



# A Parent Guide to the Idaho Alternate Assessment

## WHAT IS THE IDAA?

The Idaho Alternate Assessment (IDAA) is a statewide assessment that tests student's knowledge and skills on the Idaho Extended Content Standards in English/Language Arts, Math, and Science. A student who takes the IDAA has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is aligned with these Standards. The IDAA is for only a small number of students with the most significant cognitive impairments, about 1% of all students tested. Students who take the IDAA do not take the Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT).

## WHAT IS A SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT?

Significant cognitive impairment is not a disability category for special education eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is a term only used when talking about the IDAA. Students with significant cognitive impairments have very complex needs. Their adaptive skills and intellectual functioning are well below average.

## IS THE IDAA RIGHT FOR MY CHILD?

A student's IEP team, including parents, decides if the student has a significant cognitive impairment and qualifies to take the IDAA. The IEP team must respond, "Yes," to all four of the participation criteria listed below before a student qualifies to take the IDAA.

1. The student has a significant cognitive impairment.
2. The student is receiving academic instruction that is aligned with the Idaho Extended Content Standards.
3. The student's course of study is primarily adaptive skills oriented, typically not measured by state or district assessments.
4. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.

The IEP team cannot place a student on the IDAA based on any of the 14 reasons listed below.

1. Having a disability
2. Poor attendance or extended absences
3. Native language/social, cultural, or economic differences
4. Expected poor performance or past basic/below basic performance on the regular education assessment
5. Academic and other services student receives
6. Educational environment or instructional setting
7. Percent of time receiving special education services
8. English Learner (EL) status
9. Low reading level/achievement level
10. Anticipated disruptive behavior
11. Impact of student scores on the accountability system
12. Administrative decision
13. Anticipated emotional distress
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in the assessment.

## **WHEN DO QUALIFYING STUDENTS TAKE THE IDAA?**

Qualifying students take the online IDAAs in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math during the same spring testing window and in the same grades as their peers who take the ISAT. Starting in spring 2021, students who qualify will take the online IDAA in Science during the same time and in the same grades as their peers taking the Science ISAT.

## **HOW DO STUDENTS TAKE THE IDAA?**

Students take the online IDAA one-on-one with a teacher who is familiar with how they communicate. Students listen to human voice recordings of test items, and then use their personal mode of communication to choose an answer. If a student cannot work a computer mouse or otherwise click an answer on their own, then the teacher can click the student's answer. Below are two examples of when a teacher might click an answer for a student.

- If a student uses eye-gaze to communicate, the teacher would click the answer choice the student indicated by looking at it.
- If a student likes to click the computer mouse all over the screen, the teacher can control the mouse and click the answer for the student.

The IDAAs in ELA and Math are computer adaptive tests (CAT) that have items at three levels of difficulty: low, moderate, and high. The computer presents test items based on how students answer. If the student answers an item correctly, the next item will be at the same or higher level. If the student answers incorrectly, the next item will be at the same or lower level.

If the student cannot communicate a choice on all of the first four test items, the teacher uses the *Early Stopping Rule*. This means that the student does not have to take the rest of the test. The student is counted as having taken the test.

## **I AM WORRIED THAT THE IDAA WILL BE TOO LONG FOR MY CHILD.**

The IDAAs in ELA and Math have 50 questions. Students do not have to take the IDAA at one time or in one day. Students can take as many breaks as they need to work through the entire test, even if it takes a few days.

## **WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IDAA?**

- Visit the [Special Education and Alternate Assessment webpage](https://www.sde.idaho.gov/assessment/sped/) (<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/assessment/sped/>) on the [State Department of Education website](http://sde.idaho.gov) (sde.idaho.gov) to learn more about the IDAA.
- You can download the [IDAA Participation Worksheet](#) from the [IDAA Participation Criteria Training webpage](#) (<https://idahotc.com/Resources/View/ID/578>).

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### **For Questions Contact**

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