What IEP Teams Need to Know...

Passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 has resulted in a greater focus on the accountability of educational services for students with disabilities. The Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) uses the performance of all students on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Grade-Level Assessments, End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments, and the MAP-Alternate (MAP-A) in determining a district’s performance level for district accreditation. The NCLB Act requires states to annually report on the performance of students with disabilities as well as other subgroups of students as measured by the Grade-Level, the MAP-A, and EOC Assessments. The Office of Special Education has identified the improved performance of students with disabilities on the Grade-Level and EOC Assessments as one of its Performance Goals as required by IDEA. This focus on educational achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities is intended to direct attention to the accommodations and supports needed by students with disabilities to access and progress in the general education curriculum. Participation in state and district-wide assessments goes hand in hand with access to the general education curriculum.

1. Why are students with disabilities required to participate in the Grade-Level Assessments, End-of-Course Assessments and district-wide assessments of student achievement?

Participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement is required by a number of state and federal laws and regulations. More importantly, participation in these tests sets the expectation that students with disabilities can achieve the standards that have been established for all students. Their participation should lead to improved teaching and learning, and will also allow local administrators and boards of education to consider the needs of all students when they make instructional decisions and set policy (i.e., curriculum adoptions, staffing patterns, and professional development). It is important to expect students with disabilities to meet the high standards that have been set for all students. This may involve using the accommodations and supports provided by special education. It is also important to remember that the majority of students with disabilities identified under IDEA do not have significant cognitive disabilities which would inhibit their ability to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.
2. **In general, what decisions does the IEP team have to make regarding a student’s involvement in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement?**

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must make decisions about how students with disabilities participate in assessment programs. These decisions include whether a student will participate in the Grade-Level and EOC Assessments or the MAP-A. When making the decision about participation in the Grade-Level or EOC Assessments, the IEP team must also consider the student’s need for accommodations. If the IEP team decides that the Grade-Level or EOC Assessments are not appropriate for an individual student, even with the use of accommodations, then the team can determine the student’s eligibility for the MAP-A.

The IEP must address the same considerations for district-wide assessments of student achievement. If the IEP team determines that a child will not participate in a district-wide assessment (or a part of an assessment) even with accommodations, the IEP must state why the assessment is not appropriate and how the child will be assessed to measure the skill and/or knowledge being assessed by the district-wide assessment.

In making these decisions, the IEP team has the responsibility and authority to determine the individual accommodations that a student needs to ensure his or her participation in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the Department) or local school districts cannot limit the authority of an IEP team in the selection of accommodations.

If a specific accommodation is not on the list of accommodations in the Examiner’s Manual, the accommodation can still be used. However, some accommodations will invalidate a student’s test results for accountability purposes. All assessment accommodation decisions made by the IEP team must be documented in the IEP. See questions 5 and 7 for further information on the documentation of accommodation decisions and accommodations that invalidate test results.

3. **Do Students with disabilities have to take all parts of the Grade-Level or EOC Assessments?**

Students with disabilities must take all of the Grade-Level Assessments or the MAP-A which are developed for their grade level. In Missouri students are required to take the Algebra I, Biology, English II and Government EOC Assessments. If a student’s IEP team determined that MAP-A is the appropriate assessment, the student would not take the EOC Assessments. Students who are participating in the MAP-A will not participate in the other statewide assessments. Students that are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) are also required to take the ACCESS for ELLS English Language Proficiency Assessment.

The MAP-A has been developed to allow all students with disabilities to participate in the Missouri Assessment Program. The MAP-A is a portfolio-based assessment that measures student performance based on alternate achievement standards. The MAP-A is aligned with Missouri’s Show-Me Standards. The MAP-A relies on the involvement of teachers to customize the assessment for each student and is designed only for students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet grade level and eligibility criteria. The students IEP team must agree that the student meets all of the criteria outlined in the Missouri alternate assessment decision making checklist or flowchart. These criteria are listed in Table 1 on page 3. MAP-A Assessments in both Communication Arts and Mathematics are required for eligible children in grades 3-8. In addition, the MAP-A Mathematics Assessment is required at grade 10 and the MAP-A Communication Arts Assessment at grade 11. MAP-A Science Assessment is required for eligible students at grades 5, 8, and 11.
**TABLE 1**

**Missouri Alternate Assessment Decision Making Checklist**

Alternate assessment participation is determined by the student’s IEP team, using the criteria established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. **The IEP team for a student with a disability MUST answer “YES” to ALL of the following eligibility criteria in order for the student to be eligible to participate in the Missouri Alternate Assessment.** Please refer to the Missouri Alternate Assessment Decision Making Guidance Document for additional guidance in determining eligibility for the alternate assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Student has been evaluated and found eligible under IDEA.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student has an identified disability under IDEA.</td>
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<td>- The student has an Individualized Education Plan.</td>
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<td><strong>2. The student demonstrates the most significant cognitive disabilities and limited adaptive skills that may be combined with physical or behavioral limitations.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student has been determined to have cognitive abilities falling within the most significant cognitive disability range as evidenced by standardized assessments <strong>OR</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student has been determined to have cognitive abilities falling within the most significant cognitive disability range as evidenced by pervasive supports. <strong>AND</strong></td>
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<td>- The student demonstrates adaptive skills that are significantly limited compared to same age peers.</td>
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<td><strong>3. The most significant cognitive disability impacts the student’s access to the curriculum and requires specialized instruction.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student requires a highly specialized educational program with intensive supports and modifications/accommodations for access to the general education curriculum <strong>AND</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student requires daily instruction for core academic standards and functional life skills on a substantially different grade level from that of peers with disabilities <strong>AND</strong></td>
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<td>- The student requires intensive instructional strategies which may include, but are not limited to, repeated drill/practice in multiple settings, skills taught in substantially smaller steps than peers with frequent prompts and guidance from adults <strong>AND</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student requires information to be obtained primarily through methods other than reading due to limited reading ability <strong>AND</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student requires alternate methods to express or share oral or written ideas and information.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. The most significant cognitive disability impacts the student’s post-school outcomes.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student’s post-secondary outcomes likely require supported or assisted living.</td>
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<td><strong>5. Additional factors considered for the student.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The student’s inability to participate in the regular assessment is primarily the result of the most significant cognitive disability and NOT excessive absences; visual or auditory disabilities; or social, cultural, language or economic differences.</td>
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4. What assessments must be considered at the district level?

District-wide assessments include those assessments that are part of the district assessment program used to determine levels of student achievement. Districts should provide IEP teams with a list of the district-wide assessments administered in their districts and the grades at which they are administered so the IEP team can make participation decisions. If an IEP team determines that a particular district-wide assessment (or a part of the assessment) is not appropriate for an individual student, the IEP team must document in the IEP why the assessment is not appropriate and how the student will be assessed.

When determining alternative assessment methods for district-wide assessment, the IEP team must ensure that the alternate method of assessment will be consistent with that purpose. In other words, if the purpose of the district-wide assessment is to assess reading ability, the alternative method must also result in an assessment of the student’s reading ability. The MAP-A is not an alternate to a district-wide assessment of student achievement.

5. What do IEP teams need to know in order to make effective decisions about a student’s participation and accommodations?

It is important that IEP teams know how the Grade-Level and EOC Assessments have been constructed and what skills students will need to take the tests. Grade-Level Assessments consist of a combination of multiple choice, constructed response and performance event questions. Multiple choice questions require students to “bubble in” their answers. The constructed response and performance event items require written responses. EOC Assessments are all multiple choice.

Being familiar with the nature of the assessment items on the Grade-Level, EOC and district-wide assessments will assist teams in making decisions about accommodations. DESE has a number of “released” assessment questions that IEP teams can review to assist them in making these decisions. More information can also be found at the following DESE web site:

- [http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/Released_Items/riarchiveindex.html](http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/Released_Items/riarchiveindex.html)
- [http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/eoc_resources.html#QA](http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/eoc_resources.html#QA)

Each IEP team must determine what accommodations, if any, the student needs in order to participate in the state or district-wide assessments. The purpose of an accommodation is to “level the playing field” so that a student with a disability can demonstrate what he knows and is able to do, but not provide the student with an advantage.

Typically, the accommodations needed by students with disabilities in a testing environment are also used by students in their instructional program. The accommodation cannot be used solely on the Grade-Level or EOC Assessments, but must be needed in order for the student to learn in his/her school environment or to show what he/she has learned. For example, the test can be scribed for a student who requires scribing in the everyday school environment to show the content he/she has learned. However, scribing is not an appropriate accommodation for spelling or for poor handwriting, as students without disabilities also have poor handwriting and make spelling errors. The scoring rubrics do not penalize students for spelling errors or poor handwriting. A second example would be reading the mathematics portion of the test to a student. It would be appropriate to consider reading the mathematics assessment to a student, depending on his/her individual reading difficulties, but would not be fitting to read the mathematics assessment to a student who is capable of reading the material, but may be inattentive. IEP teams need to be sensitive to the use of accommodations and involve students, especially older students, in making accommodation decisions. Districts need to make every attempt to administer accommodations in a sensitive and discreet manner.

Accommodations determined necessary by the IEP team must be documented in the IEP. The Department has
identified a list of common accommodations that might be needed by students with disabilities. Table 2 (see page 8) lists accommodations currently allowed on the Grade-Level and EOC Assessments. IEP teams are encouraged to review and understand the accommodations and notes in Table 2, as many changes have been made to the accommodations list. If an IEP team determines the need for an accommodation that is not on this list, the accommodation must be identified in the IEP and coded as “other.” Any accommodation used should allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do. A student with an IEP that includes accommodations may use those accommodations under standard conditions. A student is neither required to use all of his or her accommodations, nor can the student be denied the use of any of his or her accommodations during testing.

### 6. What scores are generated by the Grade-Level and EOC Assessments and what impact does the use of accommodations have on these scores?

The Grade-Level/EOC Assessments generate several scores. Two are especially important to IEP team decision-making:

1. Achievement Level score
2. National Percentile score

There are 4 achievement levels for the Grade-Level and EOC Assessments and the MAP-A:

1. Below Basic
2. Basic
3. Proficient
4. Advanced

### Grade-Level Assessments

The Grade-Level Assessments generates a score that is referred to as a National Percentile (NP). This score is based solely upon the student’s performance on the TerraNova™ Survey. This NP score can be used to compare an individual student’s performance with other students in the nation. However, in order to make such a comparison, the student must take this portion of the assessment under the conditions in which the TerraNova™ Survey was normed. For example, this portion of the assessment is timed. In order for a student to generate an NP that can be compared with other students, extended time cannot be used as an accommodation. However, if the IEP team determines that extended time is a needed accommodation for this portion of the test, then that extended time is permitted. The IEP team members need to understand that the NP generated under these conditions cannot be interpreted as or compared with an NP generated under standard conditions. NOTE: Using extended time for the TerraNova™ Survey does NOT invalidate the assessment.

The district has the same obligation to identify those accommodations that will impact a student’s score or results on district-wide assessments. IEP teams need to understand the implications of their decisions and how those decisions might impact individual students when considering accommodations for district-wide assessments.
EOC
The Department uses the students’ correct responses and points earned to derive the EOC scale score. A student receives an EOC scale score when he or she enters into any content assessment. EOC scale scores range in value from 100 to 250. The EOC scale score determines the student’s achievement level. For all content areas, a scale score of 200 to 224 is considered Proficient and a scale score of 225 and above is considered Advanced.

MAP-A
The achievement level score for students who take the MAP-A are integrated into the building and district scores for all students to determine Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO).

Student performance can be reported in terms of four performance/achievement levels that describe a pathway to proficiency. Each achievement level represents standards of performance for each assessed content area. Achievement level scores describe what students can do in terms of the content and skills assessed. These scores are a means of comparing test results with standards of academic performance.

7. **What accommodations may invalidate a student’s response?**

The following table lists several reasons why a Grade-Level or EOC Assessment will be invalidated. Some invalidation reasons apply specifically to Communication Arts (English I or English II). Other invalidation reasons affect all content areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for invalidating the test:</th>
<th>Then...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an Examiner reads any part of the Communication Arts test to a student...</td>
<td>bubble in “04 Oral Reading” Results in Lowest Obtainable Scale Score (LOSS). This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an Examiner signs any part of the Communication Arts test to a student...</td>
<td>bubble in “05 Signing of assessment” Results in LOSS. This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an Examiner paraphrases the test questions in any content area...</td>
<td>bubble in “06 Paraphrasing” Invalidates all tests. This code applies to all content assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an Examiner reads any part of the Communication Arts test to a student in the student’s native language...</td>
<td>bubble in “11 Oral reading in native language” Results in LOSS. This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a student uses a bilingual dictionary for any part of the Communication Arts test...</td>
<td>bubble in “43 Use of bilingual ” Results in LOSS. This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Can teachers preview the Grade-Level and EOC Assessment prior to testing?

No. Only translators are allowed to preview Grade-Level and EOC Assessments. Special Education teachers may NOT preview those assessments for any reason. For the Grade-Level or EOC Assessments, Special Education teachers should not preselect items for an IEP student to attempt. Students with disabilities should be given the opportunity to fully participate and demonstrate skills on these assessments. Current statistical measurement requires that any unanswered test item be automatically scored as incorrect. When a student enters into the test, they will receive the score they achieved or the Lowest Obtainable Scale Score (LOSS). The student’s score will never be a zero or any score below the LOSS. The LOSS is an established score that indicates the level expected for a student who guesses on every item. The LOSS is unique to each grade and content area. If a student does not enter into a Grade-Level or EOC Assessment, then the student will receive a Level Not Determined (LND) for that assessment.

9. Can parents request that their child not participate in the Grade-Level, MAP-A, and the EOC Assessments? What about nonparticipation requests by parents for district-wide assessments?

All students enrolled in a public or charter school are expected to participate in the state’s assessment program. Missouri does not have a procedure for a parent to request that their child be exempt from the MAP Grade-Level, MAP-A, and the EOC Assessments.

If the district has a policy and procedure for parents to request that their children not participate in district-wide assessments, then that same procedure must be available to parents of children with disabilities. If no policy exists for parents to request nonparticipation for nondisabled students, then districts may not have a policy for students with disabilities.

10. Is out-of-grade-level testing allowed in the MAP?

No. In order to provide coherent information about school accountability, student achievement, and attainment of state standards at specific grade levels, students must be assessed in the grade level to which they are assigned.
### Accommodations for ELL/Students with Disabilities

- **End-of-Course Accommodations for ELL/Students with Disabilities**

- **Grade-Level Accommodations for ELL and Students with Disabilities**

### Missouri Assessment Program Guidance

- **Missouri Assessment Program Website**

- **Missouri Alternate Assessment Decision Making Flow Chart**

- **Missouri Assessment Decision Making Guidance Document**
11. Are students who are receiving homebound services, enrolled in vocational schools or juvenile detention centers, or placed in approved private agencies OR OTHER out-of-district placements by local districts required to take THE GRADE-Level and EOC Assessments and district-wide assessments? What about homeschooled students?

All students enrolled in the district must be tested. This includes homebound students and students receiving services in off-site locations, e.g. other districts, private agencies, and correctional facilities. Special procedures must be used to test these students and may include testing off-campus. The district must follow the appropriate procedures for the Grade-Level and the EOC Assessments. All Test Examiners must be trained, and test security must be upheld. If any of these students do not take the Grade-Level Assessment, they should be recorded as absent, and the district will receive the LND for the student. If a student does not take a required EOC Assessment before graduation, the district will receive the LND for that student. Do not mark a student absent for an EOC Assessment until the final opportunity for taking the assessment before graduation occurs.

Home-schooled students fall into a different category. Honoring a parental request for a home-schooled student to be included in the Grade-Level or EOC Assessments is a local district decision.