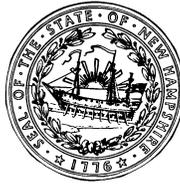


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Deputy Commissioner of Education
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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, N.H. 03301
FAX 603-271-1953
Citizens Services Line 1-800-339-9900

January 25, 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian:

During the 2009-2010 school year, your child participated in the *New Hampshire Alternate Assessment* (NH-Alt). The report sent with this letter shows the assessment scores your child received. If your child was in grade 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 10 in 2009-2010, then this report will show you the progress they made in learning reading and mathematics skills during the year. If your child was in grade 4, 7 or 10, then you will *also* see a score showing progress they made in learning writing skills. Lastly, if your child was in grade 4, 8 or 11, you will see a score showing progress they made in learning science skills.

We are sending this letter along with your child's report and a few extra pages called: General Information for Parents, Frequently Asked Questions, and Guide to Interpreting Reports. I hope these materials will give you the information you need to understand and make sense of your child's NH Alternate Assessment Student Report.

If, when you have had a chance to look over this packet, you discover that you still have questions, please call me at the office. I welcome your call. My number is: (603) 271-7383.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gaye V. Fedorchak".

Gaye Fedorchak
NH State Alternate Assessment Supervisor
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

gfedorchak@ed.state.nh.us
(603)-271-7383

**NH Alternate Assessment:
General Information for Parents & Educators**



General Background Information for Parents & Educators About the New Hampshire Alternate Assessment

The participation of all students in large-scale assessment programs, such as the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and New Hampshire Alternate Assessment (NH-Alt), is important to ensure that all students are provided an opportunity to learn the academic skills identified as being most critical for New Hampshire students. These skills are described in the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks.

Federal and state education laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA '04), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and NH RSA 193:C require that students with disabilities have access to the general academic curriculum, with appropriate accommodations and supports, and that they be assessed on the same general curriculum standards as all other students. *In addition*, for the small number of students who cannot participate in the paper and pencil general state assessment based on grade-level achievement standards- even with the best instruction and with accommodations, New Hampshire provides a statewide Alternate Assessment, based on *alternate* academic achievement standards. These alternate achievement standards are designed to meet the needs of students with severe cognitive disabilities. The purpose of this document is to answer some common general questions about the New Hampshire Alternate Assessment.

Who participates in the NH Alternate Assessment?

Only those students who have the *most severe cognitive disabilities and are unable to demonstrate achievement of grade-level academic standards, even with the best instruction and with appropriate accommodations*, may participate in the Alternate Assessment, which is based on *alternate achievement standards*. In New Hampshire, alternately assessed students, with teacher assistance, produce portfolios that include samples of student work and data showing the progress the student has made on academic content skills in a given school year. Four criteria must be met for a student to qualify for participation. The student must:

1. Be currently enrolled in grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, or 11, *and-*
2. Have an active IEP, *and-*
3. There must be evidence that the student's demonstrated cognitive disability and adaptive behavior skills *prevent him or her* from demonstrating achievement of the grade-level proficiency standards described in the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks, *even with best instruction and with appropriate accommodations, and-*
4. There must be historical data (current and longitudinal across multiple settings) that confirm the student criteria listed above.

✦ What are characteristics of students appropriately served in the New Hampshire Alternate Assessment?

The following characteristics occur *in combination*—not in isolation:

- **Limited Communication:** The student may have very limited expressive vocabulary and language skills, or may be considered to be non-verbal. The student may use simple language structures to communicate and seldom acquires new communication skills through incidental learning. Most NH-Alt students do talk and have some limited, *very basic* writing skills, but each of these students shows a *substantial delay* in the development of language skills relative to the skills of same-aged peers. (Note: This does not include any student with “limited communication” who has no effective communication system in place or under active development.);
and
- **Very Low Levels of Academic Achievement:** Performance in the subject matters of reading, writing, and mathematics is significantly below that of same-aged peers (e.g., *performance-level expectations must be modified to a reduced or simpler level of performance from the curriculum standards set for general education or “typical” New Hampshire students*). When typical general education peers are reading paragraphs and answering questions, the Alternate Assessment student might be matching objects, pictures, or symbols, and when typical peers are writing and solving equations, the Alternate Assessment student might be using objects, symbol systems, or pictures to show more basic connections. (Note: This does not include students working just 1 or 2 grade levels below grade-level, or any student who has not had full opportunity to benefit from empirically sound instructional intervention. This also does not include any student who has, as documented in IEP team meeting notes, had a cognitive disability “ruled out” in order to identify the student as a child having a specific learning disability and not mental retardation.);
and
- **Highly Specialized Instruction:** The student generally requires systematic instruction with tasks broken into small steps. In addition, the student needs deliberate instruction to apply learned skills across multiple settings (e.g., school, home, work, and other settings);
and
- **Ample Supports:** The student requires individualized instructional, technological, or interpersonal supports to make progress in learning. The student *requires accommodations* to demonstrate proficiency of even the *modified* performance expectation levels described above, such as modeling and repeated demonstration, physical hand-over-hand guidance, specially designed prompting procedures, and alternate or augmented communication systems.

✦ Why are students with disabilities required to participate in the state Assessment Program?

The full participation of students with disabilities in state and district Assessment Programs is required by federal and state laws. This is to ensure that each student has access to and progresses in the state’s general academic curriculum to the maximum extent possible. Schools should use the assessment results to direct instructional attention and resources to all students who are assessed. This will lead to improved student

learning. One goal of holding schools accountable for every student's performance is to increase the academic achievement of students with disabilities. The information collected will also help each Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to assess and instruct each student appropriately.

✦ **I understand that all students must participate in statewide assessment, but who determines how a student *with disabilities* will participate in the state Assessment Program?**

The student's IEP team (which includes the parent or guardian) decides how (not if) the student will participate in the state Assessment Program. The team must come to agreement and document this decision in the IEP. The state has developed participation guidelines to support and inform IEP teams as they make participation decisions. Under IDEA '04, all students with disabilities must participate in state and district general assessments in one of the 3 ways: 1. NECAP general grade level assessment with no accommodations, 2. NECAP general grade level assessment with accommodations, or 3. NH Alternate Assessment based on *alternate* standards. The state publishes participation guidelines that offer information regarding who must participate in statewide assessment and under what circumstances students may be exempted from participation. Exemptions are extremely limited. *Schools must apply for any exemption formally and in writing.* These applications are reviewed at both the district and state levels. Examples include serious medical emergency (but not chronic medical fragility), or enrolling in NH from another state after the test window has closed. Limited exemptions from state reading and writing assessments are also available for students who have been in US schools for less than one year. These participation guidelines can be found on the New Hampshire Department of Education Web site: www.ed.state.nh.us/assessment under the "NECAP" heading. Once on this page, Choose: "Fall (current year) Materials and Information".

✦ **How will students with significant disabilities, who are unable to participate in the general state Assessment Program, be assessed?**

The New Hampshire Department of Education has developed a portfolio-based Alternate Assessment. The Department of Education requires schools to measure student progress in specified academic standards across the school year, and the IEP team members determine which targeted academic skills will be sampled from classroom work to demonstrate the student's knowledge and growth in these skills. Each NH-Alt Portfolio includes classroom data on student progress and several samples of actual student work in reading, mathematics and, in selected grades, writing and science. Student portfolios also contain documents showing opportunities for students to make choices and think about their own learning. This part of the portfolio is called evidence of "Self-Determination". All student work samples and data are based on identified curriculum standards within the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks. The use of a classroom-based portfolio approach allows the team to match the requirements of the assessment with the instructional needs of the student. Even students with the most limited skills can successfully participate in this process.

✦ ***What about students who are medically fragile or just miss several days of the year from school?***

Students who are medically fragile or miss several days of school and are *qualified* to participate in the alternate portfolio assessment should participate when present in school or, if home-based instruction is put in place, the teacher will want to continue to collect data in the home. Any extensive time out from school should be noted on the student's progress chart or graph. *Any student who receives public instruction must participate in statewide assessment of academic progress regardless of academic placement.*

There are some very limited situations where students with medical emergencies *above and beyond chronic medical fragility* may receive special consideration and be exempted from participation. *Schools must apply for this exemption formally and in writing.* Students with long term intensive medical needs or who are medically “fragile” are not automatically considered for medical exemption. The rule of thumb is that if a child can receive educational services and instruction, assessment can also occur.

✦ **Who administers the New Hampshire Alternate Assessment?**

A complete picture of the student’s academic achievement will be assembled during each year of participation. To accomplish this, the New Hampshire Alternate Assessment will be administered by all the student’s teachers working in close collaboration (general and special educators together), with input from other specialists and from parents. Parental review is a required part of the portfolio. In the absence of parental review of the final portfolio, schools must document all attempts to obtain it. This documentation must be noted in the portfolio and kept in the school records. (Initial parental permission for participation in the NH-Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards is provided by the parents at an earlier stage, prior to the beginning of the portfolio, when they sign the IEP covering this school year period.)

✦ **What should IEP teams do to prepare for Alternate Assessment?**

- Ensure that *all* students with disabilities have meaningful access to the general academic curriculum.
- Ensure that all special education teachers and IEP team members review and understand the NH Curriculum Frameworks and the critical functions (or skills) that lie at the heart of each academic content standard.
- Select targeted skills that represent important learning goals for the student. (These must be linked in meaningful and age appropriate ways to the curriculum standards in the required content areas.)

✦ **What is the parent/guardian role in the Alternate Assessment process?**

Parents and/or guardians, as members of the IEP team, are involved in the decision to include the student in Alternate Assessment. In addition to their involvement with the IEP team, there are other responsibilities of the parent and/or guardian. These include:

- Reviewing and responding to portfolio-related consent forms prior to the beginning of the portfolio process, and
- Reviewing the completed student portfolio and signing the Parent/Guardian Portfolio Review Statement.

- On this Portfolio Review Statement, parents/guardians have the chance to express their opinion about the portfolio. Parent comments are welcomed and valued. They are important in helping to improve our assessment processes.

✦ **How can teachers and administrators prepare to implement the Alternate Assessment?**

Each year, the New Hampshire Department of Education publishes an Educators' Manual for Alternate Assessment. This manual provides the basis for extensive training sessions each year with educators who are involved in developing student portfolios. Teachers from all content areas, including general education teachers, should receive this information. Training on how to develop high-quality portfolios and implement the process is provided. It is recommended that teachers attend all offered training sessions. The NH Department of Education employs two full-time NH-Alternate Assessment Field Coaches who specialize in training educators to conduct the NH Alternate Assessment. They conduct both group and, by appointment, smaller onsite training sessions.

Teachers and administrators should also ensure that students with disabilities have access to the *same resources and opportunities* for learning that are afforded to students without disabilities. Including students in classroom activities that specifically address the NH Curriculum Frameworks is crucial if they are to develop the required skills to meet these challenging standards and be prepared for the Alternate Assessment. IEP teams should work diligently to provide all students with an effective means of communication and access to assistive technology.

✦ **The Central Importance of Identifying & Supporting Student Communication Needs:**

There is no more limiting experience in school, than not being able to express one's own needs, wants, and ideas. Communication exchange is the way we all learn. It represents the way students take information into themselves, and the way students express themselves to others and, thereby, receive important feedback from the world. Without an effective means of communicating, students cannot meet the most basic human needs, and cannot grow in academic skills. Students who participate in alternate assessment *all* have limited communication skills and *many of these students require assistive or augmented communication systems of support* in order to engage and genuinely participate in school activities. Every student can communicate. The question is: how? *Teams must develop deep understanding of the communication needs of every alternately assessed student, and provide the resources required to support those needs.* This is the **MOST** important way alternately assessed students are supported in their public school experience.

✦ **How will the Alternate Assessment results be reported and used?**

The results of Alternate Assessment on each student with disabilities will be reported confidentially to parents and the student's teachers. In addition, public group-based school, district, and state assessment summary reports are posted each year on the NH Department of Education website at: www.ed.state.nh.us (on the bottom left of the screen, choose: *NH School District Profiles*). Individual student results should be used to inform student instruction and related planning. Summary level results provide information on how well our programs are meeting the needs of this student population.

Every parent and every school will also receive this Guide to Interpreting Reports that explains how all student portfolios were evaluated and scored.

✦ **How can I get more information about the NH Alternate Assessment?**

More information about the New Hampshire Alternate Assessment is available from the New Hampshire Department of Education and from Measured Progress. In addition, more information can be found on the Web pages of both the Department of Education and Measured Progress. Personal contact information is given below.

General inquiries may be directed to:

Susan Morgan, NHDoe, Program Specialist, at:
smorgan@ed.state.nh.us, (603) 271- 3719

Policy and other inquiries may be directed to:

Gaye Fedorchak, NHDoe,
Supervisor of NH Alternate Assessment and Access Support, at:
gfedorchak@ed.state.nh.us, (603) 271-7383

Online Information Available:

Here is the web site for the NH Alternate Assessment:

*<http://www.ed.state.nh.us/assessment>
(Once there, choose: NH-Alternate Assessment)*

Frequently Asked Questions



Other Frequently Asked Questions

These frequently asked questions were compiled from the 2009-2010 NH Alternate Assessment training sessions and from questions received.

NH-Alt During 2009-2010 for Alternately Assessed Students in Grade:	What content areas are assessed?			
	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
2	Yes	Yes	-	-
3	Yes	Yes	-	-
4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes	-	-
6	Yes	Yes		
7	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
8	-	-	-	Yes
10	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
11	-	-	-	Yes

 ***How do I get a copy of the 2009-2010 NH Alternate Assessment Educators' Manual and/or Portfolio Template?***

In any of three ways:

1. All participants in September NH-Alt Training Workshops receive a printed copy.
2. Copies of the *New Hampshire Alternate Assessment Educators' Manual* and/or the Portfolio Template may be immediately printed as a Word document from the following Web location: <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/assessment>. (Once there, choose: NH Alternate Assessment and look for *2009-2010 Materials and Information*.)
3. Copies of the Educators' Manual (that are printed, tabbed, and spiral-bound) and copies of the Portfolio Template (that are printed, 3-hole punched and shrink-wrapped) can be ordered from Measured Progress and will be sent free of charge. To order, call: Adriane Bredenberg at Measured Progress (1-800-431-8901 x 2328).

✦ ***Who can I call to ask questions about NH Alternate Assessment?***

The NHDoe employs two full-time Alternate Assessment Coaches who specialize in training educators to conduct the NH Alternate Assessment.

Portfolio development questions may be directed to:

Marie Cote, Alternate Assessment Coach, at:
marie.cote@comcast.net, (603) 689-8777 and

Allyson Vignola, Alternate Assessment Coach, at:
allysonvignola@hotmail.com, (603) 848-4850

General inquiries may be directed to:

Susan Morgan, NHDoe, Program Specialist, at:
smorgan@ed.state.nh.us, (603) 271- 3719

Policy and other inquiries may be directed to:

Gaye Fedorchak, NHDoe,
Supervisor of NH Alternate Assessment and Access Support, at:
gfedorchak@ed.state.nh.us, (603) 271-7383

✦ ***What is the 1% rule?***

Under the federal law known as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*, no more than 1% of the scores from statewide assessment in a school district are allowed to *show proficiency* in an assessment based on alternate achievement standards. The remaining statewide assessment scores *in the proficient or above range*, must be earned by students who take a general assessment based on *grade-level* academic standards.

For example, if a district had a total of 500 students and *all 500 hundred students* participated in the NH Alternate Assessment, the state would be allowed to *credit* only 5 students from this district as earning scores of “proficient” through the NH Alternate Assessment. The remaining 495 students, no matter what their scores, would not be credited as “proficient” for purposes of district accountability for student results. Students and parents would receive individual scores as earned, but the school and district would not be credited with teaching students grade-level material. This is one of the fundamental requirements of the NCLB law. The reason for this rule is to ensure that the vast majority of students are supported by their schools to learn and to show *grade-level proficiency* of academic content skills. NH Alternate Assessment does not assess the achievement of grade-level content skills. Instead, NH Alternate Assessment assesses content skills that are *linked to* grade-level academic activities but are modified to a lower level of depth, complexity, and breadth.

✦ ***What happens when a student moves into the school district partway through the school year?***

Under federal and state law, all students (with very rare exceptions) in *all* school districts *must participate* in statewide assessment. This includes new students who move into the district during the school year. As with any new student, the previous (or sending) school district should send any files and grade reports (both current and previous) to the new district. If the student is in the process of participating in the NH Alternate Assessment, the sending NH district should send any of the portfolio portions thus far completed in the current school year. On a student's chart or graph within the portfolio, the teacher may note the dates of the transition and from where the student arrived. Students moving in-state from one NH public school district to another must complete and submit a portfolio.

- *Note: Data on all alternate assessment students enrolled in your district at any time during the school year will be collected online during NH Alternate Assessment Registration between February and March. This same data will be updated just before statewide portfolio pick up in May. Students moving in and out may be documented in this way for accountability. Please note: Registration for participation is very important and verifies that a student meets the qualifying criteria. Portfolio assessments submitted for students who are not registered for participation in Alternate Assessment as certified by the district superintendent will not be accepted or scored, but will be returned to the sender.*

Special Case –

Entry to a NH Public School District from Placements Not Accountable for Providing Instruction in NH Curriculum:

Below is outlined the procedure for arrival in NH public schools of an alternately assessed student from these *three places*:

1. another state

2. a home-school program
3. a privately *funded* placement in a *private* school

NH-Alt eligible students from these 3 categories, who arrive, for any reason, in a NH District ***on or before Feb. 1st must complete a NH-Alt portfolio.*** These students will be exposed to NH curriculum and instruction for a sufficient time to conduct this assessment. However, students in the 3 categories listed above, who ***arrive after Feb. 1st do NOT have to complete*** a NH Alternate Assessment during that school year. These students are treated, under NCLB/AYP accountability, as “NT/Approved” (Not Tested for Approved Reasons),

- *Note: Data on all alternate assessment students enrolled in your district at any time during the school year will be collected online during NH Alternate Assessment Registration between February and March. This same data will be updated just before statewide portfolio pick up in May. Students moving in and out may be documented in this way for accountability.*

✦ ***Transitioning Students between NH Alternate and NECAP General Assessment:***

A chart to guide teams in identifying how to transition students from one assessment system into the other is available online at: www.ed.state.nh.us/assessment. On this page, choose: NECAP or NH-Alternate Assessment, and on this page, choose: Fall (current year) Materials and Information.

✦ ***Are there times at which a student must take BOTH the NECAP and the alternate portfolio assessment?***

Yes, but only one, as follows: In the fall, when a NH public student is transitioning from NH general assessment(NECAP) into NH Alternate Assessment, but this was not decided until after Feb. 1 in the prior school year, then the student must do both fall NECAP and NH-Alt .

*In the fall, if a NH publicly enrolled student was **NOT identified prior to Feb. 1 of the prior school year, as an alternately assessed student**, then the student is expected to participate in the NH general assessment (NECAP) in October, but this would not extend to the Science test given in May. If the student is transitioning into the NH-Alt, then the student will be assessed in Science through the year-long NH-Alt portfolio process. Also in the fall, the school would begin the NH Alternate Assessment as well for all content areas assessed in that grade in NH-Alt. This will achieve the assessment transition from general to alternate assessment for the student. The student will not have to take the general assessment again after that first transition year.*

✦ ***If a student completed a NH Alternate Assessment portfolio during the last school year but the team decides that the student can participate within the general assessment this year, what score will “stand” as the student’s score?***

The NH Alternate Assessment score will stand as the student’s score. Once an alternate assessment score is generated for a student, then the NECAP assessment can only be taken as a practice experience. If NECAP is taken as a practice test in this way, then the school should complete all parts of the NECAP Student Response Booklet exactly the same way they do so for students who normally participate in NECAP assessment. Measured Progress will identify students who have a prior NH-Alt score through a match of student identification numbers across systems. This will ensure that a NECAP score report is returned to provide feedback only for this student in addition to the official NH Alternate Assessment Reports (student and summary).

In this way only the NH-Alt score will be counted for purposes of NCLB accountability, but you will get information from both experiences, through the NECAP student report, NECAP item analysis reports, and student level data files.

✦ ***How do students transition from NH Alternate Assessment to General Assessment?***

Students *may change* from NH Alternate Assessment to NH General (NECAP) Assessment by NOT doing a portfolio during the current school year. Instead, they would simply participate in the full grade-level instruction during the current school year. Then, in October of the *next* school year, they would participate in the NECAP assessment. (For more information, see online Transition Chart, described above.)

✦ ***How do I produce an assessment portfolio starting halfway through the school year for a new student? Won't it get a poor score?***

The NH Alternate Assessment is designed to allow collection of academic performance data during each of 3 data collection periods across the year. Portfolio scoring is designed to allow students to show *and receive credit for* academic skill growth even if it occurs late in the year. Well-chosen targeted skills with solid baseline data usually lead to successful student growth that can be demonstrated. Portfolios begun late in the year may not score at the highest possible levels, but they can and often do earn scores in the proficient range. In addition, the data gathered during the portfolio process help to inform instruction and planning for the upcoming year. This is one of the purposes that assessment, at its best, is meant to serve.

✦ ***How do I register a student for participation in NH Alternate Assessment?***

Special education directors/coordinators from *sending districts* can register students electronically from February to early March. The NH Department of Education sends a letter during January to each public school district outlining the registration dates and process. Sending public school districts are responsible for ensuring the participation of all their students in statewide assessment and, therefore, are solely responsible for registering their out-of-district students. Registrations are not accepted from private school personnel. Participation eligibility must be verified in writing by each district superintendent for the students in that district. This is completed at the close of NH-Alt online registration in late March.

✦ ***Can a student take the NECAP mathematical section and do the NH Alternate portfolio for the reading component?***

No. A student must either fully participate in the NECAP or fully participate in the alternate portfolio assessment. Generally, a student who shows such severe cognitive disability as to require Alternate Assessment in one content area will also need it in other content areas. If a student can successfully participate in the general assessment in one content they should also be able to participate, perhaps with accommodations, in general assessment in other content areas.

✦ ***Does a targeted skill have to come from the student's IEP goals and objectives?***

No. IEP documents focus on the method of access to the school curriculum. They do not set curriculum itself. You may want to include the targeted skills in the student's IEP if they help to show the method of access that the student is using to acquire and demonstrate the targeted academic skills. This may help team members to be aware of and working toward the targeted skills using a path of access that works best for the student.

✦ **What are the required standards for Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science?**

All required standards assessed in the NH Alternate portfolio assessment can be found on page 69 in the 2009-2010 NH-Alternate Assessment Educator's Manual, found online at www.ed.state.nh.us/assessment (choose NH Alternate Assessment), or at www.measuredprogress.org.

What happens if a student is found to be inappropriately placed in NH Alternate Assessment?

Note: Students who participate in Alternate Assessment are not expected to meet the level of depth or complexity in their academic knowledge as students who participate in the General Assessment. The decision to have a student participate in the Alternate Assessment is a team process and must be documented in the student's IEP. Parents never have to approve the IEP until they are satisfied with its contents. If you feel strongly about having your child participate in statewide general assessment based on grade-level achievement standards, please contact your child's Case Manager or the Special Education Director in your district to work toward a solution.

Students who participate in NH Alternate Assessment do count toward all the school and district accountability numbers. These students count just like the students who take general assessment. The school is held accountable for their academic performance on the test and also held *accountable for their appropriate participation in statewide assessment*. Students who participate in statewide assessment and are placed in out-of-district private schools also count toward school and district accountability determinations.

Some students fall into a transition zone of academic skills. These students are functioning at higher levels relative to most Alternate Assessment students, but they are still struggling mightily when assessed on the general assessment. It is clear that some team decisions are not black or white, nor are they easily made. From the roughly 3500 portfolios we have seen over the last 3 years, we have been able to affirm that the vast majority of students who take the NH Alternate Assessment appear to be reasonably identified and appropriately assessed. We have been watching the federal guidance for information on how we should handle those few assessments that are judged to be inappropriate to the student. The federal directive is that if the state education agency (SEA) finds a student who was inappropriately assessed under the Alternate Assessment system that we are to count that student as *non-participating* for purposes of statewide assessment. This, in turn, would be reflected in the school's and district's participation accountability numbers.

In practice, here is what is starting to happen. Please know that we are in the very early stages of our response to this concern: First, we have built a check on this problem into our portfolio-scoring system. Each portfolio is scored by two independent scorers who are continuously monitored for score accuracy and reliability. Each of these scorers is asked to indicate whether the portfolio illustrates work showing skills that could be better assessed in the general assessment. If *both* first-round scorers agree, we have a senior scorer review it. Then, *if we obtain consensus across all three scorers*, the portfolio is referred to the office of the Statewide Coordinator of Alternate Assessment, and the school is contacted. The first time this occurs will be considered an advisory year and the team will be asked to review its decision. If the team decides to keep the student as a participant in NH-Alternate Assessment then again, the following year, the portfolio submitted for this student will be reviewed for appropriateness. If ,

in two consecutive years, scorers determine that the student appears to be inappropriately placed in NH Alternate Assessment, the IEP team will be notified that they must make a choice: The school and district may accept a minimum performance score on NH Alternate Assessment (0 performance credit), or the school may have the student participate in the following fall's NECAP general grade-level assessment for whatever score the student earns.

This process directly addresses the issue of inappropriate assignment. The intent of this process is to provide as fair and objective a method as possible to determine if and when students are inappropriately assessed against a standard lower than for which they should be reaching. Again, this is still an emerging process, and it will take time to see how well it works. The first level of appeal of such a determination would be addressed to the office of the Director of Statewide Assessment.



New Hampshire
Alternate Assessment

Guide to Interpreting Reports:

NH Alternate Assessment Portfolios Completed May 2010

Grades 2-8, 10 and 11

**Statewide
Educational Improvement and Assessment Program**

New Hampshire Department of Education

**Report Release Date:
September 17, 2010**

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Notice of Nondiscrimination

The New Hampshire Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, or disability in its programs, activities, and employment practices. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Brenda Cochrane/NH Department of Education/101 Pleasant Street/Concord, NH 03301/ (603) 271-3743.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the countless teachers in New Hampshire who teach and support our students in developing alternate portfolios that help us to see how much these students can *and are* growing in reading, writing, mathematics and science skills. Through you, we are learning to understand what they know and can do. We extend special thanks this year also to the teams of educators who worked for long hours with the Department to develop new alternate achievement level proficiency descriptions and who participated in setting the final alternate achievement standards for reading, writing, mathematics and science. The New Hampshire Department of Education also extends deep appreciation to the following individuals who offered guidance during the development of the NH Alternate Assessment Portfolio process. We thank you all for your hard work, and for your many contributions.

NH-Alternate Assessment Advisory Task Force Membership:

- **Community, School, and Higher Education Representatives:**

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Introduction

The materials in this *Guide to Interpreting Reports* are provided to assist parents, community members and school personnel in reading and interpreting the individual Student Reports, School Rosters, and Summary Reports.

New Hampshire Alternate Assessment (NH-Alt) is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are not able to participate in the statewide paper and pencil general assessment test even with accommodations. Participation of all students in statewide assessment programs is required by federal law (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the No Child Left behind Act of 2001). The NH-Alt provides an assessment of your student's individual progress toward curriculum-based alternate achievement standards. These alternate achievement standards are linked to the same curriculum standards as students who take the paper and pencil assessment. Alternate Assessment allows parents and educators to know how students with disabilities participating in NH-Alt are progressing toward learning the knowledge and skills contained in the *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks*. A NH-Alt portfolio is developed individually for each participating student. The portfolio focuses on skills that are relevant for each individual student and provides a different way for each student to demonstrate what he or she knows and is able to do in accordance with standardized criteria developed by parents, educators, policy makers and administrators working together at the state level.

NH-Alt is not a paper and pencil test, but consists of a yearlong collection of samples and summaries of each child's graded work as it progresses toward the same learning standards by which all students are assessed. Depending on the grade and age of the student, the alternate achievement standards include knowledge and skills in the areas of Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics. Each student's report contains scores for the content areas in which he or she was assessed during the 2009-2010 school year. The IEP team selected the most appropriate knowledge and skills to teach and measure based on each student's Individual Education Plan and levels of performance observed at the beginning of the year. Teachers spent much of last year teaching this knowledge and skill set, and collecting evidence on each student's growth. The resulting portfolios, or collections of student work samples, were submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Education for scoring last spring. Teachers were carefully trained to score the portfolios reliably. Each portfolio was scored according to several dimensions that are related to higher student achievement. The scoring rubric is included in the attached information.

This is the ninth year that students with disabilities have participated in NH-Alt statewide, and that reports on the results are being released. Parents and teachers have an opportunity to use these reports in conjunction with other information to better plan individual educational programs. It is important to understand how to read and interpret the reports, and how best to use the results. It is also important to be careful not to misuse the information. The scores are not intended to compare children, or to evaluate each student's teacher(s). The scores provide information that will help parents and teachers work together to create increased opportunities for children to learn. When parents and educators examine these results together, they will be able to determine appropriate adjustments in students' educational programs. This is the most appropriate use of these results.

The results of the 2010 NH-Alt have been reported in individual student reports and on school rosters. **Information on these reports is confidential.** The Department of Education will not publicly disclose information or results at the school or district level that do not include at least ten students at a grade level who participated in a NH-Alt portfolio. Please keep this in mind when discussing NH-Alt results in a public manner. The only level at which the 2010 NH-Alt results will be publicly released is at the aggregated district and state level.

For questions about the NH-Alt please contact the New Hampshire Department of Education:
Gaye Fedorchak, Supervisor of NH Alternate Assessment and Access Support,
Department of Education, 271-7383, gfedorchak@ed.state.nh.us

Portfolio Components

The Scoring Rubric represents the criteria on which the portfolio is judged. It is based on effective practice and current research and has two parts: the Performance Dimension and the Program Dimension.

The Performance Dimension is used to evaluate two areas. The first performance area evaluates **student progress** toward achieving curriculum-based skills. The second performance area evaluated is the extent of **connections and access to the curriculum** standards found within the *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks*.

The Program Dimension evaluates effective practice in three areas. The first program area evaluates opportunities the program affords the student to transfer or **generalize learned skills** and knowledge to a variety of settings that provide opportunities for students to interact with nondisabled peers or different adults. The second program area evaluates the **opportunities afforded to students to be self-directing**, by making choices, planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own performance as active participants in their own learning. It should be noted that this dimension evaluates the opportunities offered by the program, not the number of times the student actually does plan, monitor, and evaluate his or her progress. The third program area evaluates the **appropriate use of supports** for students and the degree to which supports used are naturally built into the activity.

In order to understand the scoring, some description needs to be offered. Portfolios are contained in a 3-ring notebook binder that holds specific information supplied by the team on behalf of the student. Each binder, for grades 2-7 and 10, has a section for student work in Reading, and a section for student work in Mathematics. At grades 4, 7, and 10, binders also have a section for student work in Writing. Lastly, at grades 4, 8, and 11, binders have a section for student work in Science. Each section holds student work samples relating to two curriculum standards in that content area. (2 standards in Reading, 2 in Math, 2 in Writing and 2 in Science). Evidence related to one single content standard is called an “entry” and contains examples of student work related just to that content standard. The Reading section has two entries, the Math section also has two entries, and the Writing and Science sections, when included, also have two entries.

Sample Confidential Student Report:

1. Performance Scores are the most heavily weighted scores in the portfolio. Base points (1 to 4) earned in Student Progress are multiplied x 4 to yielding raw scores that range from 4 to 16. The same weight is given to base points earned showing Connections & Access to the General Curriculum. The score range possible in the Connections & Access sub-area of Performance is also 4-16 points.

2. Program Score base points are less heavily weighted. Base points earned under Generalized Performance (1-4) are multiplied x 3, producing a sub-score range of 3-12. Self Determination and Supports base points (1-4 in each area) are each multiplied by a factor of 1, producing a sub-score range of 1-4 for Self Determination, and also a sub-score range of 1-4 for Supports.

3. All 5 weighted sub-scores are then added together to produce a Total Raw Score. Total Raw Scores earned can range from 13 to 52. On page 8 you'll find a Total Raw Score to Achievement Level Conversion Chart.



New Hampshire
Alternate Assessment
Student Report
School Year: 2009-2010
Portfolios Submitted: May 2010

Student: Robert Holmes
District: Demonstration District A
School: Demonstration School 2
Portfolios Completed: End of Grade 4 - 2010

Content Area	Performance Scores		Program Scores			Total Raw Score = (4xA) + (4xB) + (3xC) + D + E	Achievement Level*
	Student Progress (A)	Connections & Access to General Curriculum (B)	Generalized Performance (C)	Self-Determination (D)	Supports (E)		
Reading	4	4	3	2.5	4	47	Proficient with Distinction
Mathematics	3.5	3.5	2.5	2	4	41	Proficient
Writing	2.5	3.5	2	2.5	3.5	36	Partially Proficient

* Not Tested: L = Not Tested: State Approved First Year LEP Not Tested: S = Not Tested: State-Approved Special Consideration Not Tested: N = Not Tested: Other

New Hampshire Alternate Assessment: Achievement Level Distribution of Students Statewide				
Content Area	Proficient with Distinction	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Substantially Below Proficient
Reading	35%	42%	17%	6%
Mathematics	32%	42%	20%	6%
Writing	25%	47%	19%	9%

Reading Achievement Level Description

Proficient with Distinction (Level 4): Student is successfully demonstrating *extensive progress* in targeted reading skills. Student *has access to and is using* a variety of modified reading materials that are linked to general education reading curriculum activities.

Opportunities to practice reading skills are offered in *varied settings* and include naturally embedded supports, or this student is *included fulltime* in the general education classroom for reading. Opportunities for interaction with typical peers and different adults are *extensive*. Opportunities for self determination are *consistent* and include *all required components*.

Instructional supports, team supports, and task structure are *effective* and allow this student to successfully access modified grade-linked reading materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination.

Mathematics Achievement Level Description

Proficient (Level 3): Student is successfully demonstrating *moderate progress* that is consistent with the intended goal(s) in targeted mathematics skill(s). Student *has access to and is using* a variety of modified mathematics materials that are linked to general education mathematics curriculum activities.

Opportunities to practice mathematics skills are offered in *varied settings*, or *consistently within a general education or other natural setting*. Opportunities for self determination and interaction with typical peers are *consistent*.

Instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure are *adequate* for this student to access modified grade-linked mathematics materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination. Remaining areas of weakness can be addressed by the existing team.

Writing Achievement Level Description

Partially Proficient (Level 2): Student is demonstrating *some progress* in targeted writing skill(s) using the modified writing materials and/or activities presented. Student *has some access* to modified writing materials that are linked to general education writing curriculum activities within this grade.

Opportunities to practice writing skills in various settings are *somewhat limited*. Opportunities for self determination are *inconsistent*. Typical peer interactions are *inconsistent* or *not evident*.

Redesigned instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure *may be necessary* for this student to access modified grade-linked writing materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination.

DEA-DEMO2



New Hampshire
Alternate Assessment

Student Report

School Year: 2009-2010

Portfolios Submitted: May 2010

Student:	Robert Holmes
District:	Demonstration District A
School:	Demonstration School 2
Portfolios	
Completed:	End of Grade 4 - 2010

Content Area	Performance Scores		Program Scores			Total Raw Score = (4xA) + (4xB) + (3xC) + D + E	Achievement Level*
	Student Progress (A)	Connections & Access to General Curriculum (B)	Generalized Performance (C)	Self-Determination (D)	Supports (E)		
Science	3	3	2.5	2.5	4	38	Proficient

*Not Tested: L = Not Tested: State Approved First Year LEP Not Tested: S = Not Tested: State-Approved Special Consideration Not Tested: N = Not Tested: Other

New Hampshire Alternate Assessment: Achievement Level Distribution of Students Statewide				
Content Area	Proficient with Distinction	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Substantially Below Proficient
Science	31%	37%	22%	10%

Science

Achievement Level Description

Proficient (Level 3): Student is successfully demonstrating *moderate progress* that is consistent with the intended goal(s) in targeted science skill(s). Student *has access to and is using* a variety of modified science materials that are linked to general education science curriculum activities.

Opportunities to practice science skills are offered *in varied settings, or consistently within a general education or other natural setting*. Opportunities for self determination and interaction with typical peers are *consistent*.

Instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure are *adequate* for this student to access modified grade-linked science materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination. Remaining areas of weakness can be addressed by the existing team.

DEA-DEMO2

Sample Confidential Student Roster Report (Provided for Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science)



C O N F I D E N T I A L

New Hampshire Alternate Assessment
Student Roster Report: School Level

Writing

School Year: 2009-2010, Portfolios Submitted: May 2010

School:	Demonstration School 1
District:	Demonstration District A
Portfolios	
Completed:	End of Grade - 2010

Student	SASID	Grade	Performance Scores		Program Scores			Total Raw Score	Achievement Level*
			Student Progress	Connections & Access to General Curriculum	Generalized Performance	Self-Determination	Supports		
Alfara, Laynegloriel N	H077801225	4	3.5	4	3.5	1	4	45	3
Clawson, Brady	G342861222	4	3	3.5	1	4	3	36	2
Glenn, Steven	G253781143	4	2.5	2.5	3.5	4	3	37	2
Lane, Alyssa M	F425271124	4	4	4	3	4	3	48	4
Mcmonigal, Steven	G516431124	4	1	2	2	1	1.5	20	1
Packard, Nathaniel	G311101126	4							N
Rasmussen, Jayson A	H253931224	4	3	3.5	4	3	4	45	3
Gjata, Fjorelo	E238551239	7	4	4	4	4	4	52	4
Kenney, Ticia	E121651237	7	3.5	4	2	4	3	43	3
Kohan, Max	H528301229	7	3.5	3.5	2	1	1.5	36	2
Mclaughlin, David D	E317331131	7	3	3	1.5	1.5	1	31	2
Oquendo, April L	H337981331	7	3.5	4	3.5	4	4	48	4
Owens, Dante C	G524801122	7	2	2	2	1	1	24	1
Thibault, Quinn A	E288531141	7	4	4	3.5	4	4	50	4
Thurlow, Syriese	F375661328	7							N
Kittredge, Jillian	G039181143	10	4	3.5	3.5	1	3	44	3
Latter, Kirsten	G470961221	10	3	2.5	2	2.5	2.5	33	2
Parker, Kimberly	F177481325	10							S
Payne, Demarea L	E476721249	10	4	3	1	1	1	33	2
Tristan, Dominick M	G473661234	10	1.5	2.5	1	1	1	21	1
Truitt, Alyssa G	F033599446	10	3.5	4	2	2.5	3	41	3

*Level 4 = Proficient with Distinction; Level 3 = Proficient; Level 2 = Partially Proficient; Level 1 = Substantially Below Proficient; S = Not Tested: State-Approved Special Consideration; L = Not Tested: State-Approved First Year LEP; N = Not Tested: Other

Sample Public Disaggregated Report (Provided in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science - Minimum group size =10)



New Hampshire Alternate Assessment
Disaggregated Results, All Tested Grades
Mathematics
School Year: 2009-2010
Portfolios Submitted: May 2010

District: Demonstration District A

REPORTING CATEGORIES	DISTRICT												STATE									
	NH-Alt Enrolled	Not Tested Approved: Alt	Not Tested Other: Alt	Tested in Alt	Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		Tested in Alt	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Tested in Alt	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
	N	N	N	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	%	%	%	N	%	%	%	%
All Students	134	5	16	113	27	24	38	34	28	25	20	18	1111	32	41	18	9					
Gender																						
Male	90	3	10	77	19	25	26	34	19	25	13	17	687	32	38	20	9					
Female	44	2	6	36	8	22	12	33	9	25	7	19	424	31	44	16	9					
Not Reported	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*					
Primary Race/Ethnicity																						
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5	1	0	4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5	*	*	*	*					
Asian	7	0	1	6	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	23	17	43	30	9					
Black or African American	7	0	0	7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	34	26	35	26	12					
Hispanic or Latino	12	0	3	9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	37	35	35	22	8					
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	0	0	2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	*	*	*	*					
White (non-Hispanic)	99	4	12	83	20	24	29	35	19	23	15	18	1008	32	41	18	9					
No Primary Race/Ethnicity Reported	2	0	0	2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	*	*	*	*					
LEP Status																						
Currently Receiving LEP Services	8	0	2	6	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	18	33	44	11	11					
Former LEP Student - monitoring year 1	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*					
Former LEP Student - monitoring year 2	1	0	0	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	*	*	*					
All Other Students	125	5	14	106	23	22	36	34	28	26	19	18	1092	32	41	19	9					
IEP																						
Students with an IEP	134	5	16	113	27	24	38	34	28	25	20	18	1111	32	41	18	9					
All Other Students	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*					
SES																						
Economically Disadvantaged Students	44	0	6	38	10	26	16	42	7	18	5	13	397	34	45	13	8					
All Other Students	90	5	10	75	17	23	22	29	21	28	15	20	714	31	38	21	10					
Migrant																						
Migrant Students	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*					
All Other Students	134	5	16	113	27	24	38	34	28	25	20	18	1111	32	41	18	9					
Title I																						
Students Receiving Title I Services	11	0	1	10	4	40	4	40	1	10	1	10	118	41	39	16	4					
All Other Students	123	5	15	103	23	22	34	33	27	26	19	18	993	31	41	19	10					

Level 4 = Proficient with Distinction; Level 3 = Proficient; Level 2 = Partially Proficient; Level 1 = Substantially Below Proficient

*Fewer than ten (10) students were assessed in this category

DEA

Sample Public State Summary Report (Provided in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science - Minimum group size =10)



New Hampshire Alternate Assessment
State Summary Report: Reading Results
School Year: 2009-2010, Portfolios Submitted: May 2010

Substantially Below Proficient (Level 1)

Student demonstrates little or no progress in any targeted reading skills using the modified reading materials and/or activities presented. Student is not accessing modified reading materials that are linked to general education curriculum activities. Opportunities to practice reading skills in various settings are limited. Opportunities for self determination and typical peer interaction are rare or not present. Redesigned instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure are necessary for this student to access modified grade-linked reading materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination. (Raw Score 13-28)

Partially Proficient (Level 2)

Student is demonstrating some progress in targeted reading skill(s) using the modified reading materials and/or activities presented. Student has some access to modified reading materials that are linked to general education reading curriculum activities. Opportunities to practice reading skills in various settings are somewhat limited. Opportunities for self determination are inconsistent. Typical peer interactions are inconsistent or not evident. Redesigned instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure may be necessary for this student to access modified grade-linked reading materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination. (Raw Score 29-37)

Proficient (Level 3)

Student is successfully demonstrating moderate progress that is consistent with the intended goal(s) in targeted reading skill(s). Student has access to and is using a variety of modified reading materials that are linked to general education reading curriculum activities. Opportunities to practice reading skills are offered in varied settings, or consistently within a general education or other natural setting. Opportunities for self determination and interaction with typical peers are consistent. Instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure are adequate for this student to access modified grade-linked reading materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination. Remaining areas of weakness can be addressed by the existing team. (Raw Score 38-46)

Proficient with Distinction (Level 4)

Student is successfully demonstrating extensive progress in targeted reading skills. Student has access to and is using a variety of modified reading materials that are linked to general education reading curriculum activities. Opportunities to practice reading skills are offered in varied settings and include naturally embedded supports, or this student is included full-time in the general education classroom for reading. Opportunities for interaction with typical peers and different adults are extensive. Opportunities for self determination are consistent and include all required components. Instructional supports, team supports, and task structure are effective and allow this student to successfully access modified grade-linked reading materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination. (Raw Score 47-52)

Portfolios Completed During Teaching Year	Students at Each Achievement Level												
	NH-Alt Enrolled	Not Tested Approved: Alt	Not Tested Other: Alt	Tested in Alt	Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		
	N	N	N	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
All Grades													
2007-08	1114	0	0	1114	294	26	490	44	222	20	108	10	
2008-09	1156	8	37	1111	364	33	477	43	198	18	72	6	
2009-10	1156	8	37	1111	364	33	477	43	198	18	72	6	
Cumulative Average	1135	4	19	1113	329	30	484	43	210	19	90	8	
Grade 2													
2007-08	174	0	0	174	60	34	76	44	26	15	12	7	
2008-09	186	2	5	179	79	44	75	42	21	12	4	2	
2009-10	186	2	5	179	79	44	75	42	21	12	4	2	
Cumulative Average	183	2	4	178	74	42	75	42	22	13	6	3	
Grade 3													
2007-08	166	0	0	166	66	40	72	43	24	14	4	2	
2008-09	165	1	6	158	52	33	76	48	26	16	4	3	
2009-10	165	1	6	158	52	33	76	48	26	16	4	3	
Cumulative Average	165	1	5	160	56	35	75	47	26	16	4	3	
Grade 4													
2007-08	166	0	0	166	37	22	81	49	34	20	14	8	
2008-09	168	2	5	161	56	35	68	42	27	17	10	6	
2009-10	168	2	5	161	56	35	68	42	27	17	10	6	
Cumulative Average	168	2	4	162	51	32	71	44	29	18	11	7	
Grade 5													
2007-08	181	0	0	181	40	22	85	47	36	20	20	11	
2008-09	169	2	3	164	56	34	59	36	42	26	7	4	
2009-10	169	2	3	164	56	34	59	36	42	26	7	4	
Cumulative Average	172	2	2	168	52	31	66	39	41	24	10	6	
Grade 6													
2007-08	163	0	0	163	46	28	61	37	40	25	16	10	
2008-09	179	0	9	170	55	32	69	41	27	16	19	11	
2009-10	179	0	9	170	55	32	69	41	27	16	19	11	
Cumulative Average	175	0	7	168	53	31	67	40	30	18	18	11	
Grade 7													
2007-08	155	0	0	155	32	21	74	48	28	18	21	14	
2008-09	160	0	5	155	46	30	74	48	27	17	8	5	
2009-10	160	0	5	155	46	30	74	48	27	17	8	5	
Cumulative Average	159	0	4	155	43	27	74	48	27	18	11	7	
Grade 10													
2007-08	109	0	0	109	13	12	41	38	34	31	21	19	
2008-09	129	1	4	124	20	16	56	45	28	23	20	16	
2009-10	129	1	4	124	20	16	56	45	28	23	20	16	
Cumulative Average	124	1	3	120	18	15	52	43	30	25	20	17	

Description of Data Reported

Achievement Levels

Achievement levels describe what students at each level know and are able to do within the program provided. Proficiency levels for the NH Alternate at grades 2-8, 10 and 11 are: Proficient with Distinction, Proficient, Partially Proficient, and Substantially Below Proficient.

The NH Alternate Assessment is divided into two scoring dimensions:

1. **The Performance Dimension** looks at student progress in reading, writing or mathematics content areas. In addition, student work samples are assessed for the quality of their connections and access to the general curriculum. Student access must show linkage to grade-level curriculum, but may do so at a reduced level of depth, breadth, and complexity that matches the learning needs of the individual student.
2. **The Program Dimension** has three subcategories that evaluate the student's educational program: Generalized Performance (use of the skill across different settings and situations), Self-Determination (opportunities for the student to direct and monitor his or her own performance), and Supports (the match between the level of assistance needed and student capacity for independence).
3. **Base Points Earned in Each of the Five Sub-Areas:** A student can receive a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 4 base points in each of the 5 sub-areas (described in 1 and 2 above). Base points are awarded in each sub-area using a **scoring rubric** (see scoring rubric on page 10 of this guide).
4. **Calculating Sub-Area Raw Scores:** These base points are multiplied by a weighting factor yielding a weighted raw score for each of the 5 sub-areas. To obtain sub-area raw scores, Student Progress base points are multiplied x 4; Connections & Access base points are multiplied x4; Generalized Performance base points are multiplied x3; Self Determination base points are multiplied x1; and Supports base points are multiplied x1.
5. **Calculating Total Raw Score for the Content Area:** The 5 weighted sub-scores are then added together producing a Total Raw Score for the Content Area. Content Area Total Raw Scores range from a minimum of 13 to a maximum of 52 weighted raw score points.
6. **Alternate Assessment Portfolios are scored a minimum of two times each.** For the Performance Dimension base points are required to match exactly or be adjacent. A third score is required when the scores of scorer 1 and scorer 2 are not exact or adjacent. For the Program Dimension base points are also required to match exactly or be adjacent (i.e. scores of a 1 and a 2, or scores of a 2 and a 3). A third score is required when the scores of scorer 1 and scorer 2 do not match or are not adjacent. If a student receives a score with a decimal in it, it means that scorer 1 and scorer 2 gave the subcategory adjacent scores and therefore the score the student receives is the average of the two scores. For example, scorer 1 gives a score of 1 and scorer 2 gives a score of 2, the student gets the average of the 2 scores which would be a 1.5. The quality of the scoring process is closely monitored and recorded throughout the process. If at any time a scorer is found to be performing below threshold level, they are pulled from scoring, retrained, and portfolios impacted are rescored by more senior scorers. Scorer reliabilities are reported in the technical documentation that is also available for this assessment. In 2005, statistical data show that extremely reliable inter-rater agreement was, in fact, achieved.

**Total Raw Score
To
Achievement Level Conversion Chart
2009-2010**

Grade Span:	If Total Raw Score for the content area is:	Then Achievement Level for the content area is:
All grades: 2-8, 10 & 11	47-52	Level 4: Proficient with Distinction
	38-46	Level 3: Proficient
	29-37	Level 2: Partially Proficient
	13-28	Level 1: Substantially Below Proficient

Achievement Level Descriptions:

<p>Level 4: Proficient with Distinction</p>	<p>Student is successfully demonstrating <i>extensive progress</i> in targeted content skills. Student <i>has access to and is using</i> a variety of modified content materials that are linked to general education content curriculum activities.</p> <p>Opportunities to practice content skills are offered in <i>varied settings</i> and include naturally embedded supports, or this student is <i>included fulltime in the general education classroom</i>. Opportunities for interaction with typical peers and different adults are <i>extensive</i>. Opportunities for self determination are <i>consistent and include all required components</i>.</p> <p>Instructional supports, team supports, and task structure <i>are effective</i> and allow this student to successfully access modified grade-linked content materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination.</p>
<p>Level 3: Proficient</p>	<p>Student is successfully demonstrating <i>moderate progress</i> that is consistent with the intended goal(s) in targeted content skill(s). Student <i>has access to and is using</i> a variety of modified content materials that are linked to general education content curriculum activities.</p> <p>Opportunities to practice content skills are offered in <i>varied settings, or consistently within a general education or other natural setting</i>. Opportunities for self determination and interaction with typical peers are <i>consistent</i>.</p> <p>Instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure are <i>adequate</i> for this student to access modified grade-linked content materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination. Remaining areas of weakness can be addressed by the existing team.</p>
<p>Level 2: Partially Proficient</p>	<p>Student is demonstrating <i>some progress</i> in targeted content skill(s) using the modified content materials and/or activities presented. Student <i>has some access</i> to modified content materials that are linked to general education content curriculum activities.</p> <p>Opportunities to practice content skills in various settings are <i>somewhat limited</i>. Opportunities for self determination are <i>inconsistent</i>. Typical peer interactions are <i>inconsistent or not evident</i>.</p> <p>Redesigned instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure <i>may be necessary</i> for this student to access modified grade-linked content materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination.</p>
<p>Level 1: Substantially Below Proficient</p>	<p>Student demonstrates <i>little or no progress</i> in any targeted content skills using the modified content materials and/or activities presented. Student is <i>not accessing</i> modified content materials that are linked to general education curriculum activities.</p> <p>Opportunities to practice content skills in various settings are <i>limited</i>. Opportunities for self determination and typical peer interaction are <i>rare or not present</i>.</p> <p>Redesigned instructional supports, team supports, and/or task structure <i>are necessary</i> for this student to access modified grade-linked content materials and/or activities in a manner that promotes skill progress, generalization of performance, and self determination.</p>

Scoring Rubric

The following rubric was used to score the NH-Alternate portfolios according to several dimensions. These dimensions were selected since research on effective practices has shown that these factors relate positively to increased academic achievement of students with disabilities. Schools and parent are encouraged to use this rubric to interpret the scores provided on the Student Reports and School Rosters.

**Scoring Rubric for NH Alternate Assessment
2009-2010**

	1	2	3	4
<p>Student progress How is the student progressing on developing targeted content area skills and/or knowledge related to content standards and/or the student's IEP?</p>	Limited evidence of student progress on developing specifically targeted skills in either entry in this content area	Evidence of student progress on developing specifically targeted skills in one entry in this content area	Evidence of student progress on developing specifically targeted skills in both entries in this content area OR Evidence of extensive progress on developing specifically targeted skills in one entry in this content area	Evidence of extensive progress on developing specifically targeted skills in both entries in this content area
<p>Connections and access to general curriculum How is the student progressing on using targeted skills to access general curriculum content-related skills and/or knowledge?</p>	Limited evidence of applying targeted skills to acquire Curriculum Framework standards in this content area	Evidence of applying targeted skills to acquire Curriculum Framework standards in one entry in this content area	Evidence of applying targeted skills to acquire Curriculum Framework standards in both entries in this content area OR Extensive evidence of applying targeted skills to acquire Curriculum Framework standards in one entry in this content area	Extensive evidence of applying targeted skills to acquire Curriculum Framework standards in both entries in this content area

	1	2	3	4	
<p>P R O G R A M D I M E N S I O N S</p>	<p>Generalized performance Where and with whom does the student use this skill?</p>	Student uses targeted skill related to the content standard in one setting without typical peer interaction.	Student uses the targeted skill related to the content standard in two settings without typical peer interaction.	Student uses the targeted skill related to the content standard in two settings, one of which must be a natural setting with different adults and interacting with typical peers. OR Student uses the targeted skill related to the content standard in one natural setting with different adults and interacting with typical peers.	Student uses the targeted skill related to the content standard in three settings, two of which must be a natural setting with different adults and interacting with typical peers. OR Student performance is in the general classroom so that the student is interacting with typical peers in that content area full time as evidenced in both entries and where natural supports are present.
	<p>Self-determination How is the student encouraged to make choices, monitor, plan, and evaluate?</p>	Little evidence that the student has opportunities to make choices or self-monitor or self-plan his or her work products related to the targeted skill or self-evaluate his or her performance on the targeted skill	Evidence that the student has opportunities to make choices or monitor his or her work products related to the targeted skill within one (1) entry	Evidence that the student has opportunities to make choices and monitor his or her work products related to the targeted skill in both entries OR Evidence that the student has opportunities to make choices and monitor and self-plan his or her work products related to the targeted skill in one (1) entry	Evidence that the student has opportunities to make choices and monitor and self-plan his/her work products related to the targeted skill, and self-evaluate his or her performance on the targeted skill in both entries
	<p>Supports How is the student receiving assistance and supports?</p>	Use of appropriate supports (i.e., accommodations, modifications, or assistive technology) is limited.	Use of appropriate supports (i.e., accommodations, modifications, and/or assistive technology) is evident in one entry in this content area.	Use of appropriate supports (i.e., accommodations, modifications, and/or assistive technology) is evident in both entries in this content area. OR Natural supports are used in one (1) entry and use of appropriate accommodations, modifications, and/or assistive technology, is evident in both entries in this content area.	Natural supports are used in both entries. Use of appropriate accommodations, modifications, and/or assistive technology, is evident in both entries in this content area.

Content Standards Assessed:

Each content area was assessed in terms of two (2) Alt Link standards from the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks. **Two required content standards must be assessed in each required content area for each participating student.** All the required Alt Link content standards are published in the NH Alternate Assessment Educators' Manual, which is available at the NH Department of Education website (www.ed.state.nh.us). The required standards are listed on the following pages for each content area.

Required Portfolio Entries for 2009–2010

Entry 1 Reading (Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10)

Reading Alt Link 1: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will use words, pictures, gestures or symbols to read literary text.

Entry 2 Reading (Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10)

Reading Alt Link 2: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will read to gather and organize information using informational text.

Entry 1 Writing (Grades 4, 7, and 10 only)

Writing Alt Link 1: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will use words, pictures, objects, or symbols to write (inquiry, requests, information, directions, stories, and instruction).

Entry 2 Writing (Grades 4, 7, and 10 only)

Writing Alt Link 2: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will write to gather and organize information.

Entry 1 Mathematics (Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10)

Mathematics Alt Link 1: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will communicate, organize and understand mathematical concepts while recognizing mathematics is connected to self, other curricula, and every day life.

Entry 2 Mathematics (Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10)

Mathematics Alt Link 2: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will solve a problem by applying strategies to the situation.

Entry 1 Science (Grades 4, 8 and 11 only)

Science Alt Link 1: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will demonstrate scientific problem solving using a variety of strategies and tools.

Entry 2 Science (Grades 4, 8, and 11 only)

Science Alt Link 2: Given age/grade appropriate materials and activities, student will demonstrate understanding models and illustrations.

Description of NH-Alt Scoring Process

- Portfolios are scored by certified and experienced New Hampshire teachers who are not familiar with the specific student or program represented by the portfolio.
- Scorers are NOT permitted to view or score any portfolio created by or for any person or within any school or district with which they are familiar.
- Scoring of all portfolios is completed during the summer scoring institute which generally runs during the first few weeks of July.
- The Scoring Institute includes a minimum of one full-day training for all scorers prior to any portfolio scoring.
- The training includes the use of portfolio samples as examples.
- Quality monitoring and control of the scoring process is a high priority. Individual scorer performance is continuously monitored for accuracy and reliability. This performance is recorded and tracked throughout the scoring process. Scorers who below an acceptable level of performance (80% reliability) are pulled from scoring. They are then retrained, and, to continue, must demonstrate and maintain highly accurate and reliable scoring performance. If an individual scorer's performance falls below threshold, then the portfolios scored by this individual during the period of poor reliability are re-scored by highly performing scorers.
- Department of Education and Measured Progress staff members are on hand at all times to answer questions and to clarify and resolve issues that arise.
- Scorers use the scoring worksheets to guide them through a structured comparison between the portfolio evidence submitted and the scoring rubric as they rate each dimension of a portfolio. In this way, individual portfolio entries are scored and a combined Content Area score is determined according to the rubric.
- Content area entries are composed of the evidence submitted in the portfolio. This evidence includes: charted progress records, multiple student work samples, and examples of student attempts at self-determination during skill acquisition.
- Each portfolio is scored by 2 independent scorers.
- First and second scores in each dimension must be an adjacent or exact match to be considered non-discrepant. A dimension in a portfolio will be scored a third time, by a more senior scorer, if there is a discrepancy between the first and second scorers of more than 1 score point.
- There is a Table Leader for every 5 to 6 scorers to assist with the scoring process.
- All portfolios and the evidence they contain are considered to be confidential. All persons handling portfolios are required to sign a confidentiality form and are not to discuss student names, schools or contents of the portfolio outside of the Scoring Institute.
- Alternate portfolio scores are figured into local school accountability measures just as assessment scores for student in the general NH Assessment.
- After the scoring of the final 2010 administration of this version of the NH Alternate Assessment, all portfolios and associated raw materials will be recycled. All confidential information will be destroyed.