

**Kentucky Alternate Assessment:
Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment**

2026-2027 Administration Guide

**Reading, Mathematics, Science
and Social Studies**



Kentucky Department of Education

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Overview of the Test Design

The Kentucky Alternate Assessment was the result of the comprehensive Kentucky education reform in 1990. An accountability system was established as part of the reform, setting a goal for all students in Kentucky to reach a level of proficiency on learning goals and academic expectations by 2014. The purpose of the Kentucky Summative Assessment is to encourage and enable educators in each public school to increase the academic achievement of their students as the assessment is designed to improve teaching and student learning in Kentucky. Kentucky includes all public-school students in the accountability system, allowing students with disabilities to participate in one of three ways—general assessment without accommodations, general assessment with accommodations, and in the alternate assessment.

In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the former federal education law known as No Child Left Behind and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). This new law, along with the 2007 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (PL 108-446), has necessitated extensive revisions to the alternate assessment. These revisions have been carefully considered based on existing knowledge of effective practice and extensive stakeholder involvement, including the selection of standards by Kentucky teachers and administrators. The Attainment Tasks were developed by content experts, Kentucky content area teachers, special education teachers, and administrators from across the state. These stakeholders were brought together to review the tasks for content alignment and potential issues of bias and sensitivity. The work groups sought to consider the highest achievement standard possible for this student population while carefully balancing the regulatory requirements with the individual needs of the students.

This Administration Guide provides an overview of the test design for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment as well as the protocol for Attainment Task (AT) delivery. Included are [participation guideline](#) descriptions, administration guidelines, scoring criteria, performance standards, implications for the Individual Education Program (IEP), and testing protocol for the AT.

Kentucky Alternate Assessment Components

The Kentucky Alternate Assessment contains two major academic components:

1. *Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA) Attainment Tasks (AT)*
2. *Transition Attainment Record (TAR)*

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) provides both the AKSA and the TAR to meet ESSA and IDEA requirements. The ATs are administered and scored by a test administrator (i.e., certified teacher, school administrator, etc.) who has completed the required trainings and has passed the certification quiz, and the TAR is rated by the IEP or instructional team. This occurs during the student's Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) meeting but may also occur in a meeting of the team held specifically to discuss their observations and rate the student's progress on the TAR. The AT scores and TAR ratings are reported online in the Student Registration Database (SRD). The [TAR training](#) and qualification quiz will be made available beginning Sept. 28, 2026, and the TAR can be administered beginning Oct. 12, 2026,

once the training is completed. Table 1 outlines all assessment requirements by grade.

Scoring

The test administrator is trained to administer the AKSA and record student responses. The AT responses are entered by the test administrator. The raw student score is assigned a scale score and performance level (novice, apprentice, proficient or distinguished).

The TAR is a checklist of skills and knowledge in English/language arts (reading and writing), mathematics and science. The student's IEP team records a score of 0-2. "2" indicates the student can perform the skill independently; "1" indicates the student's performance is developing or requires support from others; and "0" indicates that the student does not currently demonstrate performance of the skill.

Table 1: Grade Level Requirements

Grade	Content Areas	Kentucky Academic Standards Alternate Assessment Targets	Attainment Tasks (AT)	Transition Attainment Record (TAR)
3	Reading and Mathematics	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Reading and Mathematics	✓	
4	Reading, Mathematics and Science	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Reading, Mathematics, and Science.	✓	
5	Reading, Mathematics, and Social Studies	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Reading, Mathematics, and Social Studies	✓	
6	Reading and Mathematics	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Reading and Mathematics	✓	
7	Reading, Mathematics and Science	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Reading, Mathematics, and Science.	✓	
8	Reading, Mathematics, and Social Studies	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Reading, Mathematics, and Social Studies	✓	
9	No Required Assessments Administered	No Required Assessments Administered		
10	Reading and Mathematics	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Reading and Mathematics	✓	
11	Science and Social Studies	Kentucky Academic Standards-Alternate Assessment Targets for Science and Social Studies.	✓	✓
12	No Required Assessments Administered	No Required Assessments Administered		Optional

Participation Guidelines

The IEP team must determine how the student will participate in the state-wide assessment system: general assessment, general assessment with accommodations, or the alternate assessment. Prior to any part of the alternate assessment being administered, students must first qualify for the alternate assessment. The inclusion of students prior to determining their eligibility for the alternate assessment is a possible testing allegation. Classroom placement is not a determining factor for the alternate assessment; staff must use the participation guidelines linked below.

Participation in the Kentucky Alternate Assessment is appropriate only if a student's ARC-IEP team decide that the student is unable to participate in the general assessment with accommodations and modifications. In this case, an ARC-IEP team will use the Participation Guidelines to reach a decision according to the guidelines and based on the individual needs of the student. If a student has relocated to Kentucky from another state, regardless of previous participation in an alternate assessment in a different state, the student must qualify in the state of Kentucky according to the Participation Guidelines if the intention is to place the student in the AKSA. The Participation Guidelines are designed to assist the placement team in determining *how* the student will participate in the statewide assessment and accountability system. Finally, these participation guidelines apply to the entire Kentucky Alternate Assessment Program, including all the assessment components specified in the **Overview of the Test Design** (p.3), the AKSA AT, the TAR, the Career Work Experience Certification (CWEK), and the Employability Skills Attainment Record (ESAR).

It is important to note that classroom placement should not determine participation in the alternate assessment, nor should participation in the alternate assessment determine placement or the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

The Participation Guidelines for the Kentucky Alternate Assessment requires the placement team to consider all items to properly identify a student and then answer "YES" to **ALL** statements. The Participation Guidelines for the Kentucky Alternate Assessment should be reviewed annually as part of the IEP evaluation process. This must be done prior to administering any alternate assessments.

Grade Placement

Students should move from grade to grade each year along with same-age peers. A student may repeat a grade, which would be considered a retention, requiring the student to repeat that specific grade level assessment(s).

A student should be assessed at the same grade at which he or she is listed on the attendance roster in Infinite Campus on the first day of the district testing window. Once a student has completed all academic and assessment requirements by grade 12, he or she may be placed into grade 14 on attendance rosters and focus on transition with no more required assessments to be administered.

Alternate Assessment and Accountability Folder (AAAF)

The KDE no longer requires the AAAF to be maintained as a state requirement. Some districts choose to require the use of AAAF. Please reach out to your district administrator for resources.

Achievement Standards

Alternate Achievement Standards: Alternate Achievement Standards (also known as Performance Level Descriptors, or PLDs) are the expectation of how much content knowledge a student must demonstrate in order to reach a specific proficiency level. Alternate Achievement Standards/PLDs must be aligned with the state's academic content standards (i.e., include knowledge and skills that link to grade-level expectations), must promote access to the general curriculum, and must reflect the professional judgment of the highest learning standards possible for the group of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (Standards and Assessment Peer Review Guidance, 2004).

The AKSA is based on Alternate Achievement Standards that differ in complexity from grade-level standards. Specifically, the AKSA uses **Alternate Assessment Targets**, which delineate limits to the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS). The Alternate Assessment Targets reduce breadth, depth, and/or complexity, while maintaining alignment with the general curriculum.

Performance Levels: The Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment uses the same performance levels used in the general assessment: Distinguished, Proficient, Apprentice, and Novice.

Performance Level Descriptors are statements that describe what a student should know, understand, and do at a specific grade level or achievement tier.

The IEP and the Alternate Assessment

Questions often arise regarding the relationship between the IEP and the alternate assessment. There are two federal laws to consider when discussing this relationship. ESSA: Non-Regulatory Guidance (Alternate Achievement Standards for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities, 2015) provides two reasons that the student's IEP goals are not appropriate measures for annual yearly progress as required by ESSA:

1. IEP goals are designed to meet the individual needs of the student, provide a means to monitor progress and report to parents, as well as to make decisions regarding special education and related services the student receives.
2. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) states receiving Title I, Part A are required to administer statewide assessments to all public school students in reading, mathematics and science, while IEP goals may address a broader range of academic and functional needs, including behavioral, developmental, communication, and adaptive needs.

However, the requirements of IDEA 2004 suggest that it is reasonable for the IEP to support the student in the alternate assessment.

1. IDEA 2004 regulations define specially designed instruction as adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child and to **ensure access to the general curriculum** so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that **apply to all children** (§300.39(b)(3).
2. It further requires annual IEP goals to be designed to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (§300.320(a)(2)(i). (Federal Register 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301, 2003).

The IEP should clarify the specially designed instruction, including accommodations, adaptations, modifications, and delivery of instruction that support access to the content standards that are assessed. IEP goals can be designed to move the child toward attainment of the content standards, either by writing specific objectives that address individual standards or by targeting skills that will facilitate learning of the standards (e.g., switch activation that will assist the student in accessing information and demonstrating understanding of the standards or the number recognition that will help with solving mathematics problems).

Classroom placement is solely a team (ARC or IEP team) decision and should be guided by the individual needs of the student and the principles of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The IEP team should consider the placement that best facilitates the student's access to the general curriculum and the student's placement should never be determined by the type of assessment the student takes.

Administration Code and Inclusion of Special Populations Training

All teachers must complete the 703 KAR 5:080 Administration Code for Kentucky's Educational Program and the 703 KAR 5:070 Inclusion of Special Populations in the State Required Assessment and Accountability trainings, and alternate assessment trainings following state and district procedures. These trainings provide teachers with the proper assessment practices required by law. The Alternate Assessment administration qualification process includes completing the required training/quizzes: Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment Training as well as the TAR Training at the respective grades ([Kentucky Alternate Assessment trainings](#)). The last step is completing the corresponding online quizzes. A copy of the completed quiz certificate must be printed and given to the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) to verify quiz completion before any state assessment may be administered.

Attainment Tasks

The **AKSA** is designed to provide an alternate assessment to the Kentucky Summative Assessment. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA 2007) requires states to develop and implement guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in regular assessments with accommodations. The Attainment Task approach:

- provides evidence of understanding, skills and concepts related to the specified grade

level content standards,

- begins with an authentic task that requires understanding of skills and concepts necessary for real-world problems, genuine purposes and audiences and is fully scripted for the test administrator to follow,
- requires the student to answer questions needed to complete a task, working step by step as directed by the teacher or test administrator, and
- allows the teacher to record the student responses.

In the event that a computer is used to assist in the accommodation of test materials, secure measures must be followed. Accommodations that include placing any materials onto the computer must have those files completely removed and permanently deleted. This applies to both the scanning and entry of secure test materials and student responses. Electronic or other versions of secure assessment materials shall not be maintained in the district and must be destroyed. The student response sheets are securely stored until after data cleanup and then they follow the district retention policy.

Test Security

The Attainment Tasks are considered secure testing materials. Test administrators must follow the guidelines established through the Administration Code and Inclusion of Special Populations. The following is information from the administration code training that is adapted to address the Attainment Tasks.

DACs, administrators, and teachers must ensure the security of the assessment materials before, during and after test administration. When not being used for testing sessions, all ATs and materials shall be stored in a secure double locked location with access granted to authorized personnel only.

Acceptable	Not Acceptable
• It is appropriate for teachers to know the standards/targets measured by the statewide assessment and to teach those standards/targets. • After all required trainings and the qualification quiz have been successfully completed, ATs can be reviewed prior to the start of the testing window, so needed modifications to materials can be made. • Teachers may use released test items found on the Kentucky Department of Education's Sample Test Items webpage to help prepare their students for the assessment by adapting them to meet the needs of the students participating in the alternate assessment. • If materials are photocopied to enlarge or provide color contrast based on needs identified as an allowable accommodation,	• Secure test materials shall not be reproduced/alterd in a way that could lead or guide a student to the correct response. • No one shall take notes regarding the content, concepts or structure of any secure test item. • No one may have test binders without authorization from the district or building assessment coordinator. • Local district staff may not show items in the test binders to anyone not administering the test. • Teachers or other staff with knowledge of the content of any secure test item shall not reveal this content to anyone. • Teachers or other staff, who become aware of specific test items through any means, shall not use this knowledge to

all photocopies must be securely destroyed at the conclusion of the testing window with all other secure materials.	prepare students for the assessment.
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Administration Protocol

This section provides detailed specifications for conducting the AKSA Attainment Tasks with individual students. Adherence to these guidelines is required to facilitate the assessment process.

Protocol for Administering the Task

The task must be administered in a one-to-one setting with the student in a quiet place without interruptions. The room should be free of other students. Any adult(s) in the room should be there to assist in the administration of the assessment and should sign a non-disclosure agreement.

As addressed in the Administration Code, any materials containing content, information or strategies for solving problems must be covered or removed from classroom walls, bulletin boards, or other surfaces (e.g., ceilings, floors, blinds, windows and clothing) during testing sessions.

The task must be administered by a certified staff member (e.g., teacher, counselor, related service provider, etc.). The test administrator must qualify by completing the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment online training and the qualifying quiz no later than November 6. If a new teacher or another teacher joins the school later and needs to complete the quiz, they can email dacinfo@education.ky.gov to request the quiz be opened. Test administrators must also complete the Administration Code and Inclusion of Special Populations training prior to administering an assessment. The task is scripted and is to be read to the student as written or using acceptable adjustments as described in the *Steps to Administering* found below on page 11. "Quotation marks" signify the scripted portions to be read to the student.

The task may be administered in more than one session, allowing for a smaller amount of time for each session. A five-minute break between each content area grade-level task is OPTIONAL, but only one content area may be administered to an individual student each day. In extraordinary circumstances, some students may need to complete more than one content area per day. However, this requires special permission from KDE. Please email dacinfo@education.ky.gov. Optional breaks will be noted in the testing materials. If a student is having difficulty attending or experiencing medical or behavioral difficulties, the administration can be stopped during **a task**. Resume the task at the point stopped during the prior session. Starting over is unacceptable and could lead to a potential allegation. The administrator may orient the student to where he or she was in the process. For example, the teacher could say, "Last time we looked at food items and compared them. Now we are going to..." **No re-teaching** should occur between these sessions.

Store the Attainment Tasks in a secure, double-locked location when not testing.

The tasks must be administered in the same content order as provided within the binder. For example, a grade 3 student would first complete the reading assessment before moving onto the mathematics assessment.

Steps to Administering:

1. Complete training in 703 KAR 5:080 Administration Code for Kentucky's Educational Assessment Program and 703 KAR 5:070 Inclusion of Special Populations in the State Required Assessment and Accountability Programs.
2. Read the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment Administration Guide.
3. Complete the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment online training and the qualification quiz. Print a copy of the quiz certification for the DAC.
4. Review the Attainment Task Resource Guide for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment.
5. Non-school personnel or classified staff who **assist** with the administration of the assessment must sign a nondisclosure form to keep on record.
6. Complete a [seating chart](#) which includes a diagram.
7. Preview the tasks and the accompanying required assessment materials (RAM) and prepare for administration (e.g., gathering materials, gaining familiarity with all vocabulary).
8. Make modifications to materials to ensure accessibility to individual students. Refer to the Accommodations section (pages 12-14) for important information regarding appropriate use. The accommodations may include but are not limited to:
 - enlarging or coloring pictures and text,
 - creating a high contrast version of the pictures/symbols,
 - using objects to represent answers and distractors, and
 - highlighting sections that are to be reread as indicated in the task
 - Direct questions or concerns about specific accommodations to the Office of Assessment and Accountability (OAA) via email to dacinfo@education.ky.gov.
9. Orient the student to any RAM by reading the title of the RAM and directing the student's attention to the features of the RAM, as directed in the task.
10. Read the script, signified by "quotation marks" exactly as written:
 - the script can be repeated if the student requests this or the test administrator deems the student was not paying attention. If the script for images, audio or video files or animations is needed, scripts can be found in the RAM Envelope and must be read exactly as written.
11. Follow directions included in the script to guide the process. The directions will be signified by an *italics* font and will include:
 - what materials to present to the student at specified times (e.g., present the sentence template labeled Thanksgiving Dinner Story) and
 - instructions on the level of support allowable by the teacher.

If pictures are cut apart, they must be presented to the student in the original order. The answer choices can be placed horizontally, vertically, in corners (eye gaze board), etc. as long as the choices are given in the same order as provided in the

testing material (e.g., left to right, top to bottom, etc.).

12. Words in the questions that are underlined and bolded are to be emphasized by the test administrator for the student (e.g., **not**, **best**, **most**, **likely**, etc.).
13. Allow the student to independently respond to each task item and record the student's selected response, or select the no response option, on the accompanying answer sheet.
14. If a task has RAM on the cover page of the assessment, all paper-based RAM are found at the end of the task (e.g., after question five). Animations and audio files are available through the Online Training System (OTS). To be given access to the appropriate grade level materials, it is critical to update your profile with the correct district, school(s), and grade(s). Log out of the OTS whenever the system is not in active use. Some tasks may require materials that are not paper-based, and they will also be provided in the RAM with the testing materials shipment.
15. All task questions are provided on a single page at the end of the task. These questions are for student use and can be covered, cut apart, and used **as needed** for student comprehension.
16. Record each student response before moving to the next assessment item. Indicate which answer choice the student selected by recording his or her response on the answer sheet provided. If the student moved to the next question, the student cannot "go back" to a previous question as information in questions that follow may provide answers.
17. The student responses will be transferred from the answer sheet to the SRD.
18. The SRD is scheduled to open for Window 1* score entry on Nov. 9, 2026.
19. The AT will be administered, and responses entered during two different assessment windows (students must complete both testing Windows regardless of when they qualified for the alternate or enrolled in a District).
 - a. **Window 1*: Nov. 9 – Dec. 18, 2026** to administer the AT, and through **Dec. 22, 2026** to enter the scores in the SRD, and
 - b. **Window 2*: April 12 - May 26, 2027** to administer the AT and through **May 28, 2027** to enter scores in the SRD. *All dates are tentative and subject to change.
20. After scores are entered into the SRD, store the answer sheets in a secure double locked location. The SRD does not maintain data beyond the current school year; therefore, the recommendation is to keep the answer sheets stored securely through data clean-up in the beginning of the next school year. At that time, follow district policy for retaining student documentation.
21. Return the Attainment Task Binder at the conclusion of each testing window to the DAC, Building Assessment Coordinator (BAC) or Director of Special Education (DoSE) for secure destruction. The DAC must retain their Window 1 DAC binders or Window 1 grade-band binders if the DAC binders were not ordered to have copies of the assessment until the completion of the school year in the event that a make-up assessment is needed.

Acceptable Administration Procedures:

Provide supports that assist the student in demonstrating his or her understanding. These may include:

- cueing the student to begin or continue working,
- cueing the student to attend to the task,

- orienting the student to the choices or RAM (e.g., **reading and pointing to each response item or features of the RAM before a question is read**, guiding a student who is using textures or objects to feel each to orient placement and then asking the student to choose the answer),
- using an established system for motivation and on task behavior (e.g., positive behavior support, token system, behavior chart, primary reinforcer, etc.), and
- providing multiple cues for the student to respond or an extended wait time before recording a score of “No Response”. *These cues should not provide assistance that could lead the student to the correct answer.*

The student can change his or her answer, if done so independently, **before moving to the next item** and if the teacher has not indicated the accuracy of the student’s response in any way.

Non-acceptable Administration Procedures:

Verbal or nonverbal prompts or cues cannot:

- give the student information on the accuracy of the response,
- guide the student to the correct answer (e.g., point to the correct answer, emphasize the correct answer with voice inflection, place the correct answer in a preferred spot, highlight the correct answer, etc.), and
- indicate to the student when he/she is answering correctly or incorrectly.

The test administrator cannot:

- reread the task to the student any time they want to (without a student request to do so),
- decide that a student response is not the intended response,
- give the student multiple attempts to correct a response,
- return to a previously answered question, and
- start the task over if stopped.

Accommodations

Providing the appropriate accommodations is vital to the validity of the assessment.

Accommodations or supports shall meet the following conditions:

1. For students with a disability, accommodations or supports in the instructional process shall be **both age-appropriate and related to both the student’s verified disability and specially designed instruction described in the student’s IEP**. Accommodations or modifications shall be based on the individual needs of the student and not on a disability category;
2. Accommodations or supports shall be part of the **student’s ongoing instructional program** and not introduced for the first time during state-required assessment;
3. Accommodations or supports shall be for the **purpose of students accessing the curriculum and demonstrating what they know and are able to do**;
4. Changes in the administration of the assessment or recording of student responses shall be **consistent with the instructional strategies, assistive technology devices, and services identified on the student’s IEP**; and
5. Accommodations, or supports, or both **shall not inappropriately impact the content being measured**.

There are several types of accommodations and supports. The following are a few accommodations or supports and guidance on the use of each (**not an exhaustive list**):

1. The [Resource Guide](#) for AKSA Attainment Tasks is updated and posted online at the beginning of each year on the KDE website. The guide reviews administration procedures, prepares teachers for making accommodations and adaptations to the AT itself, and provides both a general glossary and specific content glossaries for picture response options used in the AT. These picture response options can be used during instruction. Alternate text is provided for each of the images in the resource guide.
2. The AT is printed in black and white with grey scale for enhanced shading and distinction within images. **When necessary, color images are included in the RAM**
3. Definitions/clarifications of language and vocabulary are embedded in the AT. These are noted parenthetically after a word or concept that may need further explanation for the student. The test administrator may read either the language in the assessment item (or response), the language in the parentheses, or both.
4. Math tools such as number lines, counters, formulas, etc., are provided with the attainment task itself and in the RAM. Manipulatives and other supports not included in the assessment may be provided based on the student's instruction and their IEP.
5. Use colored lenses or overlays to assist with low vision.
6. Enlarge the answer choices/pictures and any accompanying materials to assist with low vision and fine motor limitations. The task items are to be read to the student so there is no need to enlarge the task items.
7. Reprint the answer choices/pictures and any accompanying materials on high contrast paper to assist with low vision. **This would include coloring pictures** (remember, if one picture response option is colored, they all must be colored).
8. Change picture symbols to ones that the student uses during instruction. This can be done at the school level as long as the replacement picture symbol does not cue the student to the correct answer and **all pictures are changed consistently** (e.g., all pictures are changed, not just the correct answer).
9. Pair objects or tactile symbols with the picture symbol answer choices or use them to replace picture symbol answer choices. This is appropriate as long as the objects do not cue the student to the correct answer and objects are provided consistently (e.g., tactile objects are used for all answer options, not just the correct answer) and are presented in the same order as the original response options are listed.
10. Create raised lines on the picture symbol answer choices using an embosser, glue or craft paint. This is appropriate as long as all answer choices are raised.
11. Use a program at the school or district level to place answer choices on to the computer and allow the student to take the test online. **When this accommodation is used it is important to remove all files from the computer by deleting and then emptying the recycle bin.**
12. Typically, a reader and scribe will not be necessary as accommodations because the expectation is that the test will be read, and answers scribed for all students. This includes use of the student's native language when reading aloud.
13. When a question utilizes a closed (fill in the blank) sentence, the test administrator may read the sentence with each response option.

DACs may order specialized materials for students with Visual Impairments documented on their IEP.

These materials are provided only when RAM can be enhanced using tactile graphics. Tactile

graphics are embossed on special thermal paper. Tactile graphics of maps, charts, ecosystems and other relevant items are provided. **Students should be receiving instruction on how to read tactile graphics throughout the year.** For more information on teaching students how to use tactile graphics refer to the [paths to literacy](#) website. Not all grades will have RAM that have tactile graphics prepared for them.

Glossary

Accommodation: Changes in how a test or assessment is presented or in the response a test-taker gives (e.g., test format, response format, setting, timing, schedule); changes do not affect level, content, or performance criteria but provide equitable instructional and assessment access for students with disabilities. Accommodations are intended to *mediate* the effects of a student's disability— they are *not* intended to reduce learning expectations.

Adaptation: Changes made to existing materials or instructional delivery in order to meet the needs of a student (e.g., head pointers, Opti-Indicator, *Boardmaker* (Mayer Johnson) symbols, photographs, symbols paired with real objects, real objects, enlarged pictures, textured or raised pictures, high contrast color or coactive signs).

Alignment: The effort to ensure that what teachers teach is in accord with what the curriculum says will be taught and what is assessed on official assessments. The alignment of expectations for student learning with assessments for measuring students' attainment of these expectations is an essential attribute for an effective standards-based education system. Without adequate alignment between standards and assessments, teachers and students become confused about educational expectations. Among other things, this can result in learning expectations being lowered for some students while being raised for others, creating potential inequities.

Assessment Prompt: The instructions given to the student that explain what he or she is expected to do.

Assistive Technology: Tools and strategies used to assist students in developing and participating in meaningful academics, social relationships, and employment activities; can range from *low technology* (e.g., unaided communication systems, sign language, etc.) to *high technology* (e.g., computers with switch interfaces, etc.).

Attainment Tasks: Attainment Tasks are performance events that require students to complete a task, working step by step as directed by the teacher.

Augmentative Communication: Low, medium or high technology system that assists the student in both receptive and expressive language (e.g., making a request, initiate and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal).

Complexity: Describes the kind of thinking involved in a task. More complex tasks require more demanding reasoning. Complexity does not result from the fact that there are multiple answers. Students relate ideas within the content area standards and must select or devise one approach among many alternatives to solve the problem.

Cut Scores: Set by the Standards Setting committee, cut scores are demarcations on a scale of all possible raw scores that show the beginning and ending points for each performance level.

Individual Educational Program (IEP): An Individual Educational Program (IEP) is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.

Prompt: For the purpose of this assessment, a prompt is defined as any word(s), gesture, or physical assistance provided by the teacher that is designed **to lead or guide the student to the correct answer** during any instructional activity or assessment completions and is different than an assessment prompt.

Supports: Adaptations, assistive technology, and other accommodations that provide the student access to information and allow the student to demonstrate understanding. These do not guide the student to the answer.

Student Registration Database (SRD): The online data system used to house scores from the Attainment Task and Transition Attainment Record administrations.

Transition Attainment Record (TAR): The Transition Attainment Record is a checklist-based assessment which evaluates the student's readiness in reading, mathematics and science. The TAR serves as an alternate assessment for the college admissions exam. The TAR is required at grade 11 and made available at grades 12 and 14 for any student who does not meet benchmark at grade 11.

References

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997, PL 105-17, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 *et seq.*

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2007, PL 108-446, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

Kentucky Department of Education. (2025, August 1). [Assessment Regulations Training Materials](#).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, PL 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425, 20 U.S.C §§ 6301 *et seq.*

U.S. Department of Education (December 9, 2003). Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged. *Federal Register*, 66 (236), 68698-68708

U.S. Department of Education (September 2018). [A State's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education's Assessment Peer Review Process](#).

U.S. Department of Education (August 2005). Alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant disabilities, non-regulatory guidance