How are the assessment results used?

Teachers, administrators, and parents use assessment results to gauge the effectiveness of the instruction provided. As with any other statewide assessment, the AAA is a reflection of the educational program provided to the student as well as the student’s progress toward achievement of curriculum standards. Results on the AAA are used to maximize opportunities for students to be better prepared for their next step in the education and career planning process.

What scores do students receive on the AAA?

Alabama’s statewide content standards set specific academic expectations for all students in Alabama public schools. The AAA measures how well a student has acquired knowledge and skills based on alternate achievement standards for his/her grade level. Each student’s work is scored based on the following criteria:

**Complexity:** the level of instruction and assessment selected by the teacher based on the student’s mastery of skills

**Level of Assistance:** the degree of assistance provided based upon the student’s abilities to complete a task or activity

**Mastery:** based upon the student’s overall performance on a task or activity

Additional information may be found on the Alabama State Department of Education’s Website (www.alsde.edu) under Student Assessment.
**What is the Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA)?**

The AAA is a portfolio assessment for students in grades 3-8 and 10 who have been identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities and cannot participate in the general assessment program even with maximum accommodations. All students in these grades who are participating in the Alabama Extended Standards curriculum are assessed in the subjects of Reading and Mathematics. Students in grades 5, 7, and 10 are also assessed in Science.

**When do students take the AAA?**

Student work samples are collected throughout the school year. Teachers select and compile the evidence for the portfolios to be submitted in early May.

**Who takes the AAA assessment?**

Students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the curriculum based on alternate achievement standards due to their unique learning needs participates in the AAA. Each student's Individual Education Program (IEP) team reviews a comprehensive set of criteria to determine whether the student should participate in the general assessment program or the AAA. As a member of the IEP team, the student's parent/guardian plays an important role in the assessment decision.

**How was the AAA Developed?**

The AAA was developed through a series of committee meetings with Alabama special education and general education teachers and administrators. Alabama educators assisted the Alabama State Department of Education in determining the content to be assessed, the types of student work appropriate for inclusion in the portfolio, and the criteria by which the student work will be scored.

**What is a portfolio assessment?**

A portfolio assessment consists of samples of student work used to capture student learning and progress of skills found in the state curriculum. It is not a traditional paper-and-pencil test; the AAA is a collection of student work that allows participants the opportunity to demonstrate the progress they have made throughout the school year.

**What is the purpose of the AAA?**

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), states must ensure that all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, have access to curriculum that encompasses challenging academic standards. The AAA helps ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn.