



New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Educational Partnership





New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

Essential Information for Families of Students with Disabilities

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

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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.

Training Objectives

Participants will:

- Review the state assessment options
- Identify the purpose and structure of the NYSAA
- Become familiar with the process for determining whether a student is eligible for the NYSAA
- Explore student exit options and how the NYSAA designation impacts student's postsecondary planning

Materials

- Participant Workbook
- New York State Education Department's (NYSED's) Eligibility and Participation Criteria—NYSAA
- A Parent's Quick Guide to the NYSA
- Sample Parent Notification of Participation in the NYSA
- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Parent Brochure
- Parent Letter for End of Year Model
- Model Form for Skills and Achievement Credential
- Diploma Requirements
- Postsecondary Transition Planning Checklist for Families

Opening Activity



- Take a few moments to reflect on your memories of yourself at the age of 15–21.
- What were your plans for yourself after high school?
- At what age did you begin thinking about what you wanted to do when you graduated?
- To what extent did those around you help you consider your options for life after high school and at what age did you begin these discussions?



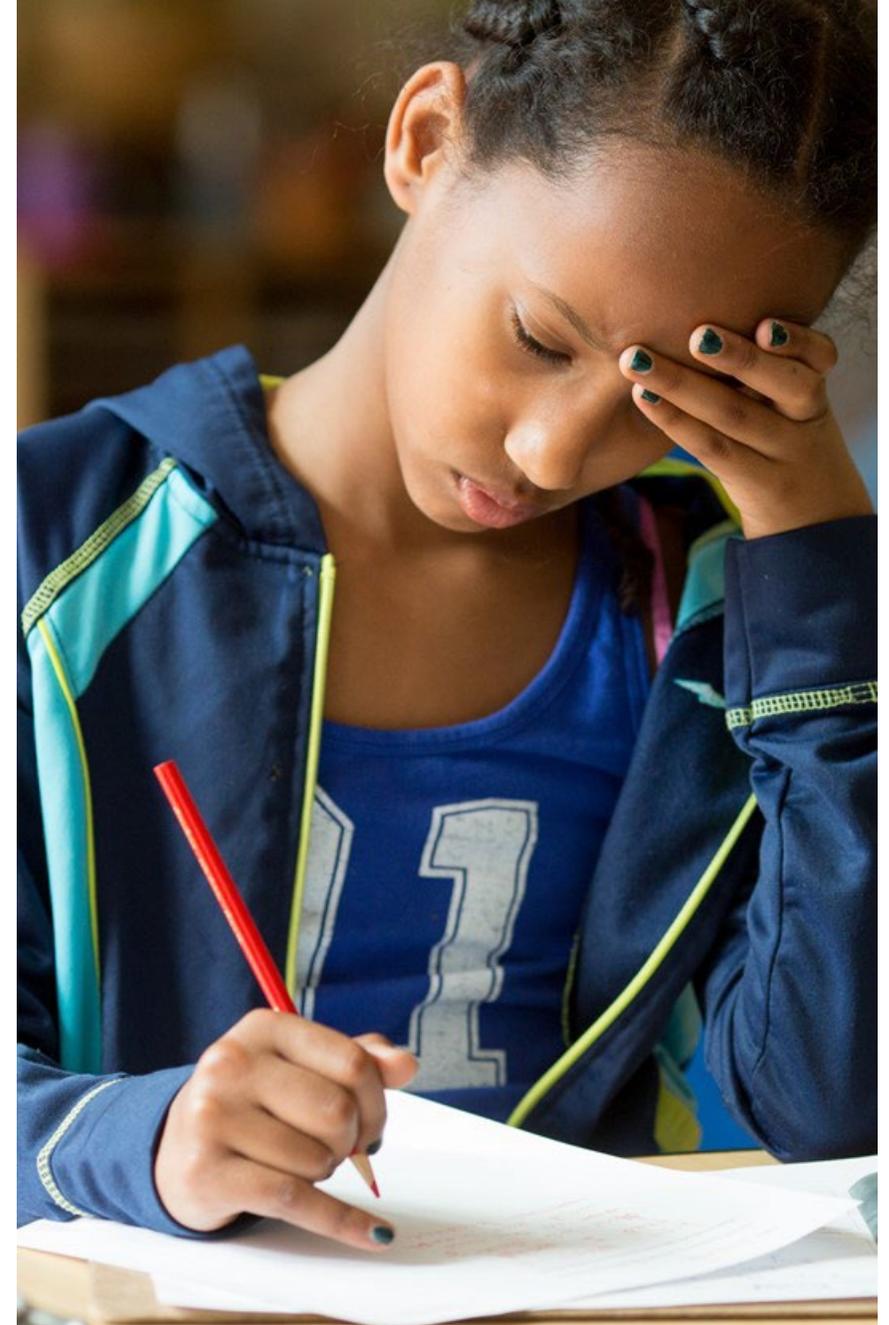
What Are Statewide Assessments?

Statewide Assessments

The federal **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** requires that states administer annual statewide assessments to:

- All students in grades 3–8, and at least once in high school, **including students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)**, in:
 - Reading/language arts
 - Math
 - Science (grades 5 and 8)

[NYSED: Parent's FAQ About NYS's Annual Grades 3–8 English Language Arts \(ELA\) and Mathematics Tests](#)



Using Student Test Results

Student test results are used to:

- Serve as an "academic checkup" to make sure your child is on track for the next grade level;
- Measure progress over time so you can see your child's year-to-year performance; and
- Provide a deeper level of information by pinpointing what skills your child has mastered and what skills your child is still developing.

Types of State Assessments



General
Assessment

General
Assessment with
Accommodations

Alternate
Assessment
(NYSAA)

General Assessments

- Grades 3–8 tests are two sessions each, over a two-day period.
- [Regents exams](#) are tied to specific courses and may be administered three times a year.
- Depending on the district, the 3–8 test can be given on paper or on a computer.
- Grades 3–8 assessments are untimed.
- Regents exams are timed.
- Both sets of tests consist of multiple-choice and open-ended questions.
- Students can complete practice tests in advance using the [NYS Question Sampler](#).

General Assessments Accommodations

Accommodations for general assessments must be documented on the student's IEP or Section 504 plan and could include:

- Flexibility in scheduling (e.g., scheduled breaks)
- Flexibility in the test setting (e.g., separate location)
- Changes in test presentation (e.g., enlarged print)
- Changes in the method of response (e.g., use of a scribe for written responses)

Alternate Assessment—NYSAA

- For students who are unable to participate in the State's general assessment system because of the severity of their disabilities, even with accommodations, states are required to develop and implement an alternate assessment.
- The NYSAA, as decided through the Committee on Special Education (CSE), is for students with the **most severe disabilities** in grades 3–8 and high school.

Determining NYSAA Eligibility

Definition of Students with Severe Disabilities



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

- 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.

A Student Must Meet All Three Criteria to be Eligible



- 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.

CSE Considerations

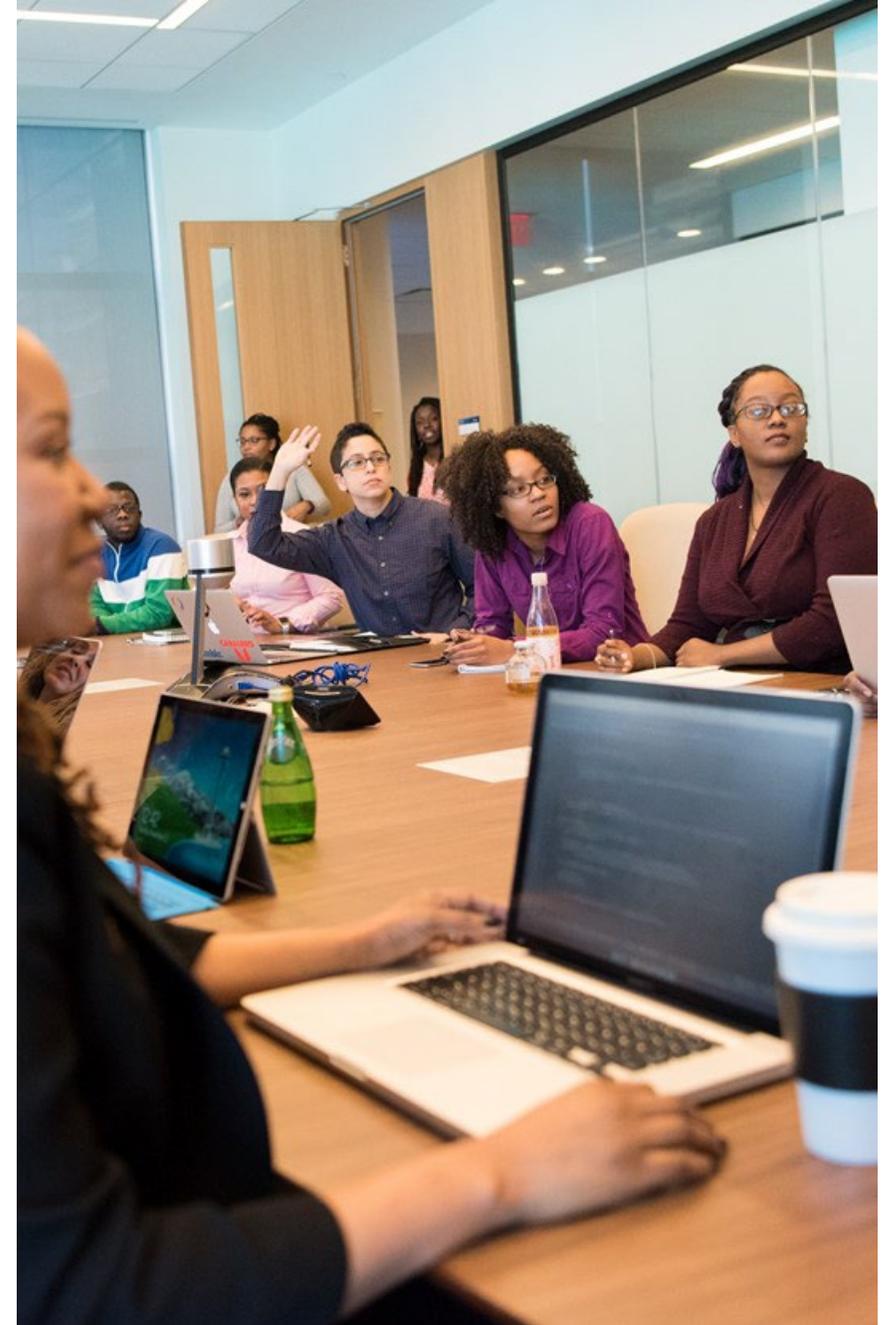
CSE Teams must ensure decisions are **not** based **exclusively** on:

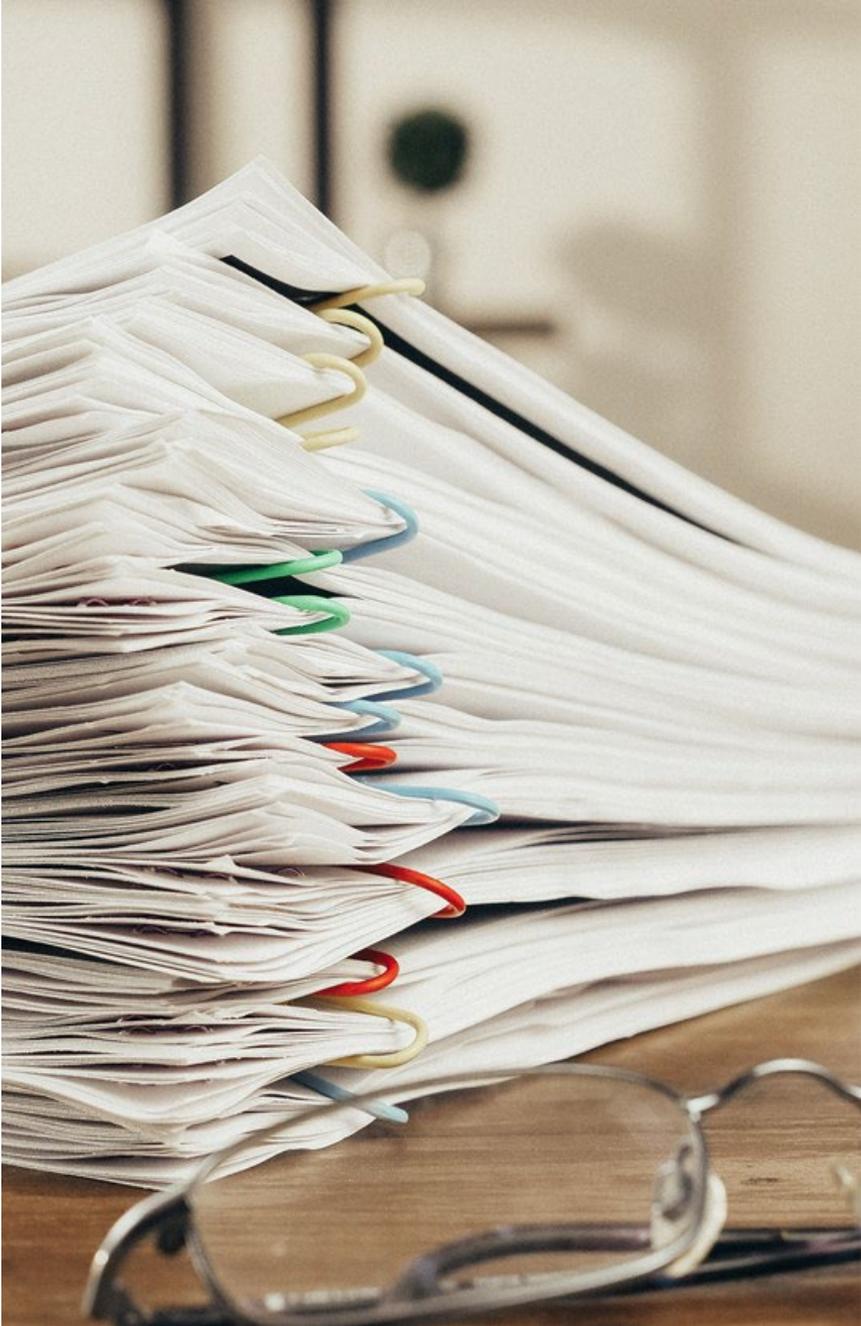
- Category of disability
- Excessive or extended absences
- Language differences
- Cultural or environmental factors
- Previous low academic achievement
- Previous need for accommodations to participate in State or district-wide assessments

Additional CSE Considerations

CSE Teams must also thoughtfully consider how participation in the NYSAA will impact the student's:

- Participation and progress in the general curriculum
- Opportunity to earn a regular NYS diploma





Documentation on the IEP

If the CSE determines that the student **will** participate in the NYSAA, the student's IEP **must** indicate this **and** provide a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment **and** why the particular alternate assessment is appropriate for the student.

Parent Notification



Parents **must be clearly informed** their child's performance will be measured based on alternate achievement standards that are:

- Reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity
- Do not meet the expectations necessary to earn a regular high school diploma (e.g., local or Regents diploma) in NYS

How Can Families Help with the Decision-Making Process?



What Does Participation in the NYSAA Look Like?

How is the NYSAA Structured?



NYSAA eligible students are assessed using the [DLM](#) alternate assessment system.

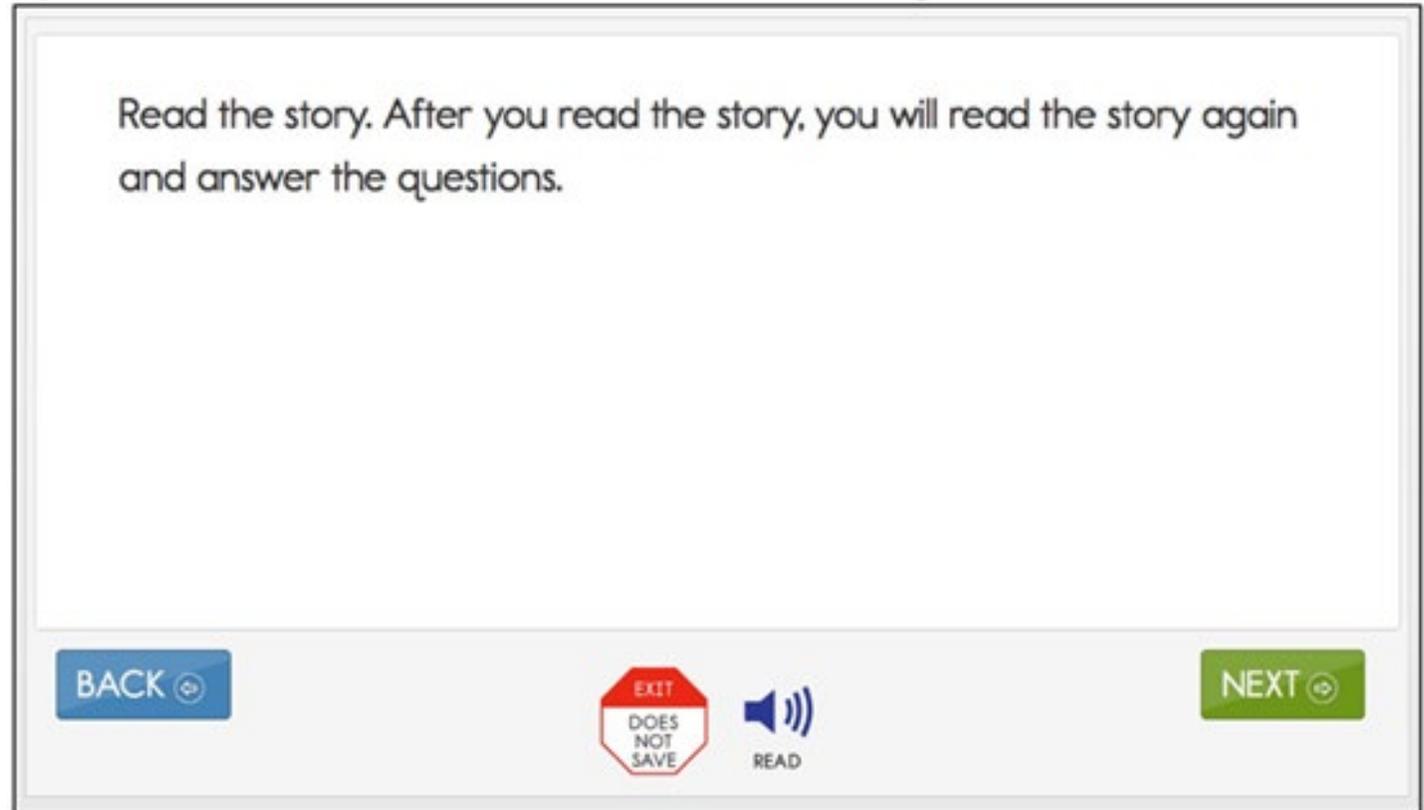


Figure 7. Screenshot of the instructions for an ELA reading testlet in Kite Student Portal.

How is the NYSAA Structured? (continued)

The DLM alternate assessment is delivered in testlets.

Each testlet contains an engagement activity and three to nine items.

This provides the opportunity to customize the assessment to the individualized abilities and needs of the student.

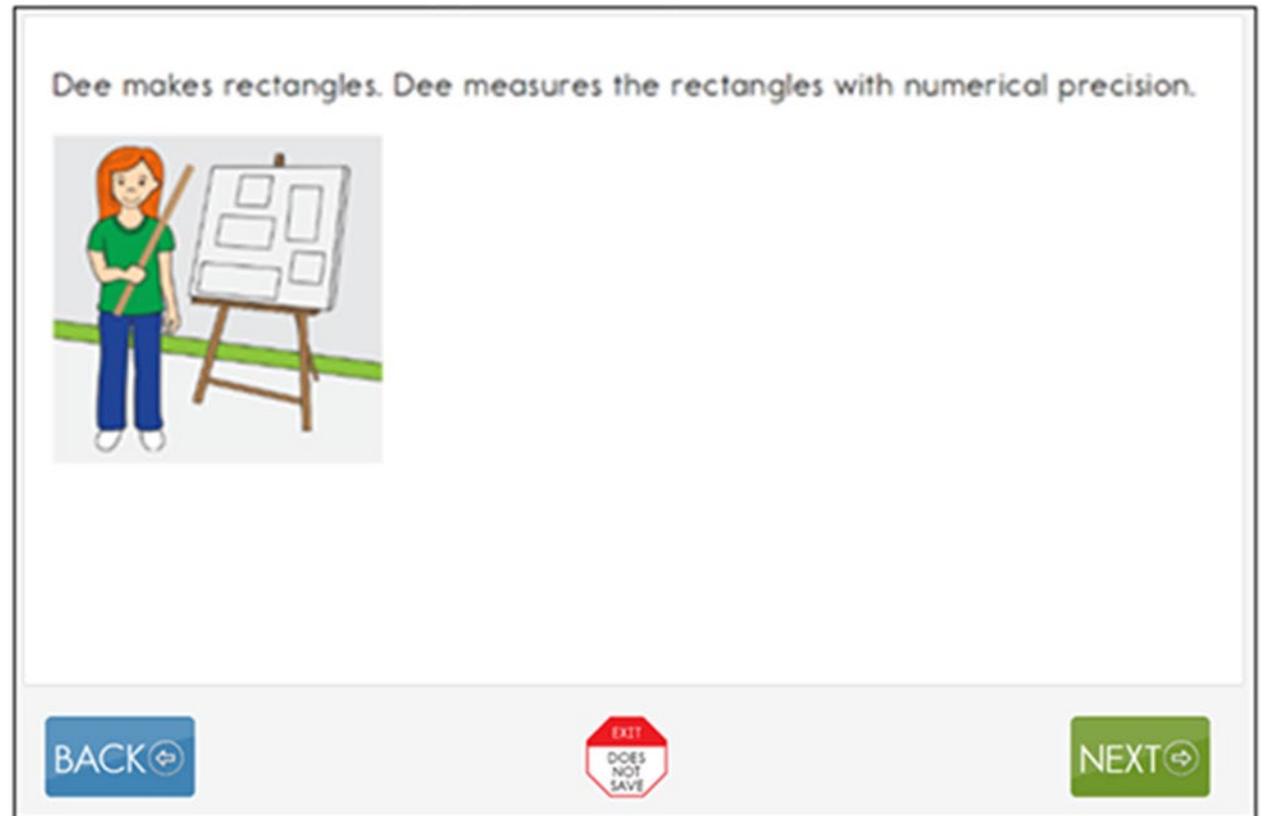


Figure 9. Screenshot of an engagement activity in a mathematics testlet on Kite Student Portal.

How Are the Results Shared and Used?

- Scores may be used to guide conversations about a child's IEP or to determine educational priorities and academic goals. These scores can help:
 - Identify a student's strengths and needs;
 - Provide information to allow for meaningful discussions surrounding a student's IEP;
 - Set instructional priorities that inform a student's functional and academic goals and short-term objectives; and
 - Identify a student's most effective method of communication across multiple settings.
- Schools provide parents/caregivers with an Individual Score Report.

When is the NYSAA Given?

Assessment Schedule

Grade	English (ELA)	Math	Science	Social Studies
K				
1st	No	No	No	No
2nd				
3rd	Yes	Yes	No	No
4th	Yes	Yes		
5th	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
6th	Yes	Yes		
7th	Yes	Yes		
8th	Yes	Yes	Yes	
9-12 th	Once*	Once*	Once*	Once*

* Once (Must be done once)

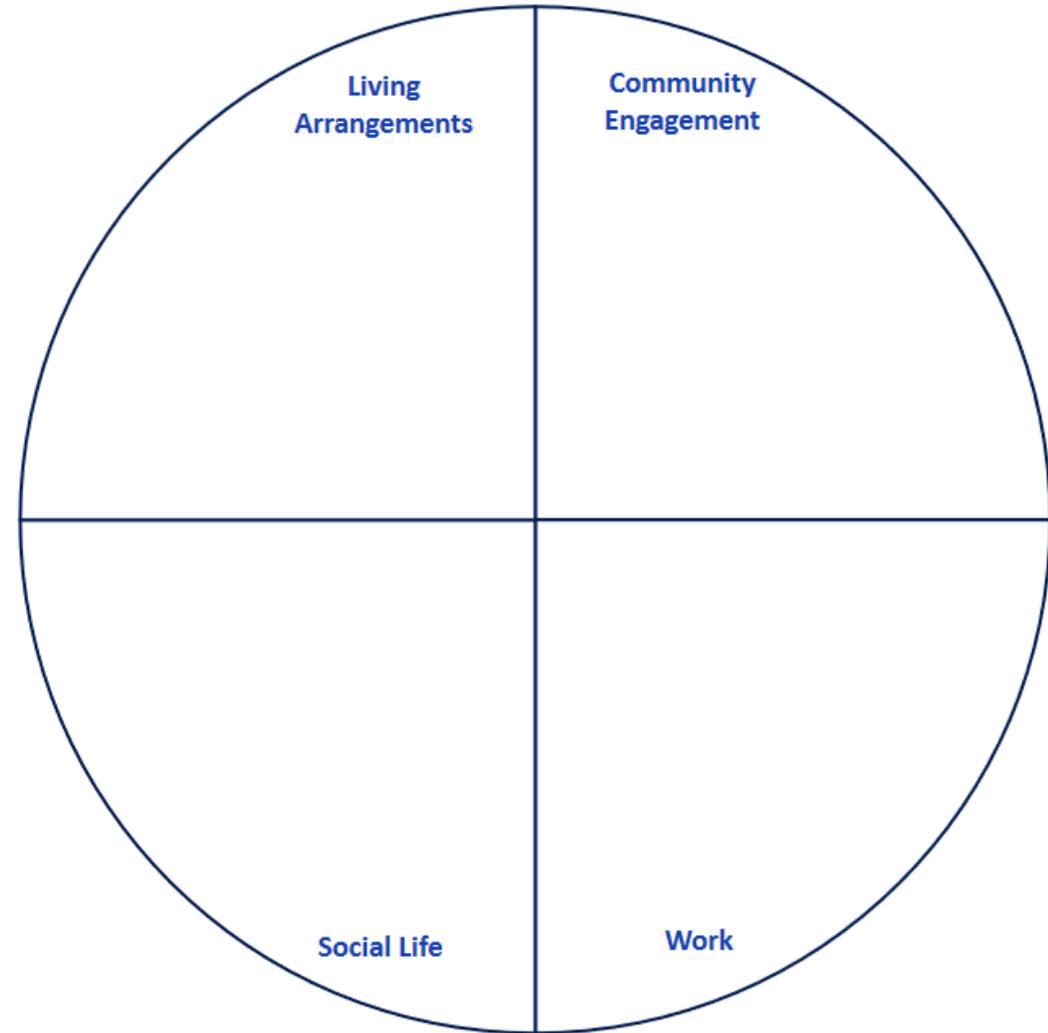
What Is the Impact of Student Participation in the NYSAA?

Hopes and Dreams Activity



Using the corresponding handout, take a few minutes to think about your hopes and dreams for your child in the following categories:

- Independent Living
- Community Engagement
- Social Life
- Employment



Credential Options

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential

Student:

- 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
- Provides learning experiences both in school and in the community

CDOS Commencement Credential

Student:

- 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

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)

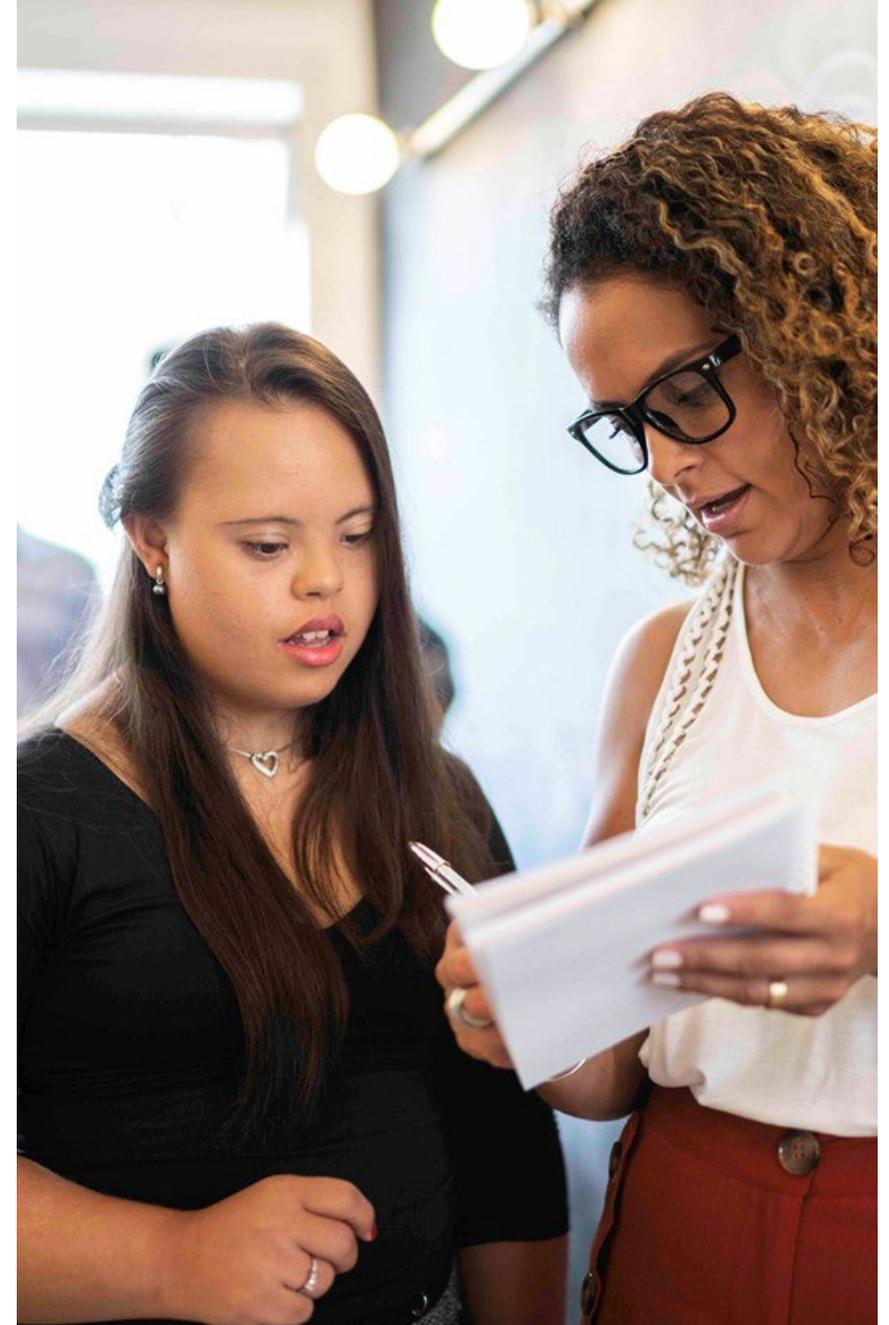
- Additional exams required:
 - +2 math
 - +1 science
 - 1 life, 1 physical
- Completed a sequence

* 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.

Postsecondary Impact

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential is **not** a NYS high school diploma, and therefore does not meet criteria for:

- College admittance
- Many postsecondary training programs
- United States (US) military branches



Postsecondary Planning Options



As students begin to plan for the future, they should be exploring post-school options in the following three areas:

Postsecondary Education

- Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) Adult Training Programs
- Think College

Employment

- Adult Career and Continuing Education Services—Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)
- Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
- Career OneStop

Independent Living

- OPWDD
- Independent Living Centers (ILCs)

OSE Partnership Community Resource Map

Discover Agencies In Your Area



--- Or ---

 English

Employment

- Paid employment (e.g., competitive integrated employment)
- Work experience (e.g., volunteer, intern, apprentice, employment training programs)
- Skill development (e.g., technology, employability skills, pre-employment)
- Career development (e.g., career counseling, job club, mentor)
- On-the-job training and support (e.g., job coach, assistive technology, supported employment)
- Youth and adult employment programs

Independent/Community Living

- Housing/Residential services (e.g., apartment, low-income housing)
- Supported living (e.g., in-home assistance, group living)
- Daily living skills (e.g., cooking, cleaning, budgeting)
- Recreation (e.g., parks, sports centers, arts, summer camps)
- Home modifications (e.g., ramps, environmental control)
- Financial assistance (e.g., public assistance, financial literacy)
- Transportation (e.g., public transportation, driving instruction, vehicle modification)
- Food security (e.g., food pantries)

Family Supports

- Support groups (e.g., parents, caregivers, peers)
- Educational resources for families
- Evaluations (e.g., psychological, neurological, assistive technology, developmental)
- Respite services

Education/Training

- Preschool/early childhood programs
- Higher education (e.g., community college, four-year college, inclusive higher ed)
- Certificate programs (e.g., food handling, welding, first aid/CPR)
- Adult education (e.g., reading, math, communication, GED)
- Vocational training programs
- Tutoring
- After-school programs
- School-age programs

Other Services

Let's Review

The NYSAA Recap

- The ESSA requires that states administer annual statewide assessments to all students in grades 3–8, and at least once in high school.
- To participate in statewide assessments through the NYSAA, a student must meet all three criteria listed in the NYSED criteria eligibility handout.
- The CSE must consider multiple factors to determine eligibility.
- Students who participate in the NYSAA will earn the Skills and Achievement Credential.

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential Recap

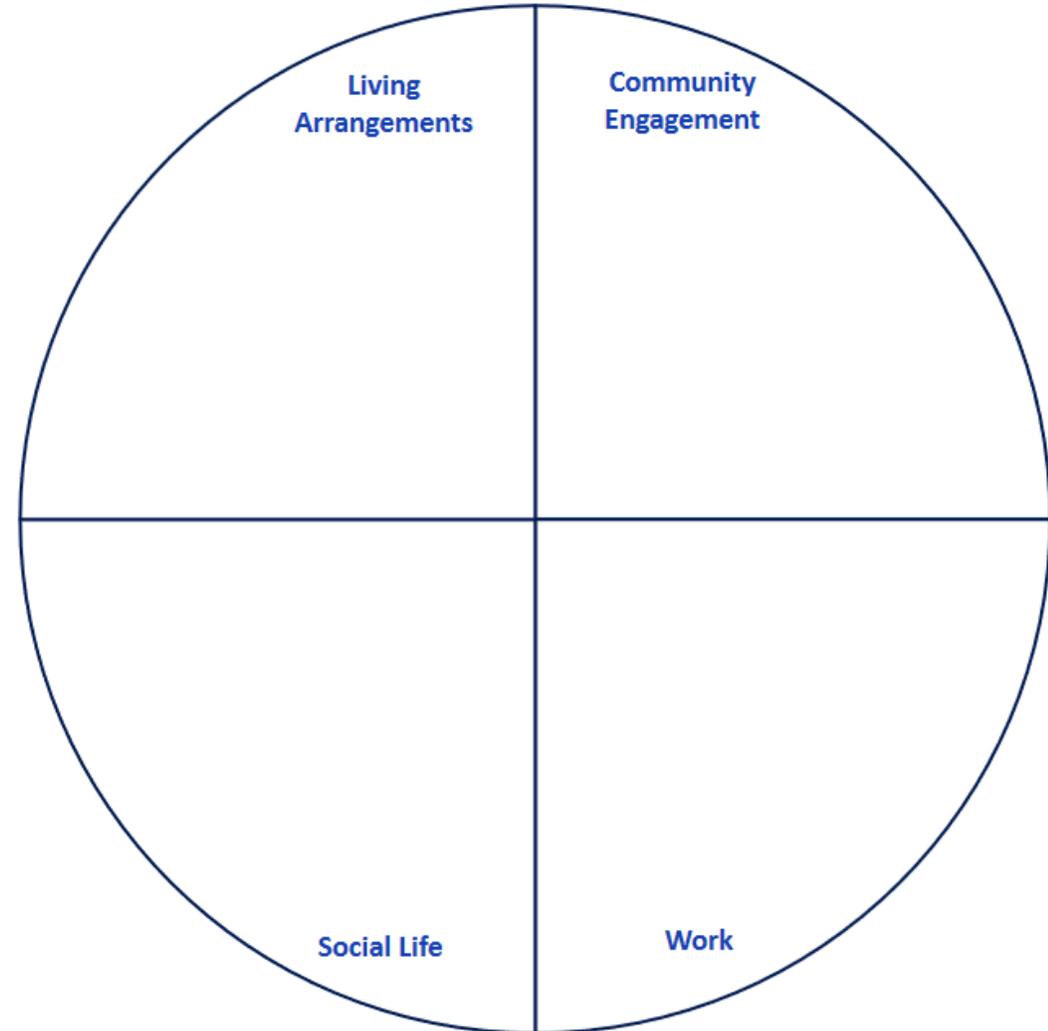
- The credential is intended to:
 - Promote learning experiences that support useful, basic, academic, and career skills.
 - Focus on a course of study and instruction aligned with the CDOS Learning Standards, not the CDOS credential.
 - Document a students' skills and strengths and levels of independence in academic, career development, and foundation skills needed for post-school living, learning, and working.
- Remember, this is a skill-based certificate, not a diploma.

Hopes and Dreams Activity—Part 2



Now that you've reviewed the NYSAA and the impact it can have on your child's postsecondary planning:

- Do you still have the same hopes and dreams previously listed?
- Have they changed?
- Do you think your child's strengths and needs indicate participation in the NYSAA?



Resources (1 of 2)

- [New York State Alternate Assessment \(NYSAA\)](#)
- [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) Standards](#)
- [Dynamic Learning Maps](#)
- [Exiting Credentials](#)
- [New York State Diploma Requirements](#)
- [New York State Education Department Past Examinations](#)
- [New York State Education Department Question Sampler](#)
- [Parent Resources for 3-8 NYS Assessments](#)

Resources (2 of 2)

- [Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential for Students with Severe Disabilities](#)
- [Student Exit Summary](#)
- [Testing Accommodations Guide for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Fact Sheets](#)
- [ThinkCollege](#)

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