



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

August 2019

Dear Parent, Guardian or Caregiver:

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, as reauthorized by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* in 2015, requires states to establish challenging standards, develop aligned assessments, and build accountability systems based upon educational results. All students are included in a state's system of standards, assessments, and accountability. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, states administer an alternate form of assessment in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Hawaii's Alternate Assessment- the Hawaii State Assessment- Alternate (HSA-Alt) allows students with significant cognitive disabilities access to test content. This assessment differs from the general assessment in several ways, most importantly the content of the test, although linked to grade-level standards, is reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity. Performance expectations for alternate students, students with significant cognitive disabilities, are not the same as those for students who take the general assessment.

The HSA-Alt is delivered in grades 3-8, and 11 for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics and in grades 5, 8 and 11 for Science. If your child is in these testing grades they are slated to take the HSA-Alt sometime this year between February 18, 2020 and May 28, 2020.

Your child's teacher will administer the HSA-Alt assessments to him or her, individually or in a small group setting. Your child will be able to respond in his or her most appropriate modality (oral, signed language, picture system, or augmentative communication device). The time required to administer the assessments will be approximately one hour per content area. However, each assessment does not need to be completed in a single session. Your child will be given breaks, as needed. Additionally, your child will use the appropriate accommodations that have been recommended by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team members so that your child can successfully demonstrate what he or she has learned.

Participation in the HSA-Alt does not prevent a student from obtaining a Hawaii high school diploma. All students who obtain this diploma will need to meet the minimum course and credit requirements. Go to: <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/GraduationRequirements/Page/Requirements.aspx> for more information.

The Department strongly encourages all parents to have their child participate in the Hawaii State Alternate Assessment so that we can better identify your child's academic strengths and needs.

If you have any questions, please contact the school at (808) _____.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Principal