

PASA Eligibility Criteria:

Decision Making Companion Tool

The PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool is a resource provided to individualized education program (IEP) teams in Pennsylvania to assist in determining eligibility for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). The PASA is appropriate for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet all six requirements listed below. Additional considerations are provided that further define the criteria and assist the IEP team in decision making. Factors that the IEP team should not consider in eligibility determination are also identified.

The IEP team must answer “YES” to **all** six criteria in order for the student to participate in the PASA. If the answer is “NO” to any of the questions, the student must participate in the PSSA/Keystones with or without accommodations, as determined appropriate by the IEP team.

1

_____ YES

Will the student be in grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 11 by September 1 of the school year during which the IEP will be operative?

Additional consideration:

The grade level listed for the student in the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) and the PASA digital system must correlate to the assessment decision documented in the current IEP.

2

_____ YES

Does the student have significant cognitive disabilities?
Pennsylvania defines significant cognitive disabilities as pervasive and global in nature, affecting student learning in all academic content areas, as well as adaptive behaviors and functional skills across life domains.

Additional consideration:

A significant cognitive disability is not directly defined by a Chapter 14 disability category. Typically students with a primary disability category of Specific Learning Disability or Speech Language Impairment DO NOT meet the definition of a significant cognitive disability. Generally, a student with a significant cognitive disability may be characterized as having intellectual functioning below average – cognitive measures of intelligence 2.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean.

3

_____ YES

Does the student require intensive, direct, and repeated instruction in order to learn and generalize academic, functional, and adaptive behavior skills across multiple settings?

Additional consideration:

The student’s course of study includes functional skills. Instruction typically occurs in a one-to-one or small group setting with opportunity to generalize and transfer skills across multiple settings.

4

_____ YES

Does the student require extensive adaptation and support in order to perform and/or participate meaningfully and productively in the everyday life activities of integrated school, home, community, and work environments?

Additional consideration:

A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student functioning across all academic, social, and community settings. The student is expected to require intensive and ongoing supports after graduation.

5

_____ YES

Does the student require substantial modifications to the general education curriculum?

Additional consideration:

Substantial modifications change the content expectation by a significant reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level standards as exemplified in the Alternate Eligible Content.

6

_____ YES

Does the student's participation in the general curriculum differ substantially in form and/or substance from that of most other students? Students found eligible to take the PASA must have measurable annual goals and short-term objectives reflected in the IEP.

Additional consideration:

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities likely require objectives, materials, prompting hierarchies, and teaching modalities different from the general education curriculum. The student's goals and objectives typically reflect the Alternate Eligible Content.

PASA eligibility determinations are NOT based on:

- IQ score or disability category alone (i.e., All students with an intellectual disability do not automatically qualify for the alternate assessment.)
- English Learner (EL) Status
- Poor attendance
- Expected poor performance on the general assessments
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Low reading or achievement level
- Anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional duress
- Impact of scores on accountability system
- Administrative decision