardized individually administered intelligence test, occurring with commensurate deficits in adaptive behavior that are frequently also evident in early childhood. Further, the cognitive disability must significantly impact the child's educational performance and ability to generalize learning from one setting to another. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in general, require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services to access an education program. These students may also rely on adults for personal care and have medical conditions that require physical/verbal supports, and assistive technology devices. These intensive and on-going supports and services are typically provided directly by educators and are delivered across all education settings.

English Learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, defined in the paragraph above, may also be identified as English learners. These students have an identified disability or disabilities that qualify them for services under the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and are also eligible for English language services under Civil Rights (May 25, 1970, Memorandum). English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are often multimodal, as well as multilingual, communicators and learners. Their specially designed educational program and English language services should be appropriately calculated to match their unique needs. This calculation includes both appropriate instructional and assessment practices.

IEP team decision making

Oregon Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams are responsible for decision making related to statewide summative assessment. IEP teams must:

1. Decide if the student will participate in standard assessment (with or without accessibility supports) or alternate assessment.
2. Determine what accessibility supports, if any, are necessary for statewide assessment.
 - a. Consult the [Oregon Accessibility Manual](#) (OAM) for relevant guidance.
3. If alternate assessment is selected, provide an explanation for why the student cannot participate in standard assessment and why alternate assessment is appropriate for the student.

If the IEP team selects Alternate Assessment for any subject, it **must be selected for all subjects** in which the student will be testing, including English language proficiency assessment. Students who participate in Alternate Assessment **will not** participate in Oregon's general assessments. This policy reflects the pervasive nature of a *significant* cognitive disability and allows the state's assessment models to appropriately measure the student populations they were designed to measure.

Unacceptable considerations

The following are **unacceptable** reasons for considering participation in the Alternate Assessments.

1. Disability category or label
2. Expected poor performance on the general assessment, or ability to exit from English learner services
3. Expected difficulties meeting the essential skills requirements* through the state's general assessment
4. Poor attendance, extended absences, or history of limited or interrupted formal schooling
5. First language, cultural factors, or economic disadvantage
6. English Learner (EL) status
7. Percent of time served in a special education setting
8. Low reading level, achievement level, or English language proficiency level
9. Anticipated disruptive behavior during testing
10. Impact of student's scores on district's/school's accountability results
11. Administrator or other single person decision
12. Anticipated emotional duress/anxiety around or during testing
13. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process

* Note that the [Assessment of Essential Skills](#) graduation policy is suspended through the 2027-28 school year.

Eligibility and Participation Criteria

To assist in decision-making, IEP teams must use the criteria in the Alternate Assessment Decision Making Checklist to determine whether a student should participate in Alternate Assessments. This checklist is available below in English and Spanish.

Alternate Assessment Decision Making Checklist

This checklist is **not** a required document. It is a tool that can be used to assist IEP teams in making individual decisions regarding participation in Alternate Assessments. Alternate Assessment participation can only be determined by the student's IEP team. **The IEP team for a student with a disability MUST answer "YES" to ALL the following questions for the student to be eligible to participate in Alternate Assessments.**

Student Name: _____ School: _____ Date: ____/____/____

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Has the student been evaluated and found eligible under IDEA for special education services? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- The student has an identified disability under IDEA. **AND**
- The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

2. Does the student demonstrate significant cognitive disabilities with commensurate delayed adaptive skills? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- The student has been determined to have cognitive abilities falling within the most significant cognitive disability range as evidenced by standardized assessments or the level of on-going supports needed for the student to access their educational program and difficulty generalizing learning from one setting to another. **AND**
- The student demonstrates adaptive skills that are substantially limited compared to same age peers and skills are commensurate with the student's cognitive ability.

3. Does significant cognitive disability impact the student's access to the general education curriculum and require individualized instruction? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- The student requires a highly specialized educational program with intensive and on-going supports, modifications, accommodations and/or adaptations to allow access to the general education curriculum. **AND/OR**
- The student consistently requires individualized instruction in core academics and functional life skills at a substantially low level relative to other peers with disabilities. **AND/OR**
- The student requires alternate methods or significant supports to communicate.

4. Does significant cognitive disability impact the student's post-school outcomes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- The student's post-secondary outcomes will likely require supported or assisted living and continued supervision and support into adulthood provided through adult service providers such as Oregon Department of Disability Services (ODDS) and/or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

5. Is the student's inability to participate in the general assessment not due to the factors listed below? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- The student's inability to participate in the state's general assessment is primarily the result of a significant cognitive disability and **NOT** due to excessive absences, other disabilities, cultural factors, first language, or economic disadvantage.

6. Is the student eligible to participate in Alternate Assessments? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If the answer to **ALL** above questions for the student is "**YES**", the student is eligible for participation in alternate assessment.
- If the answer to **ANY** above questions is "**NO**", the student is not eligible to participate in any alternate assessment. STOP HERE

The student will participate in the following Alternate Assessments: ☐ Ext ELA ☐ Ext Math ☐ Ext Science

7. Does the student have English Learner status? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If yes, the student will also participate in the **Alt ELPA**

Lista de verificación para la toma de decisiones sobre la evaluación alternativa

Esta lista de verificación **no** es un documento obligatorio. Es una herramienta que se puede utilizar para ayudar a los equipos del IEP a tomar decisiones individuales sobre la participación en las evaluaciones alternativas. Solo el equipo del IEP del estudiante puede determinar su participación en las evaluaciones alternativas. **El equipo del IEP de un estudiante con discapacidad DEBE responder “SÍ” a TODAS las siguientes preguntas para que el estudiante pueda participar en las evaluaciones alternativas.**

Nombre del estudiante: _____ Escuela: _____ Fecha: ____/____/____

CRITERIOS DE ELEGIBILIDAD

1. ¿Se ha evaluado al estudiante y se ha determinado que cumple con los requisitos de la IDEA para recibir servicios de educación especial? ☐ Sí ☐ No

- El estudiante tiene una discapacidad identificada según la IDEA. **Y**
- El estudiante tiene un Programa de Educación Individualizado (IEP).

2. ¿El estudiante demuestra discapacidades cognitivas significativas acordes con un retraso de sus habilidades de adaptación? ☐ Sí ☐ No

- Se ha determinado que el estudiante tiene capacidades cognitivas que se encuentran dentro del rango de discapacidad cognitiva más significativa, tal y como demuestran las evaluaciones estandarizadas o el nivel de apoyos continuos necesarios para que el estudiante acceda a su programa educativo y la dificultad para generalizar el aprendizaje de un entorno a otro. **Y**
- El estudiante muestra habilidades adaptativas sustancialmente limitadas en comparación con compañeros de su misma edad y las habilidades son acordes con su propia capacidad cognitiva.

3. ¿La discapacidad cognitiva significativa del estudiante afecta su acceso al currículo de educación general y requiere instrucción individualizada? ☐ Sí ☐ No

- El estudiante requiere un programa educativo altamente especializado con apoyos intensivos y continuos, modificaciones, acomodaciones y/o adaptaciones para permitir el acceso al currículo de educación general. **Y/O**
- El estudiante requiere constantemente instrucción individualizada en materias académicas básicas y habilidades funcionales para la vida a un nivel sustancialmente bajo en relación con otros compañeros con discapacidades. **Y/O**
- El estudiante requiere métodos alternativos o apoyos significativos para comunicarse.

4. ¿La discapacidad cognitiva significativa del estudiante afecta sus resultados postescolares? ☐ Sí ☐ No

- Los resultados posteriores a la escuela secundaria del estudiante probablemente requerirán una vida asistida o con apoyo y supervisión y apoyo continuos en la edad adulta a través de proveedores de servicios para adultos como el Departamento de Servicios para Discapacitados de Oregón (ODDS, por sus siglas en inglés) y/o Rehabilitación Vocacional (VR, por sus siglas en inglés).

5. ¿La incapacidad del estudiante de participar en la evaluación general no se debe a los factores que se enumeran a continuación? ☐ Sí ☐ No

- La incapacidad del estudiante de participar en la evaluación general del estado se debe principalmente a una discapacidad cognitiva significativa y **NO** a un exceso de ausencias, otras discapacidades, factores culturales, lengua materna o desventaja económica.

6. ¿El estudiante es elegible para participar en las evaluaciones alternativas? ☐ Sí ☐ No

- Si la respuesta a **TODAS** las preguntas anteriores sobre el estudiante es “**SÍ**”, es elegible para participar en la evaluación alternativa.
- Si la respuesta a **CUALQUIERA** de las preguntas anteriores es “**NO**”, el estudiante no es elegible para ninguna evaluación alternativa.

El estudiante participará en las siguientes evaluaciones alternativas:

☐ Ext. Lengua y literatura inglesas ☐ Ext. Matemáticas ☐ Ext. Ciencias

7. ¿El estudiante tiene la condición de “estudiante de inglés”? ☐ Sí ☐ No

- Si la respuesta es “**SÍ**”, el estudiante también participará en la **Alt ELPA**

Alternate Assessment Decision Making Checklist Guidance

The following guidance is provided to assist IEP teams in determining eligibility for participation in Alternate Assessments when using the checklist. It is important to remember that the team must determine that the student meets **all** the criteria included in the checklist for the student to be considered for Alternate Assessment participation.

1. **Has the student been evaluated and found eligible under IDEA for special education services?**

Only students who have been identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are eligible to participate in Alternate Assessments. The IEP team for a student must make an individualized decision regarding the student's participation in Alternate Assessments. Students who only have a medical diagnosis or are found eligible for a 504 plan are **NOT** eligible to participate in Alternate Assessments.

If the IEP team determines that the student will take Alternate Assessments, the IEP must include a statement of why the student cannot participate in the general assessment and why the Alternate Assessment has been selected and is appropriate for the student.

2. **Does the student demonstrate significant cognitive disabilities with commensurate delayed adaptive skills?**

Intelligence, as measured by a standardized individually administered intelligence test, refers to general mental capability and involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience. According to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the prevalence in recent years of intellectual disability in children aged 3-17 years ranged from 1.65% to 2.20%. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are a subset of this population. There are many causes of intellectual disability – factors may include but are not limited to injury, disease, brain development and genetics.

The most significant cognitive disabilities can be evidence by (a) standardized assessment results, (b) the intensity and pervasiveness of needed supports, and (c) significant difficulty generalizing learning from one setting to another. In addition to demonstrating significant cognitive disabilities, the student must also demonstrate significant limited adaptive skills relative to same-age peers and commensurate with the student's cognitive ability.

Although an IQ score is not the sole criterion to determine participation in the Alternate Assessments, it is expected that students taking Alternate Assessments score significantly lower than their same age peers on standardized tests of ability, or that these students may not be capable of achieving a valid score on a standardized cognitive measure. It is strongly recommended that IEP teams refer to the test manual of individual cognitive assessments for guidance on what would be considered significant cognitive disability for a particular test.

If the results from a standardized cognitive assessment instrument cannot be used with a student, documentation must be provided and reviewed that demonstrates the student requires intensive and on-going levels of support across multiple settings (e.g., home, school, community). This information must come from multiple sources and should include both skills the student can perform as well as those the student has difficulty performing. This documentation needs to include specific information for the following: communication; self-care; daily living skills; social skills; community access; self-direction; health and safety; functional academics; leisure and work.

In addition to the above criteria, the student also **must** demonstrate significant delays in adaptive skills as measured by a standardized measure of adaptive ability.

3. Does significant cognitive disability impact the student's access to the general education curriculum and require individualized instruction?

The student requires intensive supports in the school setting as evidenced by the level of individualized instruction and adult supervision and assistance provided throughout the school day. The student is taught using a substantially modified curriculum that may consist of functional life skills such as pre-academics, communication, self-care, daily living skills, and social skills. Subsequently, the student may obtain information primarily through methods other than reading due to limited reading skills and may use alternative methods to express or share oral or written ideas and information with others.

4. Does significant cognitive disability impact the student's post-school outcomes?

The student's post-secondary outcomes for independent living likely will require supported or assisted living and may involve a guardian when the student turns 18. The student will require continued supervision and support into adulthood provided through an adult service agency in order to access the community for recreation, employment, and daily living. The student's post-secondary outcomes for employment will likely result in individualized supports provided by adult agencies for success in accessing competitive integrated employment.

5. Is the student's inability to participate in the general assessment not due to the factors listed below?

To be eligible to participate in Alternate Assessment, the student's difficulties in the general educational setting **CANNOT** be primarily the result of excessive absences, mild disability, first language, cultural factors, or economic disadvantages.

To be eligible to participate in Alternate Assessment, the student's difficulties in the general educational setting must be directly related to the impact of the student's cognitive disability and limited adaptive skills.

Parent/Guardian notification requirements

A State Education Agency (or in the case of a district-wide assessment, a Local Education Agency) must ensure that parents or guardians of students selected to be assessed using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards, under the State's guidelines, are informed consistent with 34 CFR 200.2(e), that their child's achievement will be measured based on alternate academic achievement standards, and of how participation in such assessments may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma. *Section 300.160 (e) of IDEA*

Beginning in grade five, or beginning after a documented history has been established, school districts and public charter schools are required to annually provide information to the parents or guardians of a student taking an alternate assessment who has the documented history, about the availability of a Modified Diploma, Extended Diploma, and Certificate of Attendance and the requirements for each of these options. *OAR 581-022-2010(4)(d), OAR 581-022-2015(7)(b), OAR 581-022-2020(5)(b)*

Federal regulations at CFR 300.160(2)(e) require that parents are informed about the consequences of having their child assessed against alternate academic achievement standards, particularly as it relates to potential limitations on diploma options for graduation. As part of the eligibility determination process, IEP teams should review all Oregon diploma options and discuss potential limitations of any option other than a standard diploma, as elaborated on the ODE [Modified Diploma, Extended Diploma and Alternative Certificates webpage](#). Pursuant to CFR 300.160(2), participation in the ORExt does not prohibit a student from attempting to complete the requirements for a standard high school diploma; however, participation in an alternate assessment denotes a substantial reduction in terms of access to the full depth, breadth, and complexity of Oregon's grade level content

standards during instruction and consequent limitations on a student's access to credit-bearing coursework required for a standard diploma.

Students scoring proficient on the Alt ELPA exit EL services and active EL status. Districts must monitor the academic and linguistic progress of students who exit EL status for four years following the proficient score. Instructional interventions and supports must be provided as necessary. Exiting EL status, by earning a proficient score on the Alt ELPA, means that the student has demonstrated sufficient academic English proficiency to engage with appropriately modified grade level content delivered in English.

Individualized Education Program Documentation

The [Oregon Standard IEP](#) includes a Statewide Assessment page. This page provides IEP teams a place to document:

- Whether a student will participate in any Statewide Assessments during the current IEP period.

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT 34 CFR 300.320(a)(6)

Will the student participate in any Statewide Assessments during this IEP period?

- ☐ No, Statewide Assessment not conducted at student's grade level (at time of testing)
- ☐ Yes (student's grade level at time of testing _____). *If yes, describe participation decisions below:*

- Which assessments the student will take (i.e., standard or alternate and with or without accessibility supports).
- What accessibility supports, if any, are necessary for statewide assessments.
- Modified cut scores. Note that the [Assessment of Essential Skills](#) graduation policy is suspended through 2027-2028, making the identification of modified cut scores unnecessary at present.
- If alternate assessment is selected, an explanation of why the student cannot participate in standard assessment and why alternate assessment is appropriate for the student.

Standard Assessment or Alternate Assessment (select one)	Accessibility Supports (includes all accommodations, designated supports, and/or universal tools the team identifies as necessary for statewide assessments)	Modified Cut Scores (Only available for standard assessment with or without accommodations)	*Explanation State why student cannot participate in standard assessment and why particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for student.
☐ Standard: English Language Arts / Literacy ☐ Without accessibility supports ☐ With accessibility supports ☐ Alternate: Extended Assessment*			

The current Oregon Standard IEP does not include a checkbox for the Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment (Alt ELPA). Participation in the Alt ELPA can be annotated in the "Statewide Assessment" section of the IEP similar to the example shown below. Districts with an approved alternative format should determine the equivalent location within their approved forms to annotate this assessment.

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT 34 CFR 300.320(a)(6)

Standard Assessment	Accessibility Supports (includes all accommodations, designated supports, and/or universal tools the team identifies as necessary for statewide assessments)	Exemption Decisions (identify appropriate domains) Up to a maximum of three domains may be exempted, but only in very rare and documented circumstances. All exemptions must be reviewed and documented in the student's IEP or 504 plan prior to the student beginning ELPA21. All cases of domain exemptions on ELPA21 are subject to monitoring by ODE.	*Explanation Statement why student cannot participate in select domains
☒ English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) ☐ Without accessibility supports ☐ With accessibility supports	NAME will participate in the Alt ELPA.	☐ *Listening ☐ *Reading ☐ *Writing ☐ *Speaking	Explanation of why NAME will participate in the Alt ELPA.

Note that documenting participation in the Alt ELPA is not a substitute for documenting accessibility supports and/or domain exemptions.

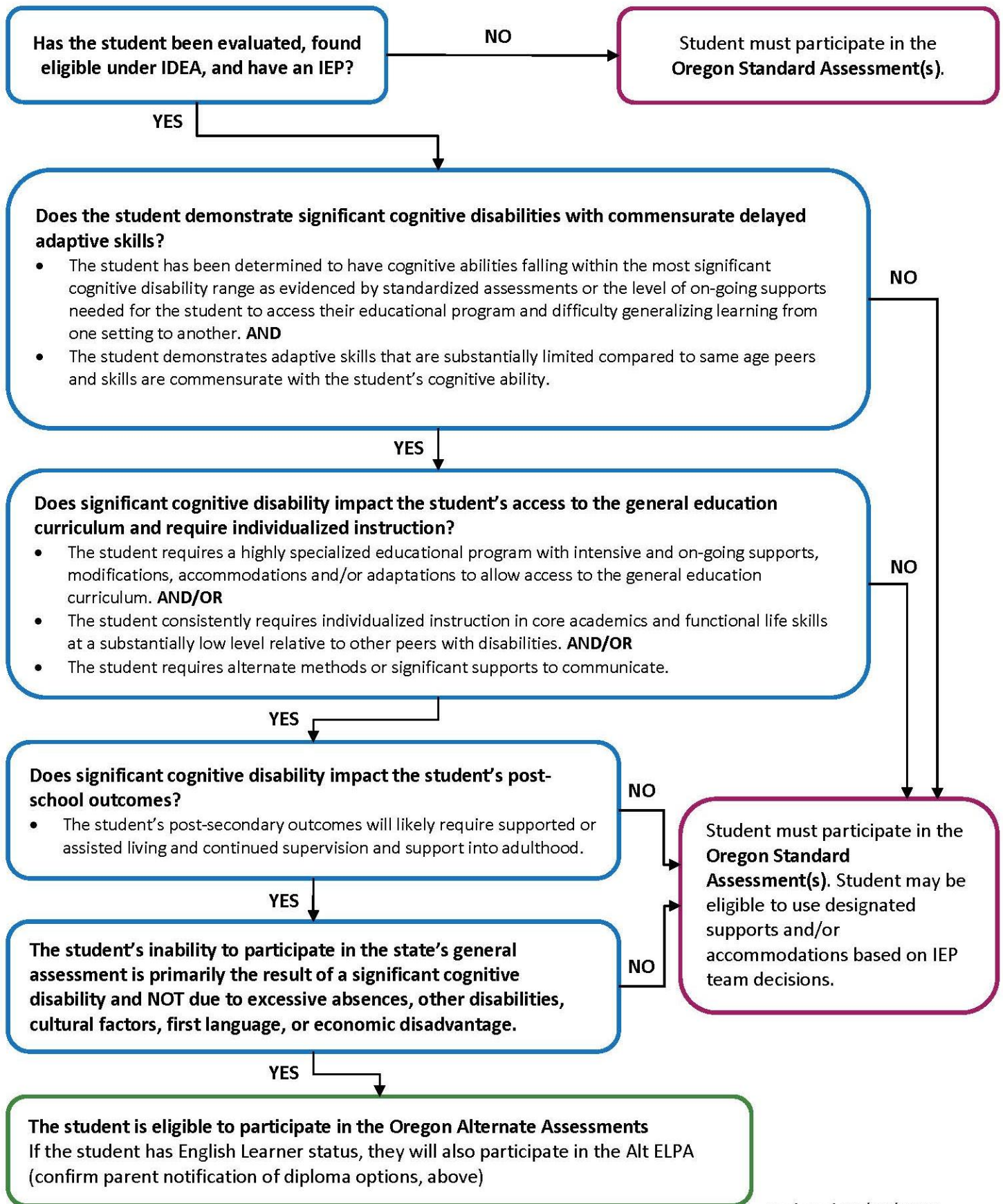
Contact information

For questions about Oregon's Alternate Assessments, please contact the [ODE Assessment Team](#).

For questions about special education services provision, districts can reach out to their [District Support Specialist](#).

For questions about English learner identification or language services provision, please contact [Kim Miller](#), English Learner Education Specialist.

Alternate Assessment Decision Making Flow Chart



Organigrama para la toma de decisiones sobre la evaluación alternativa

