

An overview of the New York State's Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) for the 2006-07 school year

What is the NYSAA? An assessment of a student's progress in academic content standards (ELA, math, science and social studies). The content assessed in NYSAA is related to the grade level content; however it is reduced in scope and complexity. It is a datafolio-style assessment in which students with severe cognitive disabilities demonstrate their performance toward achieving the New York State learning standards.

For further information, see <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/alterassessment/>.

Participation Criteria: School districts are allowed to have 1% of the special education population take the NYSAA. For example, if the school district has 100 special education students, then the school district has allowance for 1 student to take the NYSAA. There is a 2% waiver that the school can apply for. For example, if the school district has 100 special education students, then the school district can now have 2 students take the NYSAA. ** This participation rate encompasses all students in grades 3 – high school.

Eligibility for the NYSAA: To be eligible for the NYSAA, the student must meet all 3 categories noted below. The Committee on Special Education (CSE) determines whether or not a student with a severe cognitive disability is eligible to take NYSAA, based on 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.

The **age ranges** for the 2006-07 school year were revised and are below:

Age Ranges for Testing on NYSAA in 2006–07		
Assessment	Birth Date	Reaches Age Given Between September 1, 2006 and August 31, 2007
Grade 3 ELA, Math	September 1, 1997—August 31, 1998	9
Grade 4 ELA, Math, Science	September 1, 1996—August 31, 1997	10
Grade 5 ELA, Math, Social Studies	September 1, 1995—August 31, 1996	11
Grade 6 ELA, Math	September 1, 1994—August 31, 1995	12
Grade 7 ELA, Math	September 1, 1993—August 31, 1994	13
Grade 8 ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies	September 1, 1992—August 31, 1993	14
Secondary-Level ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies	September 1, 1988—August 31, 1990	17* or 18

***Note:** NYSAA-eligible students with disabilities who will be leaving school before they reach their eighteenth birthday are encouraged to take the secondary-level NYSAA before they leave school (i.e., when they are 17-years-old).

What is a Datafolio? The datafolio is a collection of student academic performance compiled by the student's instructional team, and scored by qualified scorers. Instructional team members (teacher with an assistant, aide or related services staff) document student performance, by rating the student's level of accuracy and independence, as they perform an assessment task on three different dates within the collection period. Independence is a key measure of student performance for NYSAA.

**The datafolio content must be completed as per the procedures and criteria described in the Administration manual (www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/alterassessment/home.html). Errors can lead to an unscorable document. This will be considered an 'administrative error', which results in disqualifying the student record. For example, verifying evidence must be labeled in a specific manner and with specific information. If information is missing, this will cause an administrative error, which could lead to a disqualification of the document.

AGLIs are descriptions of student performance expectations for students with severe cognitive disabilities that are aligned with the learning standards and grade level core curriculum established for all students by the Board of Regents. ^There is no longer any variation in the amount of data to be collected at different grade levels.

2:3:2 = Formula for the amount of data to be collected per content area. For each content area (science, ELA etc.), two AGLIs will be assessed. Each AGLI will be assessed on three dates. The last 2 dates of the assessment (of an AGLI) will require verifying evidence. Dates must be in chronological order.

What is the time frame for data collection? The data collection time frame for the school year 2006-07 is January 2, 2007 through March 9, 2007. All of the completed forms, documentation and evidence must be submitted for regional scoring (BOCES) by March 9, 2007.

When will the results be available? Student results will be made available in late summer or early fall of 2007.

How are parents involved? Parents should be meeting with the teacher about the datafolio early on in this process and are asked to complete a short survey. The survey is available in several languages. Informed consent for photographing video and/or audio taping also must be submitted if any of these are used. 3 attempts to contact the parent/family/guardian must be documented. For further information about parent surveys: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/alterassessment/manual/appb.htm#pfgs>

Terms:

AATN: Alternate Assessment Training network Specialist

AGLIs: Alternate Grade Level Indicators

DCS: Data Collection Sheets

DSS: Data Summary Sheet

LSET: Lead special education teacher

OSAR: Office of Standards, Assessment and Reporting at the New York State Education Department

OVF: Observer Verification Form

SSC: Score Site Coordinator

VE: verifying evidence