



Informational Brochure for Complex Area Superintendents and School Administrators

From February 16, 2021 through May 28, 2021, the Hawai'i State Alternate Assessments (HSA-Alt) will be administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities. The information in this document is designed to help Complex Area Superintendents and School Administrators prepare their schools and staff to successfully administer the HSA-Alt to students.

1. How are the Hawai'i State Alternate Assessments designed and who takes them?

The HSA-Alt is the Hawaii state summative assessment specifically designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students who take the alternate assessment must meet the state criteria for identification. Criteria include the significance of cognitive impairment and need for a modified program, intensive support, and specially designed instruction. For more information, see the HSA-Alt Participation Guidelines at alohahsap.org.

Hawaii's alternate assessment is based on reduced grade-level expectations linked to the Hawaii Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards. These standards are reduced in the HSA-Alt so that students with significant cognitive disabilities have access to the test content and are able to demonstrate their understanding.

2. What are the HSA-Alt Range Performance Level Descriptors?

The HSA-Alt Range Performance Level Descriptors are the link between the general education standards and the test items found on the alternate assessment. The Range Performance Level Descriptors reduce the Hawaii Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards into an Essence Statement. This statement and the four levels of performance described for each standard in the Range Performance Level Descriptors help item writers to craft appropriate and accessible items for students who take the alternate form of the statewide summative ELA, Math and/or Science assessments.

Checklist to help prepare teachers to administer the HSA-Alt

Step 1 Ensure IEP teams are using the HSA-Alt Participation Guidelines to identify students for the alternate assessment. Only those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet all four participation criteria should be identified. In addition, remind IEP teams to use the IEP to document the accommodations that the student receives for the assessment.

Step 2 Ensure teachers become familiar with the Range Performance Level Descriptors that describe student performance expectations for the test. Teachers should instruct students using content aligned to grade level standards.

Step 3 Teachers should meet with the IEP team to identify, confirm, or overturn HSA-Alt eligibility; accessibility supports for testing will also need to be considered.

Step 4 Teachers will need to schedule time before summative testing to test out selected student accessibility supports, including any assistive technologies, using the available online HSA-Alt Student Training Test.

Step 5 Ensure all HSA-Alt Test Administrators attend the online webinar training in January 2021 to learn how to administer the HSA-Alt.

Step 6 Teachers need to schedule time to administer the HSA-Alt. Test sessions may be spread over multiple days.

Step 7 Ensure teachers administer the HSA-Alt during the February 16 – May 28, 2021 testing window.





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3. Who developed the current HSA-Alt?

The HSA-Alt was designed by special education and content experts at the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) and Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI). The collaborative teams included both (a) experienced assessment item writers with a background in education and expertise in the assigned content area and (b) specialists in alternate assessment with experience teaching students with significant disabilities. Members of these collaborative teams were trained on aspects of item and test design that are unique to students with significant cognitive disabilities. The work was reviewed at various stages by Hawai'i special and general education teachers, state level Department of Education staff, editorial staff, bias and sensitivity experts, psychometricians, and other specialists in alternate assessment and instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

4. How can parents be encouraged to have students participate in the HSA-Alt?

- Ensure that teachers understand that all students with significant cognitive disabilities are required by law to take the HSA-Alt and that teachers convey this information to parents.
- Tell teachers in your schools that they may not encourage parents to inform the school that they do not want their child to participate in the HSA-Alt; rather, it is their professional responsibility to encourage opportunities for students to demonstrate their academic knowledge and skills by participating in the HSA-Alt.
- Explain to parents the benefits of their child participating in the HSA-Alt as outlined in the HSA-Alt Information Brochure for Parents, which is available at www.alohahsap.org.

5. How will the current assessments impact teachers?

The HSA-Alt is easier for teachers to administer and use for a number of reasons.

- The HSA-Alt requires less preparation time because teachers will administer the assessments online, using an iPad, laptop, or Chromebook.
- The HSA-Alt offers more efficient, accurate scoring of the assessment because the assessment is scored, automatically, as it is being administered using an iPad, laptop, or Chromebook. Scores are automatically entered into an online system.

6. Will there be training for teachers on the current assessments?

An online webinar training will be held for all HSA-Alt Test Administrators in January 2021. More information on this training will be available later in the school year.

**For more information about
the HSA-Alt, go to:
alohahsap.org.**





7. What are the important dates I should share with the district support team and teachers?

The chart below lists the important dates for the 2020-2021 school year.

Date	Time	Event
January 2021	8:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.	Online webinar training for Test Administrators and Complex Area Support Teams. More information on this training will be available later in the school year.
February 16 – May 28, 2021	School hours	HSA-Alt Testing Window

8. When will schools and parents receive students' score reports?

Students' score reports for the spring 2021 HSA-Alt will be made available to schools at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. Grades 3-8 and 11 students will receive a combined HSA-Alt ELA and Mathematics score report. Grades 5, 8, and 11 will receive a separate HSA-Alt Science score report.

9. How are the HSA-Alt score results used?

Scores from the HSA-Alt can be used to:

- help teachers adjust instruction for each student.
- help parents understand their child's current level of achievement for each content area assessment as described by the Range Performance Level Descriptors.
- assist the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team in determining the appropriate performance level expectations for the student for the next cycle of annual goals and objectives.

10. Where can I find additional information about the HSA-Alt?

For additional information, you may:

- contact the Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch, Assessment Section, at 808-307-3636;
- visit alohahsap.org;
- contact the Hawaii Statewide Assessment Program Help Desk at 1-866-648-3712 or send an email to hsaphelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com.

