



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Michael Sentance, J.D., LL.M.
State Superintendent of Education

January 31, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Michael Sentance
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Nominations of Teachers to Serve on the *Alabama Alternate Assessment* Achievement-Level Descriptors Committee

The Student Assessment Section of the Office of Student Learning is requesting nominations of teachers to serve on the Achievement-Level Descriptors Committee for the *Alabama Alternate Assessment* (AAA). This committee will develop alternate achievement level descriptors in reading, mathematics and science that are aligned to the new Alabama Extended Standards. When selecting the nominees, please consider those who are willing to commit to the process and to serve for the duration of the meeting.

The attached nomination form with selection criteria must be completed and submitted to the Student Assessment Section. Once the nomination forms have been received and reviewed, the Student Assessment Section will notify the system test coordinator if a participant is selected from the local education agency. The committee will meet on March 8-9, 2017, in Montgomery, Alabama. Additional meeting information will be provided to the participant(s) once the committee has been selected.

Mileage reimbursement and per diem will be paid. Anyone commuting more than 50 miles one way to Montgomery may stay overnight if he or she chooses. If you live more than 50 miles away but choose not to stay overnight, you will receive round-trip mileage for each day of the meeting, plus whatever per diem is appropriate. If you plan to stay in Montgomery, you will be responsible for making your own reservations.

If you have questions, please contact Mrs. Nannette Pence in the Student Assessment Section at 334-242-8038.

MS/MH/NP

Attachment

cc: City and County System Test Coordinators
City and County Special Education Coordinators
Dr. Barbara J. Cooper
Mrs. Shanthia Washington
Mrs. Maggie Hicks
Mrs. Nannette Pence
Ms. Crystal Richardson

FY17-2037

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Alabama Alternate Assessment
Achievement Level Descriptors Nominations Form

Please print and complete all information for the teachers you are nominating.
Note: This form is due to the Student Assessment Section office by February 10, 2017.

Nomination for Reading Content Teacher, Grades 3-5

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Reading Content Teacher, Grades 6-8

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Reading Content Teacher, Grades 9-12

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Mathematics Content Teacher, Grades 3-5

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Mathematics Content Teacher, Grades 6-8

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Mathematics Content Teacher, Grades 9-12

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Science Content Teacher, Grades 3-5

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Science Content Teacher, Grades 6-8

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Science Content Teacher, Grades 9-12

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Special Education AAA Teacher, Grades 3-8

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____

School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Exceptionalities and Content Area: _____

Nomination for Special Education AAA Teacher, Grades 3-8

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____
School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____
Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____
Exceptionalities and Content Area: _____

Nomination for Special Education AAA Teacher, Grades 9-12

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____
School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____
Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____
Exceptionalities and Content Area: _____

Nomination for Teacher of Hearing Impaired, Grades 3-12

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____
School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____
Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for Teacher of Visually Impaired, Grades 3-12

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____
School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____
Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for ESL Teacher, Grades 3-8

Teacher Name: _____ Ethnic Group: _____ Sex: _____
School Name: _____ School E-mail: _____
Work Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Nomination for ESL Teacher, Grades 6-9

Teacher Name: _____ **Ethnic Group:** _____ **Sex:** _____

School Name: _____ **School E-mail:** _____

Work Telephone: _____ **Cell:** _____

Nomination for ESL Teacher, Grades 9-12

Teacher Name: _____ **Ethnic Group:** _____ **Sex:** _____

School Name: _____ **School E-mail:** _____

Work Telephone: _____ **Cell:** _____

Once the nomination forms have been received and reviewed, staff from the Student Assessment Section will notify the system test coordinator of any teacher in his or her school system who has been selected to serve on the committee.

School system: _____

Superintendent's signature: _____

E-mail to: npence@alsde.edu or FAX: 334-242-7341

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE GUIDELINES FOR NOMINEE SELECTION

Local education agency (LEA) superintendents are asked to nominate educators to serve on the committee, based on criteria outlined in the selection guidelines and represented on the nomination form. Deadlines for submission of nominees is provided. Nomination forms are compiled and labeled by Alabama State Board of Education district. Every effort is made to ensure that all LEAs have the opportunity to submit nomination forms.

The following criteria is followed to select committee members:

- Representatives from each Alabama State Board of Education district is to be included.
- Representatives from city and county LEAs are included.
- Representatives demographically represent the state to include, male, female, race, and ethnicity.
- Representatives demographically represent general education in content areas (reading, math, and science).
- Representatives demographically represent special populations such as visually impaired, hearing impaired, and EL.

The LEA is notified if an educator is selected to serve. The educator is provided the opportunity to accept or decline. If the educator accepts the invitation to serve, a formal letter is provided to the LEA and the educator with specific committee logistics included (travel information, duration, etc.) If the educator declines to participate, the selection criteria is followed to select a replacement. The process is followed until all committee members are selected. Alternate educators are selected to fill in during emergency situations.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT-LEVEL DESCRIPTORS FOR READING AND MATHEMATICS IN GRADES 3-8 AND 10 AND SCIENCE IN GRADES 5, 7, AND 10

OVERVIEW

The Alternate Achievement-Level Descriptors (AALDs) is the document that describes the knowledge and skills expected at different performance levels with respect to the academic content standards for a grade. Descriptors must be clearly written to ensure that all stakeholders have a common understanding of what describes expected performance at various levels. The AALDs will be developed, reviewed, and finalized by committees of Alabama special education educators, content educators, and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) prior to standard setting.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND MEETING LOGISTICS

For the development of the AALDs, one committee will be convened for each of the content area alternate assessments (i.e., mathematics, reading, and science). As a result, approximately 14 Alabama educators will be convened for the meeting, and the committee members will be divided into groups of approximately four educators each. Committee members will work individually and in concert to develop the AALDs, taking special care to promote articulation across grades when needed. The meeting will last two days and will be held in Montgomery, Alabama.

The chart below shows the number of committees, committee members, and the number of facilitators needed for the meeting.

Grade-Range Committees	No. of Alabama In-State Content Experts	No. of Alabama In-State Special Education Experts	No. of Alabama In-State Sensory Experts	Vendor-Special Education Facilitators
Reading Grades 3-8 and 10	2	2	2	1
Mathematics Grades 3-8 and 10	2	2		1
Science Grades 5, 7, and 10	2	2		1
Total	6	6	2	3

The educators chosen for the alternate achievement-level descriptor meeting will include special education educators who have taught the population; content educators or those with expertise in the content areas of mathematics, reading, or science; and sensory educators for the visually impaired and deaf.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT-LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

The contracted vendor provides guiding documents designed to help educators develop descriptors for each assessment. These guiding documents will include a draft of each descriptor arranged in a bulleted list. The documents will serve as a starting point to guide committee members in the development of the descriptors. In creating the guiding documents, the contracted vendor development staff will first do an in-depth review of the standards and the extenders in order to determine what students should know and be able to do based upon the extenders. The focus will be upon how students will demonstrate the knowledge and the skills as noted in the extenders for each performance level. The process used when developing the guiding documents will include making an initial determination as to:

- The necessary characteristics/concepts of performance at each of the performance levels.
 - Level I Does Not Meet standards
 - Level II Partially Meets Standards
 - Level III Meets Standards
 - Level IV Exceeds Standards
- The categorization of the characteristics/concepts.
- The definition in clear and easily understood language of each characteristic/concept.
- The description of the performance continuum.

The guiding documents or draft descriptors will be prepared for review by a committee of Alabama educators during a review meeting. Educators will first receive a general training on how to develop draft descriptors, using the guiding documents prepared by the contracted test development staff as a starting point for discussion. The training will also include providing educators with a general overview of each assessment (e.g., number of items and item types included on a particular assessment). Definitions of key terms will also be provided.

Following the general training, Alabama educators will focus specifically on the task at hand—development of the draft descriptors for a given grade and/or content area. To begin the process, the standards documents, including the extenders, for each grade and/or content area, the developed guiding documents, and the Alabama policy definitions will be distributed and explained. Alabama educators will then be given time to familiarize themselves with the standards and the extended standards and the guiding documents. After review of the standards and the extenders committee members will be asked to develop the draft descriptors at each level. They will use the guiding documents (bulleted list) to guide this work. Specifically, the committee members will be asked to consider the following questions as they write the descriptors:

1. Does each AALD clearly summarize the knowledge and skills required for a given performance level? If not, what revisions need to be made?

2. Does each AALD provide an appropriate description of the performance level? In other words, does each provide an overview or summary of the knowledge and skills appropriate for a given performance level? If not, what revisions need to be made?
3. Does each AALD provide any information that should not be included in the description of the performance level? If so, what revisions need to be made?
4. Does any AALD include information that might be inconsistent with the knowledge and skills as defined by the content standards? If so, what revisions need to be made?
5. Does any AALD include information describing performance that might be too demanding or too easy? If so, what revisions need to be made?
6. Does each AALD show a clear progression from one performance level to another? If not, what revisions should be made?
7. Do the AALDs for a given subject area show a clear progression from one grade to the next, as needed? If not, what revisions should be made?

MEETING PREPARATION

The contracted vendor special education test development specialists will facilitate the committee process. The role of the facilitator will be to ensure that a fair and orderly consensus process is followed, that committee-work product is adequately documented, and that the process stays on schedule. The facilitators will also serve as resources, answering questions pertaining to the content of the standards. The goal of the meeting is to have committees develop the first draft of the performance-level descriptors. ALSDE team members will support the facilitation process and/or serve as observers of the process.

After the committee meeting, the draft of the descriptors for the alternate assessments (mathematics, reading, and science) will be finalized and prepared for review by the ALSDE. Upon approval by the ALSDE, the descriptors will be prepared for use during the standard-setting committee meeting.