



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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Disclaimer

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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, structure, and eligibility criteria of the NYSAA.
- Understand how the NYSAA can impact a student's educational outcomes and opportunities after high school.

Materials

- Participant Workbook
- Allowable Testing Accommodations Across New York State's Testing Programs (Appendix J from the Testing Accommodations Manual)
- A Parent's Quick Guide to the NYSAA
- NYSAA Policy Brief
- NYSAA Decision-Making Tool
- Sample Parent Notification of Participation in the NYSAA
- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Parent Brochure
- Safety Net Options Available to Students with Disabilities to Graduate with a Local Diploma
- Postsecondary Transition Planning Checklist for Families
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Toolkit

Opening Activity



- What do you already know about the NYSAA?
- What are you hoping to learn in today's session?



Statewide Assessments

Why are Statewide Assessments Used?



Identify strengths and needs that will inform instructional priorities



Measure progress from year to year



Pinpoint which skills your child has mastered and which skills your child may need more support in developing

All Students With Disabilities Must Be Included in Assessments

Options for participation:

- The State's general assessment with or without accommodations
- Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) with or without accommodations
- A combination of the State's general assessment for some content areas and NYSAA for other content areas

General Assessments

Overview

Grades 3-8

- Reading/Language Arts, Math, and Science
- Two sessions each, over a two-day period
- Multiple-choice and open-ended questions
- Untimed
- Given on paper or on a computer

Regents (High School)

- Reading/Language Arts, Math, and Science
- Tied to specific courses
- Multiple-choice and open-ended questions
- Timed
- Given on paper

Testing Accommodations

Definition of Testing Accommodations



Testing accommodations remove obstacles to the test-taking process that are presented by the disability **without reducing expectations for learning.**

Categories of Testing Accommodations



- Flexibility in how much time or how many breaks are provided



- Flexibility in the location/setting where a student takes assessments



- Changes in the way a student can give their answer or response



- Changes in the way information is presented

Allowable Testing Accommodations Across New York State (NYS)

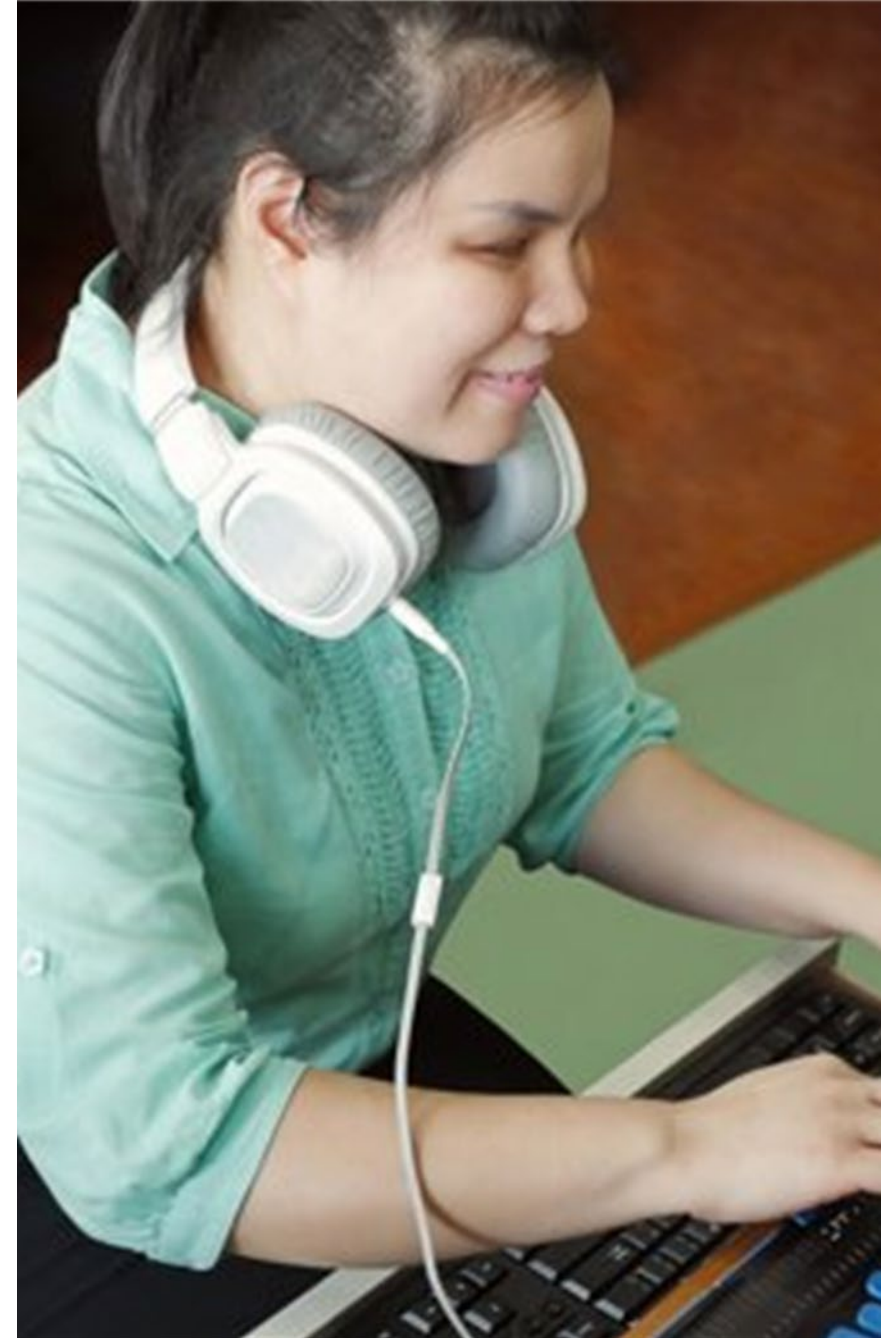
Activity Directions



1. Read through the accommodations that are allowed to be used on state testing.
2. Consider:
 - Which accommodations does your child currently use?
 - Write down any questions you might want to ask your child's teacher or Committee on Special Education (CSE) team about testing accommodations and preparing your child for state tests.

Practice Tests

- For Grades 3-8, students can practice using the [NYS Question Sampler](#). The practice test also allows you to select accommodations.
- For High School, students can look at [Regents exams](#) from previous years.



Alternate Assessment—NYSAA

Alternate Assessment—NYSAA



- Measures students' performance on alternative, less complex standards.
- For students with the **most severe disabilities** who cannot participate in the State's general assessment even with accommodations.
- Eligibility decided by the CSE team.
- Decision must be reconsidered every year.

Why is it important for NYSAA to be reserved for only the students with the most severe disabilities?



NYSAA Eligibility



What Is a Severe Disability?

Significant Challenges in All Three Areas:

Cognitive abilities:

- Most likely identified with developmental delays as an infant or toddler.
- Disability is so severe that it will impact post-school outcomes (e.g. supported housing or employment).

Communication/ language:

- Severely limited expressive and receptive language skills.

Adaptive behavior:

- Requires significant support and direct instruction with daily living skills.
- Dependent on others for physical care, health, and/or safety.
- Requires intensive supervision.

What Is Highly Specialized Education?

The student requires:

- High level of assistance and substantially modified learning materials to apply skills in different life settings (home, school, community, and/or workplace).
- Multiple sources of assistive technology.
- Support systems to address personal care, health/medical, speech/language or behavioral needs.

NYSAA Eligibility

The student has a severe disability

- Significantly limited cognitive abilities.
- Significant deficits in communication/language.
- Significant deficits in adaptive behavior.

The student requires a highly specialized educational program

- The student's program facilitates the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments.
- Requires assistive technology.
- Requires support systems to address personal care services, health/medical services, speech/language, or behavioral needs.

NYSAA Decisions Should Not be Based Exclusively on:

- Category of disability
- Educational environment
- Excessive or extended absences
- Language differences
- Cultural or environmental factors
- Previous low academic achievement
- Previous need for accommodations

How Do You Know if Your Child Is Taking the NYSAA?

- Look at their Individualized Education Program (IEP)—it's required to be documented
- Ask at a CSE meeting
- Talk to your child's teacher



Parent Notification



Parents **must be clearly informed** if 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 in NYS.

How Can Families Help with the Decision-Making Process?



What Does Participation in the NYSAA Look Like?

How Is the NYSAA Administered?



NYSAA eligible students are assessed using the [DLM](#), a computer-delivered adaptive assessment system.

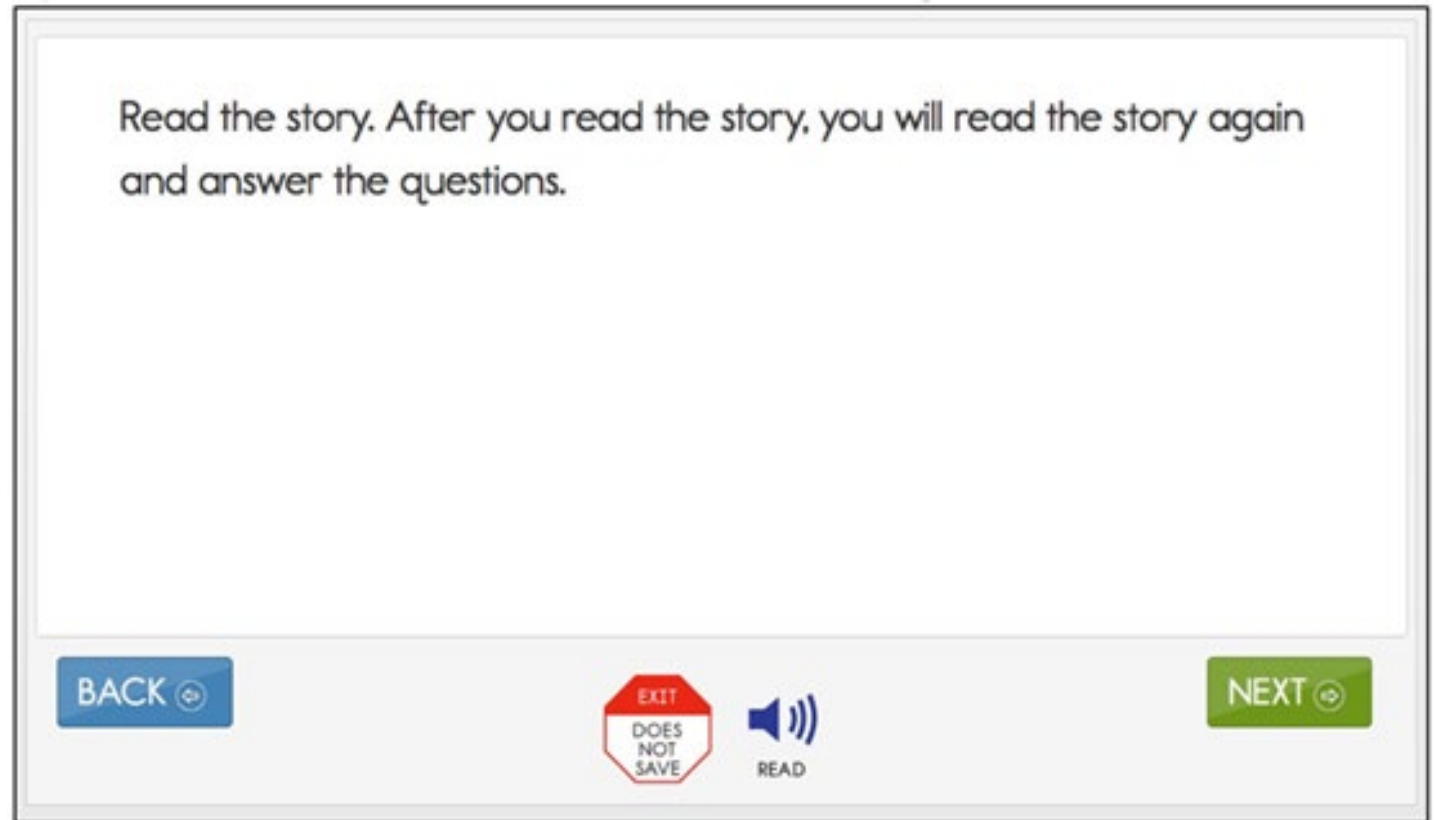


Figure 7. Screenshot of the instructions for an (English Language Arts) ELA reading testlet in Kite Student Portal.

How Is the NYSAA Structured?

The DLM alternate assessment is delivered in testlets.

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

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

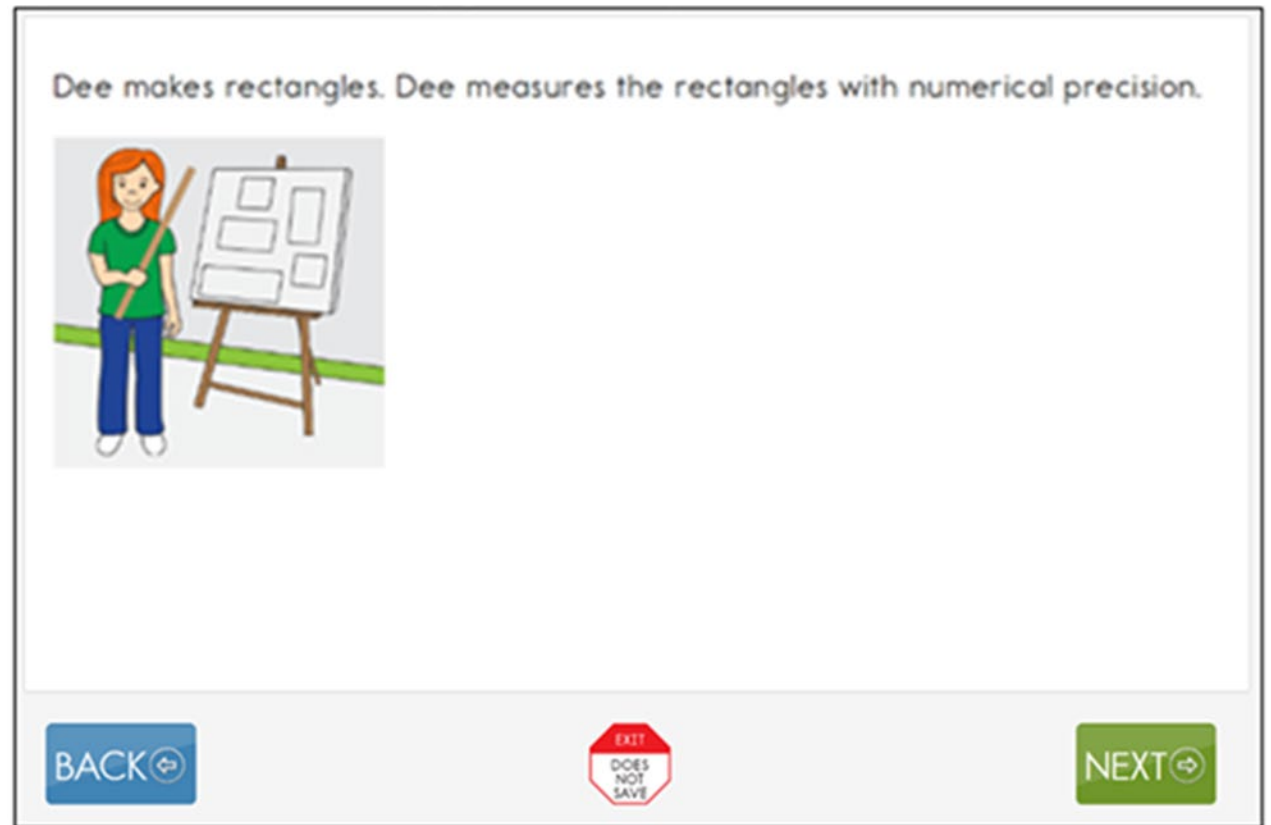


Figure 9. Screenshot of an engagement activity in a mathematics testlet on Kite Student Portal.

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	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)

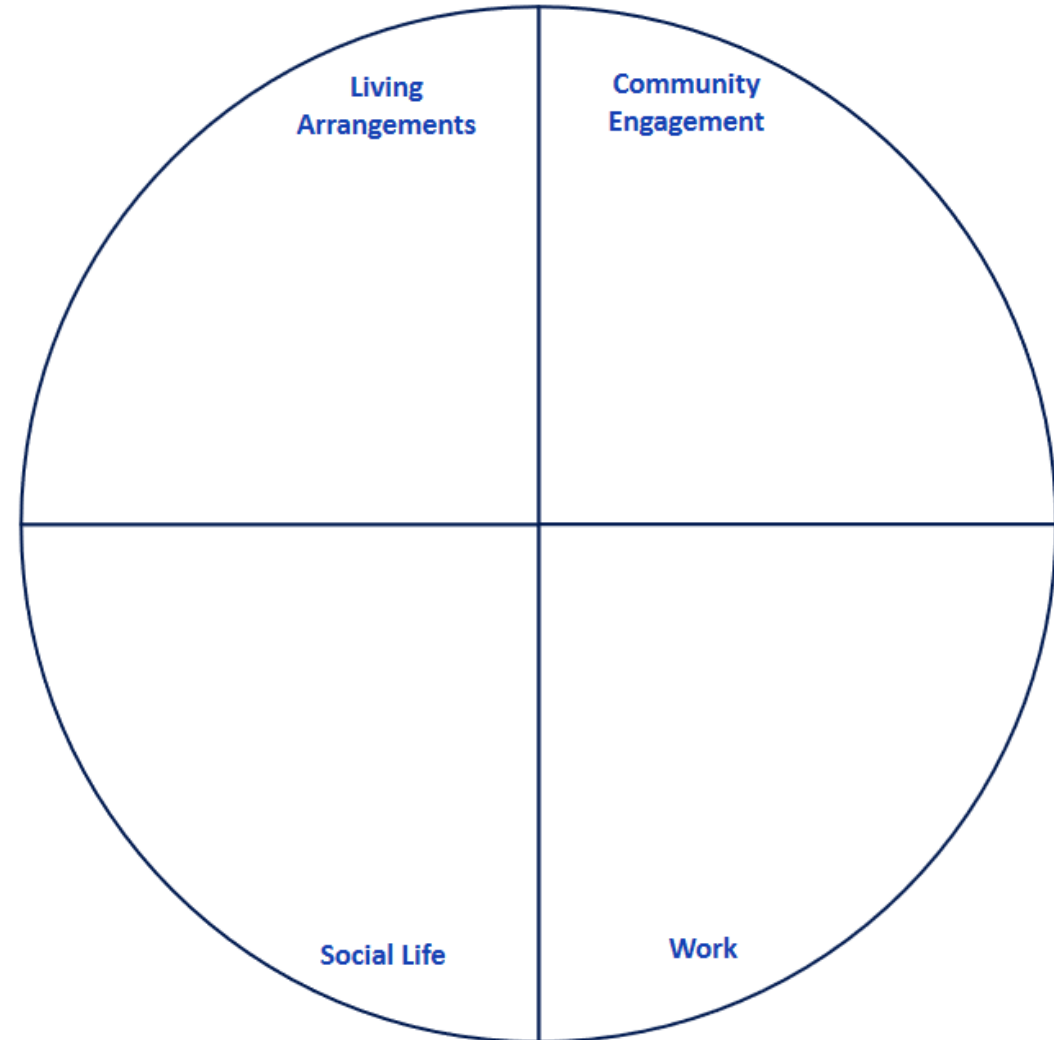
What Is the Impact of Student Participation in the NYSAA?

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



The Power of Expectations



[Watch Video: Invisibilia, National Public Radio \(NPR\)](#)

Reflection and Discussion



1. What was your reaction to hearing the outcomes of this study?
2. How do you think other people's expectations of your child has affected them?

Important Considerations

NYSAA participation impacts the student's:

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



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.

Exiting Credential Options

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential

- Available to students who are assessed using the NYSAA.
- Must document student's skills and strengths and levels of independence in academic, career development, and foundational skills.
- Additional instruction in the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Learning Standards.
- Provides learning experiences both in school and in the community.
- Not a high school diploma by State and federal standards.

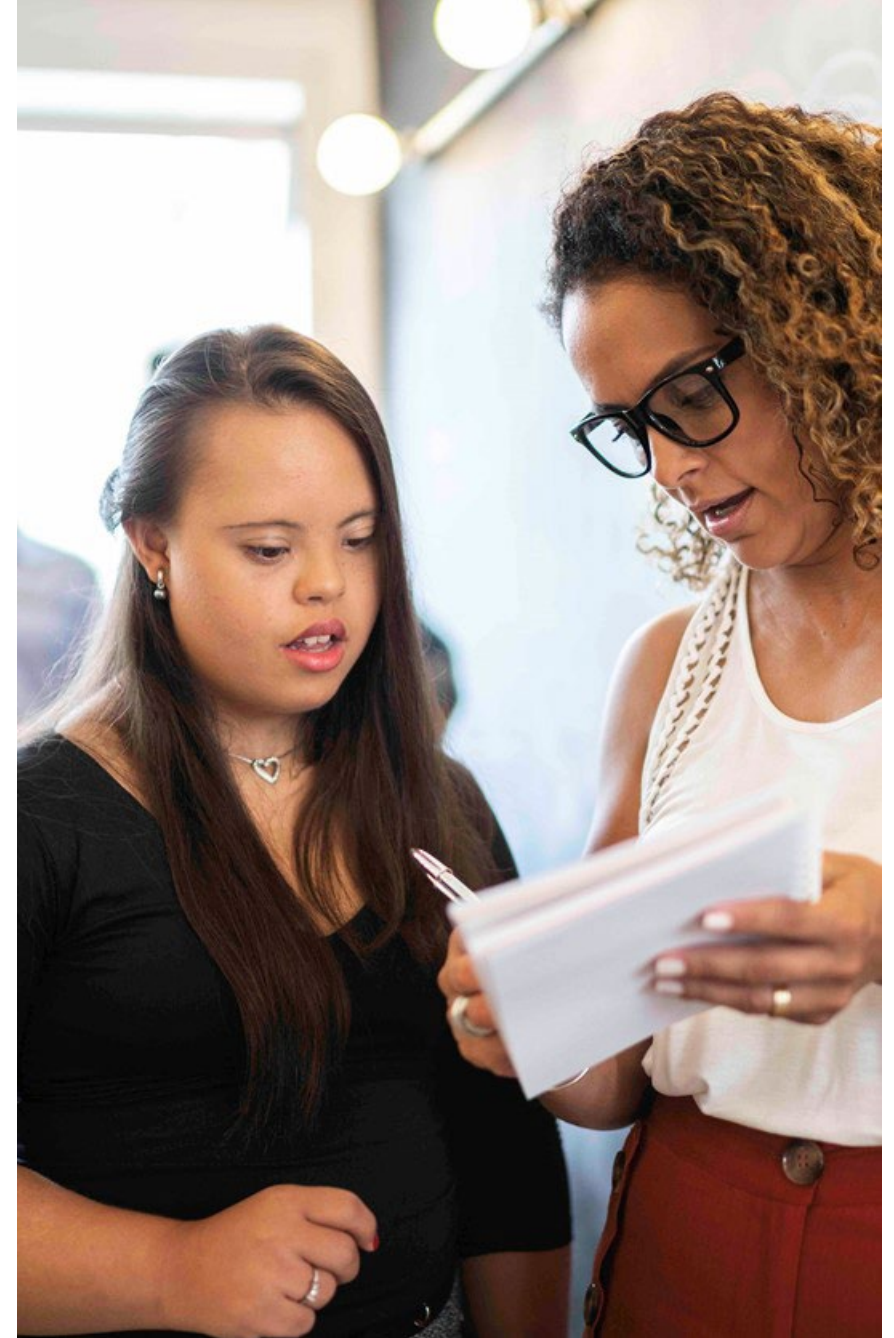
CDOS Commencement Credential

- Cannot be earned by students who participate in the NYSAA testing program in all subject areas.
- 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.

Postsecondary Impact of NYSAA

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
- Jobs where a high school diploma is required



Postsecondary Planning



Postsecondary Education

- Adult and Continuing Education (i.e., through the local Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES))
- Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs (can be explored at [Think College](#))
- On-the-job training
- Skill development through a day habilitation program

Employment

- Full-time or part-time work in the community
- Working with or without the support of a job coach
- Volunteer work in the community

Independent Living

- Live with family
- Live with peers (with or without support)
- Live independently (with or without support)
- Increase independence in a particular skill area (i.e., participate in community activities or travel in the community)

Skills and Achievement Exit Summary



Students exiting with the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential must receive a student exit summary that documents the following:

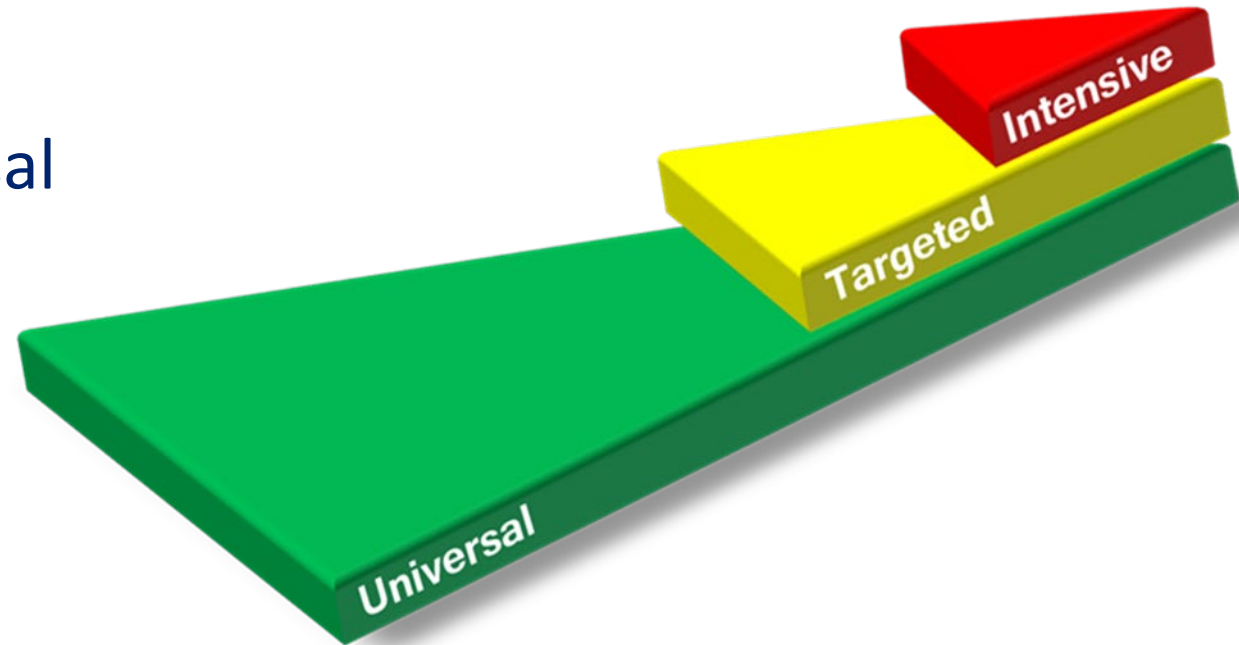
- Academic skills, as measured by the NYSAA
- Student's independent living and interpersonal skills
- Work-based learning (WBL) experiences
- CDOS skill attainment level
- Student strengths, preferences, and interests
- Measurable postsecondary goals
- Recommendations for supports needed
- State/community agency referrals

Additional Supports

Multi-Tiered System of Support

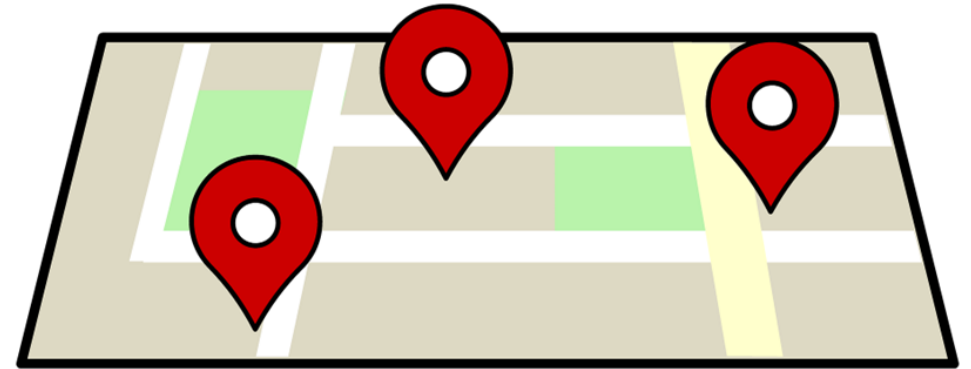


- Provides levels of academic and behavioral support based on each student's needs.
 - Tier 1: Universal
 - Tier 2: Targeted
 - Tier 3: Intensive
- All students should receive universal instruction. Targeted and intensive supports should be provided to students who are still struggling.



Discover Agencies in Your Area

- NYSED OSE has designed a Community Resource Map to connect families and professionals with local agencies and community resources in your area that can help with services from early childhood through the transition to post-school life.
- Can search by agency name, county, or service type.



Let's Review

The NYSAA Recap

- Statewide assessments are given to all students in grades 3–8, and at least once in high school.
- Students can use accommodations on statewide assessments as written in their IEP.
- To participate in statewide assessments through the NYSAA, a student must meet the criteria listed in the NYSED decision-making checklist.
- Students who participate in the NYSAA in high school are not eligible for a diploma; they will exit with the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential.

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential Recap

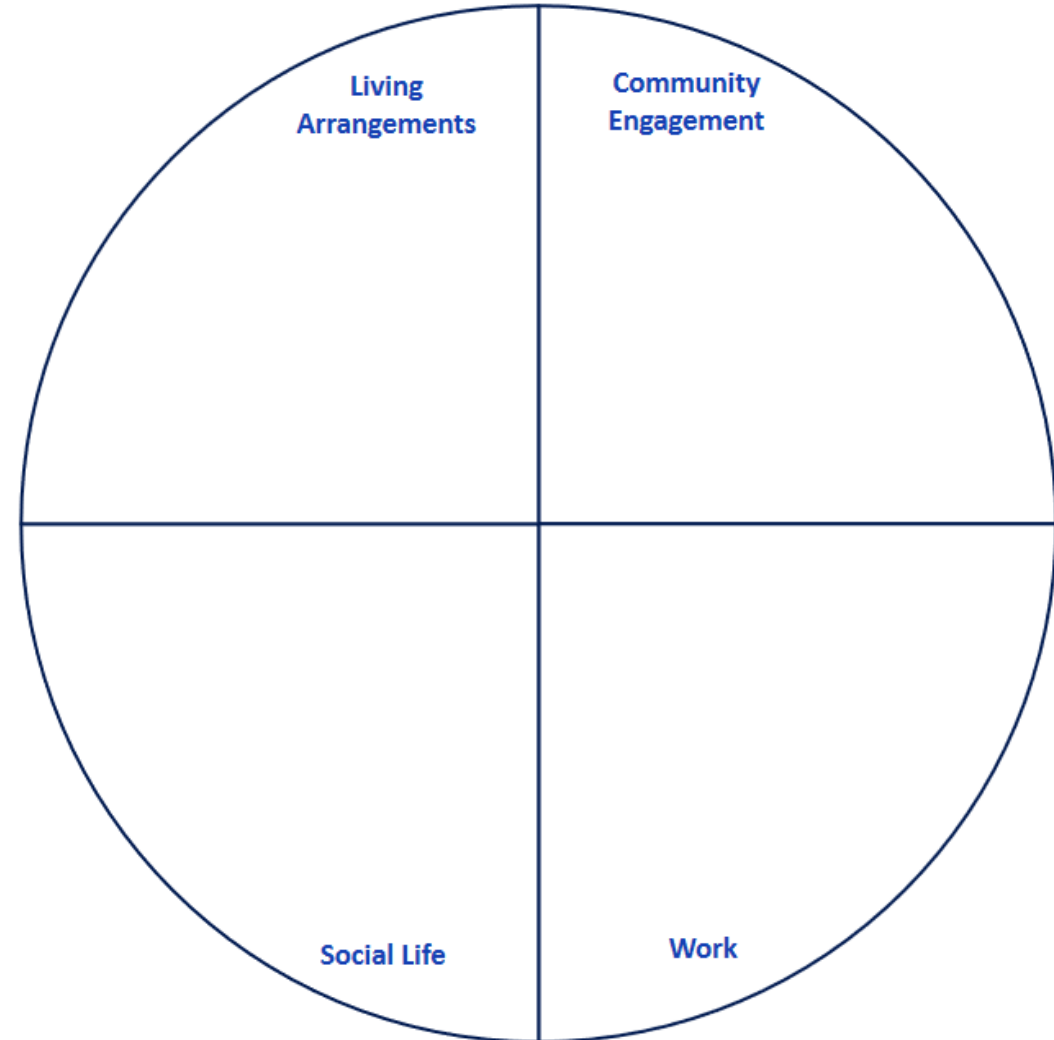
- The credential is intended to:
 - Promote learning experiences that support useful, basic, academic, and career skills.
 - Focus on a course of study and instruction aligned with the CDOS Learning Standards, not the CDOS credential.
 - Document a student's skills and strengths and levels of independence in academic, career development, and foundational 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 think your child meets all the criteria to take the NYSAA?
- Would NYSAA participation impact your child's postsecondary hopes and dreams?



Resources (1 of 2)

- [New York State Alternate Assessment \(NYSAA\)](#)
- [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) Standards](#)
- [Dynamic Learning Maps](#)
- [Exiting Credentials](#)
- [NYS Diploma Requirements](#)
- [NYS Education Department Past Examinations](#)
- [NYS 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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US Department of Education. (2016). *Every student succeeds act: Assessments under title I, part A & title I, part B: Summary of final regulations*.
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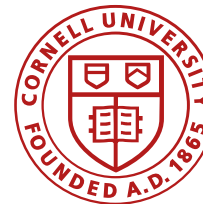
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity



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