



New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Educational Partnership





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New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

Phase I: Foundational Content



Produced by the Technical Assistance Partnership (TAP) for Data and Transition at Cornell University.

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Disclaimer

The resources shown are designed to provide helpful information. Resources are provided for instructional use purposes only and do not constitute NYSED endorsement of any vendor, author, or other sources. To the best of our knowledge, the resources provided are true and complete.

Meeting Norms

- Take care of your needs (water, food, restroom, etc.)
- Speak your truth—Use “I” statements
- Ask what you need to understand and contribute
- Listen with respect
- Push your growing edge
- Participate and struggle together
- Expect a lack of closure
- Respect each others’ needs

Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities



Self-Advocacy

Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.



Family Partnership

Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.



Specially-Designed Instruction

Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.



Research-Based Instruction

Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.



Multi-Tiered Support

Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.



Inclusive Activities

Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.



Transition Support

Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

Agenda

- Training Objectives
- What is the NYSAA?
- Federal requirements
- Guide to appropriate decision-making
- Justifications and assurances

Materials

- 2019 NYSAA Policy Brief
- How NYSAA One Percent is Calculated Handout
- NYSAA Participation Decision Making Checklist Flow Chart
- NYSAA Decision Making Checklist
- Summary of Diploma and Credential Requirements June 2022
- Understanding Current New York State (NYS) Diploma Requirements
- Parent Notification Sample Letter for NYSAA Participation

Training Objectives

The purpose of this presentation is to:

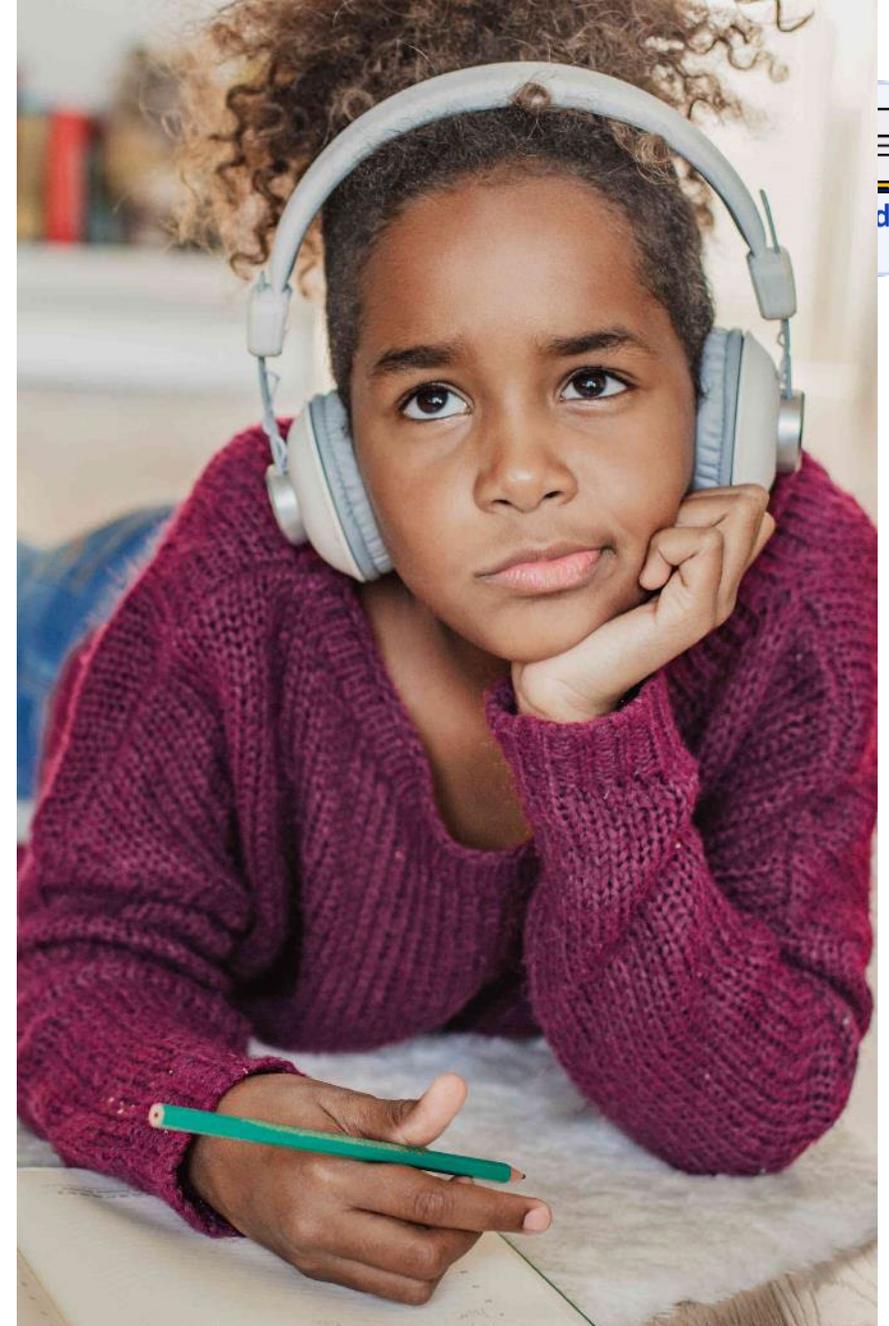
- Ensure districts receive appropriate guidance on who should be participating in the NYSAA consistent with NYS's guidelines
- Define students with the most significant disabilities
- Establish foundational knowledge for participating in subsequent Targeted Skills Group (TSG) sessions

Slide Marker Icons



What Is the NYSAA? (1 of 3)

“NYSAA is part of the New York State testing program that measures the attainment of the State’s learning standards in the areas of English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science for all students with the most severe disabilities in Grades 3–8 and high school.”



What is the NYSAA? (2 of 3)

- Students are assessed using the [Dynamic Learning Maps \(DLM\)](#) alternate assessment
 - Computer-delivered adaptive assessment
 - Measures student achievement of NYS learning standards at a reduced level of depth, breadth, and complexity

What is the NYSAA? (3 of 3)

- Students are assessed in the following areas:
 - ELA and Mathematics: grades 3-8, and one time at the high school level
 - Science: grades 4* and 8, and one time at the high school level

*Beginning in the Spring of 2024, the NYSAA science assessment will also be given in grade 5

Federal Requirements

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

IDEA and ESSA Assessment Requirements (1 of 4)

- All students with disabilities must be included in general State and districtwide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations
 - Alternate assessments for students with most significant cognitive disabilities as necessary and as indicated on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- States must have guidelines for Committees on Special Education (CSEs) in determining on a case-by-case basis whether a student is most appropriately assessed with an alternate assessment
 - CSEs must determine a student's participation is consistent with NYS guidelines

IDEA and ESSA Assessment Requirements (2 of 4)

- Guidelines must include State definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities”
- Definition should address factors related to cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior, such that:
 - Identification as having a particular disability or being an English language learner (ELL) does not determine whether a student is a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities

IDEA and ESSA Assessment Requirements (3 of 4)

Definition should also address:

- A student with the most significant cognitive disabilities is **not** identified solely on the basis of a student's previous:
 - low academic achievement; or
 - need for accommodations to participate in general State or districtwide assessments; and
- A student is identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities because the student requires **extensive, direct individualized instruction, and substantial supports** to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled

IDEA and ESSA Assessment Requirements (4 of 4)

- IEPs of alternately assessed students must include a statement of why:
 - The student cannot participate in regular assessments; and
 - The particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate

ESSA 1.0 Percent Cap Requirements

- ESSA limits the percentage of students that a state may assess with an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards to no more than 1.0 percent of all assessed students in the grades assessed in a state for each subject assessed (ELA, math, and science)
- This is to ensure that the vast majority of students take a state's general assessments and only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards



ESSA 1.0 Percent Cap

- States may **not** prohibit districts from assessing more than 1.0 percent of students with an alternate assessment
- 1.0 percent cap requirement from ESSA at State level
 - Districts must submit information justifying need to exceed 1.0 percent
 - States must provide appropriate oversight of districts submitting justifications and make justifications publicly available
- Parents (as part of IEP process) must be clearly informed
 - That child's academic achievement will be measured based on alternate achievement standards
 - How participation in alternate assessment may delay or otherwise affect completing requirements for a regular high school diploma

Comparison of Data Results

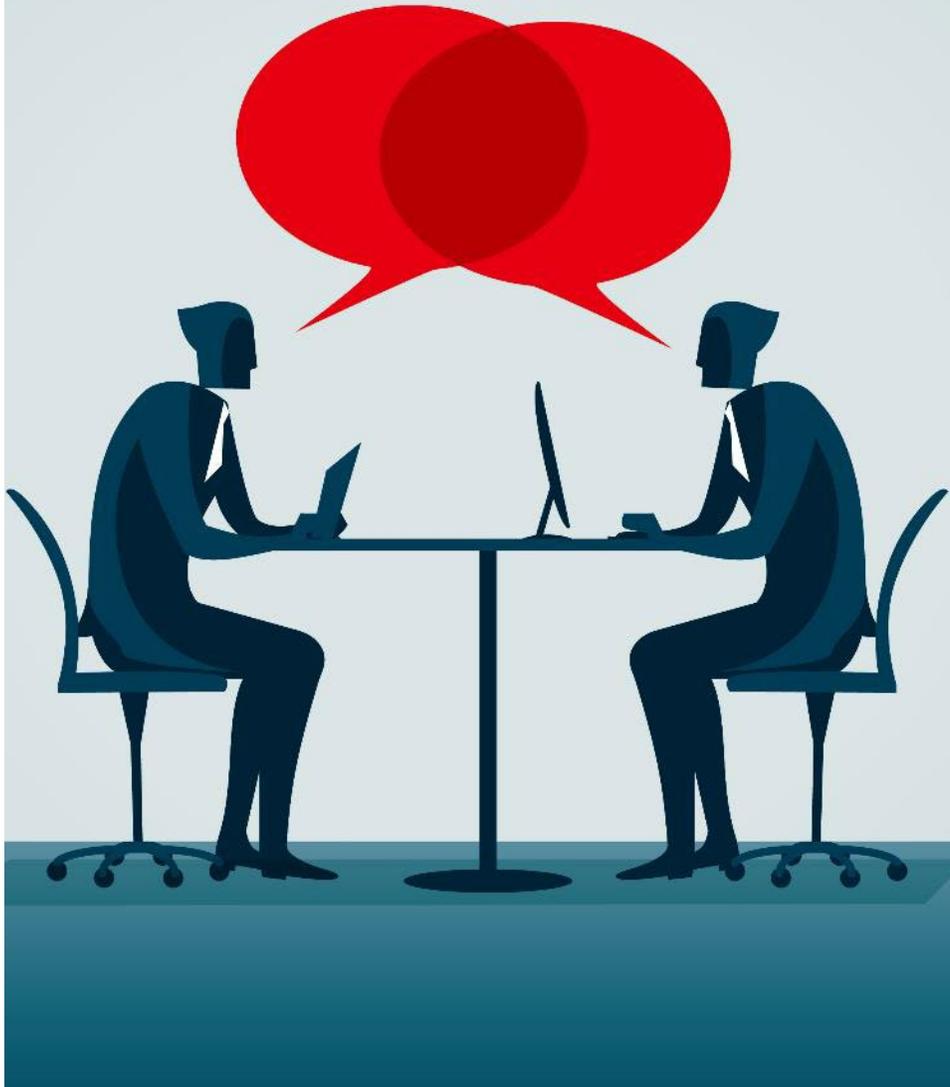
2021-22 State Average*

	ELA	Math	Science
State Target	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
State Average	1.62%	1.48%	1.18%
Your %			

*excludes Charter schools and division for youth entities



Discussion



Discuss the comparison between the State average, your percentage, and the implications on appropriate assessment considerations.

Who Are Students With Severe Disabilities?



§100.1(t)(2)(iv)

“Students with severe disabilities means students who have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education, social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment. Students with severe disabilities may experience severe speech, language, and/or perceptual-cognitive impairments, and evidence challenging behaviors that interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. These students may also have extremely fragile physiological conditions and may require personal care, physical/verbal supports, and/or prompts and assistive technology devices.”

NYSAA Process Criteria



- CSEs must determine **annually** on an individual basis whether a student will participate in:
 - The State’s general assessment with or without accommodations;
 - NYSAA with or without accommodations; or
 - A combination of the State’s general assessment for some content areas and NYSAA for other content areas
- CSEs must ensure:
 - Decisions are **not** based on:
 - Category of disability,
 - Excessive or extended absences,
 - Language differences, or
 - Cultural or environmental factors
 - Student has a personalized system of communication
 - Tests and assessments used to evaluate a student with a disability are conducted in accordance with State and federal regulations

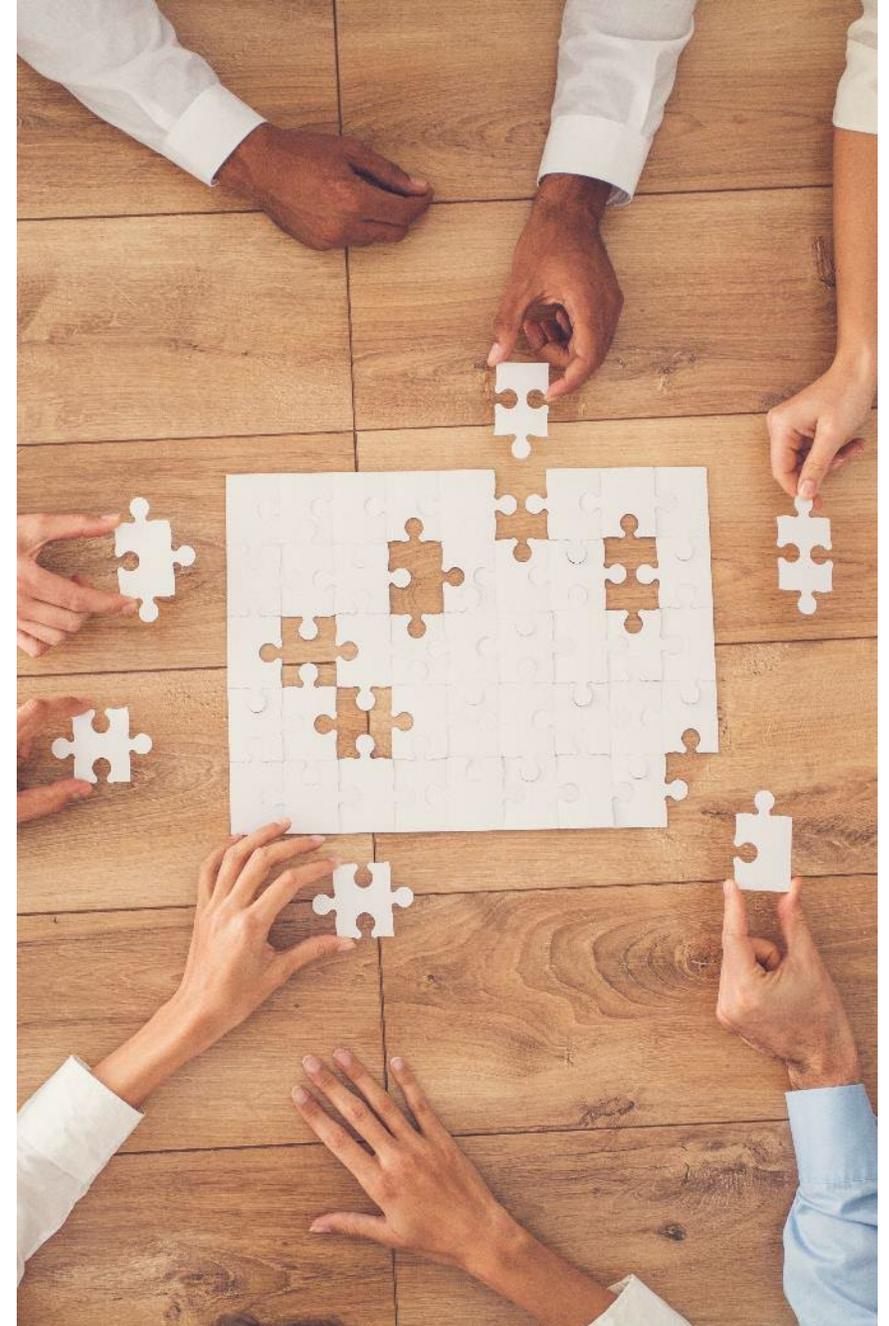
NYSAA Eligibility Criteria

- Student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and significant deficits in adaptive behavior;
And
- 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
- Student requires educational support systems, such as assistive technology, personal care services, health/medical services, or behavioral intervention

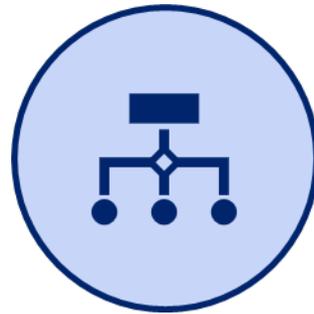
Decision-Making Process

CSEs must:

- Review and determine **annually** a student's eligibility to participate in NYSAA based on NYSED's *Eligibility and Participation Criteria*
- Thoughtfully consider how participation in NYSAA will impact student's:
 - Participation and progress in general curriculum; and
 - Opportunity to earn a NYS local or Regents diploma



CSE Decision-Making Process Resources



[NYSAA Participation Decision-Making Flowchart](#)



[NYSAA Participation Decision-Making Checklist](#)

Transition, Diploma, and Exiting Credential Options

- Consideration of diploma type relative to a student's post-secondary goals for education and employment is essential
- Discuss diploma options:
 - Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation
 - Regents Diploma
 - Local High School Diploma (based on safety net/appeal)
- Discuss exiting credential options:
 - Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential for Students with Severe Disabilities
 - Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential

Types of Diplomas



Local

22 units of credit

Used appeals, safety nets to meet assessment requirements

- **or** Superintendent Determination of a Local Diploma

Regents

22 units of credit

Earned passing scores (65+ for Regents Examinations)* on all required assessments (4 + 1)

Regents With Advanced Designation

22 units of credit

Earned passing score on all required assessments (7 + 1)

- Additional exams required:
 - +2 math
 - +1 science
 - 1 life, 1 physical
- Completed a sequence

* A student can use one traditional appeal (60–64) and still receive a Regents diploma. Special appeals and exemptions can be applied to any diploma type

Credential Options

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential

- Can be earned by students who are assessed using the NYSAA
- Instructed in and assessed on alternate performance level for the State learning standards
- Additional instruction in the CDOS Learning Standards
- Provide learning experiences both in school and in the community

CDOS Commencement Credential

- Cannot be earned by students who participate in the NYSAA testing program
- Can help a student earn a diploma, supplement a diploma, **or** serve as a standalone credential for students who attempt but do not earn a Regents or Local diploma
- Is a Board of Regents endorsed credential that recognizes the student's readiness for entry-level employment

What Do Parents Need to Know About Their Child Taking the NYSAA?

- As a part of the process for developing an IEP, if the CSE determines that a student will participate in the NYSAA, the student's parents must be clearly informed that their child's performance will be measured based on alternate achievement standards that are:
 - Reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity; and
 - Do not meet the expectations necessary to earn a NYS local or Regents high school diploma in NYS

What Do Parents Need to Know About Their Child Taking the NYSAA? (continued)



- In addition, parents must be informed that in order to earn a diploma in NYS, students must earn required course credits and take required Regents examinations and that at the high school level, a determination that the student cannot take the NYS State assessment and will participate in the [NYSAA](#) will mean that the student cannot graduate with a NYS local or Regents high school diploma
- Therefore, this determination is an important one and should be reconsidered at each annual review meeting to review the student's IEP

Justification and Assurances



- NYSED requires districts exceeding the 1.0 percent cap in one or more subject areas to submit an online justification of the need to assess more than 1.0 percent of their students who are alternately assessed
- As part of the justification, districts are also required to provide certain assurances consistent with ESSA and IDEA
- As required by ESSA, NYSED will make all submitted justifications publicly available

Justification Summary Activity



2020-21 School District Justification Summary

1. View the justifications submitted by districts in NYS
2. Reflection:
 - Are there any trends?
 - Any specific considerations?
 - What patterns are seen throughout the justifications?
 - Does this link to assessment considerations?

Looking Ahead

What to Expect

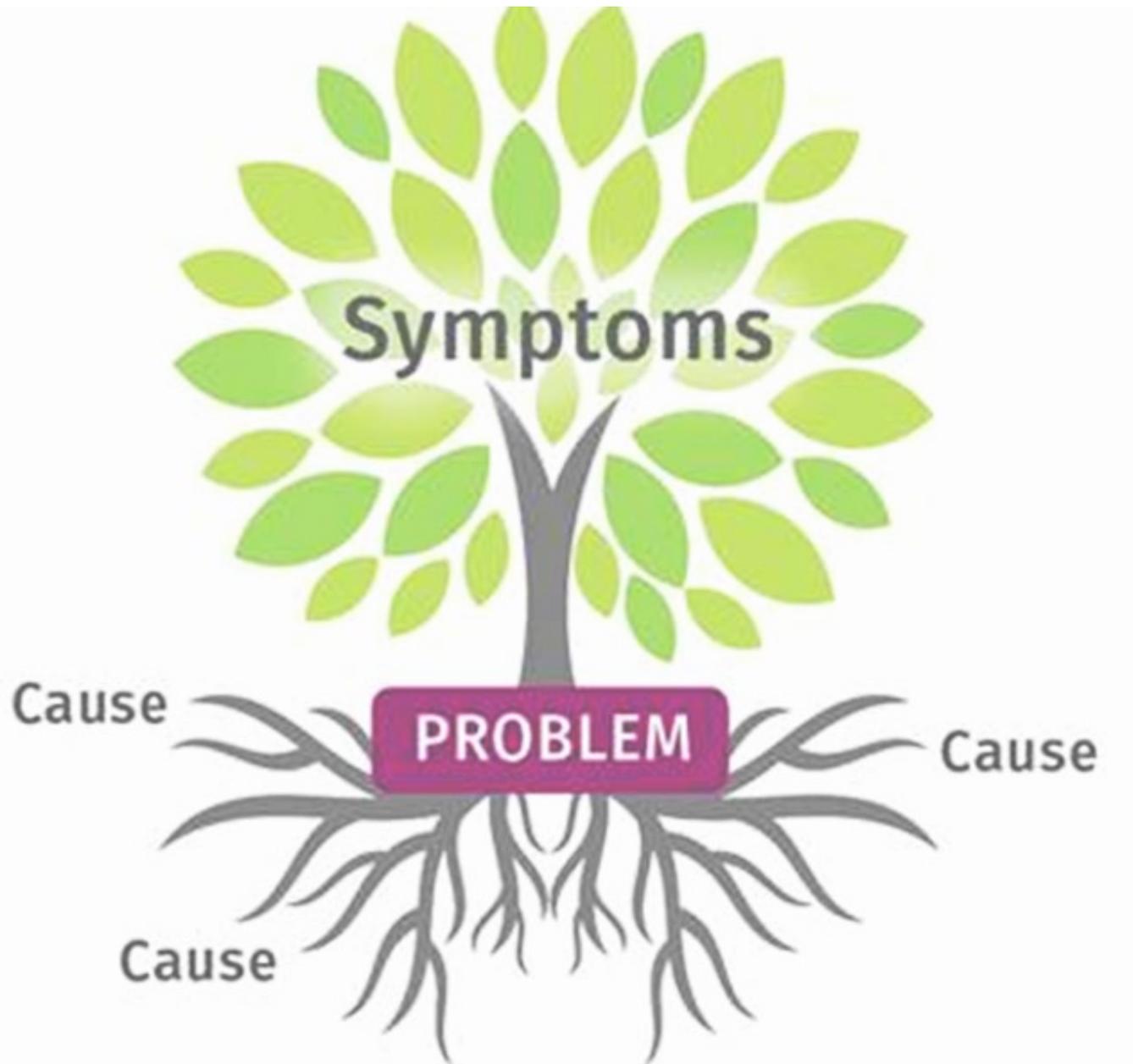
- Phase II: Facilitated Root Cause Analysis for Implementation Planning
- Session III: Implementation Planning–Theory of Action/Theory of Change
- Session IV: Evaluate and Sustain



Next Steps

Root Cause Analysis of the Data:

Why are we getting these results?



Considerations for Root Cause Analysis

- Is there a specific grade level in which CSEs begin to recommend NYSAA eligibility?
 - What trends do you see within your District?
- Are all staff, K–12, trained in understanding the eligibility criteria for NYSAA?
 - If not, which staff members are trained?
- Are all staff, K–12, aware of the definition and implication of NYSAA?
- Is NYSAA eligibility an annual discussion at CSE?
- How are CSEs documenting NYSAA participation in the IEP?

Resources

- [A Parent's Quick Guide to NYSAA](#)
- [Eligibility Criteria for Participation in NYSAA](#)
- [Justification for School Districts Exceeding the 1.0 Percent on Students Participating in NYSAA](#)
- [NYSAA](#)
- [Office of State Assessment](#)

Questions and Answers



Contact Us

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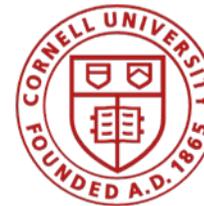
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity



New York State Education Department
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Technical Assistance Partnership
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