

How to Include Students with Disabilities in the Montana Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT)

The Requirement:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that “The state has established goals for the performance of children with disabilities in the state that...are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for children established by the state.” IDEA further requires that all students be included in the state’s accountability systems.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all students reach high standards and further establishes the requirements for participation and accountability for all students in state assessments used to determine adequate yearly progress (AYP). For students, who as a result of their disability cannot participate in the state’s regular assessment, the state education agency (Montana Office of Public Instruction) is required to construct and implement guidelines for their participation in an alternate test. Montana has met this requirement by creating the Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT)-Alternate for those students who are unable to participate in the regular CRT. Results from the CRT-Alternate will be included in the state accountability system on a yearly basis.

Basic Information about The CRT And CRT-Alternate:

Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT)

The Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) is administered annually in the Spring of the year for all students in grades 3-8 and 10. It is aligned with Montana’s content standards and measures student achievement against these state standards in the reading and math subject areas. The test, consisting of multiple choice, constructed response items, and math short answers was developed using a “universal design.” As such, it allows for a broad array of standard accommodations that include accommodations in setting, scheduling, response, and presentation. A list of accommodations, both standard and non-standard, can be found on pages 8-11 of this document. The CRT is also available in large print and Braille formats. Because of the full range of standard accommodations allowed (those that do not change the intent or content of the test), it is expected that the vast majority of students with disabilities will be able to participate in the regular CRT. In those cases where an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team may have identified an accommodation that would be defined as non-standard accommodation (a practice that changes what the test was intended to measure), the student would still be able to participate in the regular CRT.

Criterion-Referenced Test-Alternate (CRT-Alternate)

The Criterion-Referenced Test-Alternate (CRT-Alternate) is an evidence-based test that is aligned with Montana's content standards through extended benchmarks and measures student performance based on alternate achievement standards. It is expected that only those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will participate in the CRT-Alternate.

It is important to note that the scores of students with disabilities participating in the CRT-Alternate that fall into the proficient and advanced range, for purposes of determining adequate yearly progress (AYP), are limited to the 1 percent cap as defined in the final regulations under Title 1 (reference 34 CFR, Part 200). This cap applies at both the state and district levels, but not at the school level. The OPI may approve the district to exceed the one percent cap if the district submits adequate justification, and if the statewide proficient and advanced scores are less than one percent.

Assessment Options:

Following are the options available for students with disabilities to participate in the Criterion-Referenced Assessment (CRT):

- Student takes the regular CRT with no accommodations
- Student takes the regular CRT with the use of accommodations
- Student takes the CRT-Alternate

Deciding How the Student with Disabilities Will Participate:

The decisions as to whether a student with disabilities will participate in the regular CRT or the CRT-Alternate, and what accommodations, if any, are to be provided to the student must be documented in the student's IEP prior to administration of the CRT this spring. Participation in the CRT-Alternate is determined by considering each of the following questions:

- Does the student have an active IEP and receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?
- Do the student's demonstrated cognitive abilities and adaptive behavior require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum?
- Do the student's learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application of skills, as illustrated in the student's IEP's annual goals and short-term objectives?
- Does the student require direct and extensive instruction to acquire, maintain, generalize and transfer new skills?

If the answer is NO to any of the above questions, the student must participate in the regular CRT. **If all answers are YES**, the student is eligible to take the CRT-Alternate and the student is considered to be a student with a significant cognitive disability.

The decision to determine a student's eligibility to participate in the CRT-Alternate may not be based on:

- Excessive or extended absence;
- Disability category;
- Social, cultural or economic difference;
- The amount of time receiving special education services; and
- Academic achievement significantly lower than his or her same age peers.

To ensure that students with disabilities participate in the CRT in the appropriate manner, schools must do the following:

- If a special education student is in grade 3-8 or 10 or in an ungraded program and is of the chronological age of a 3-8 or grade 10 student, the student's special education teacher must review the student's current IEP, ensure that the IEP appropriately documents the student's participation in the regular CRT or the CRT-Alternate and also addresses the other requirements (see question/answer #13) under IDEA for documenting participation in the state assessment.
- If the student's IEP does not include all of the required assessment documentation for the CRT and/or it is felt that the student may participate in the assessment in a different manner than was previously determined (e.g., instead of the CRT-Alternate, the student can participate in the regular CRT, with or without accommodations), the student's IEP must be amended to address how the student will participate.

Note: A sample form, to assist IEP teams in addressing the assessment requirements under IDEA is included in this document.

It is important that the IEP team understand that the regular CRT allows for an extremely broad range of accommodations. Therefore, it is expected that the vast majority of students with disabilities will participate in the regular CRT.

Common Questions Regarding Participation of Students in the Criterion-Referenced Tests: Regular CRT and CRT-Alternate

The following question/answer format is designed to assist directors of special education, school administrators, test coordinators and other school personnel in understanding how students with disabilities can participate in the state Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT and CRT-Alternate).

1. Is the CRT-Alternate aligned with state achievement standards?

Yes. The CRT-Alternate is aligned with state achievement standards, but it is designed using expanded benchmarks, and thresholds of performance are judged against alternate performance standards.

2. If a student is in an ‘ungraded’ program, how do we decide if the student will participate in the state CRT assessment?

If the student is in an ungraded program and is of the same chronological age as students in grades 3-8 or 10, then he/she must participate in the state CRT assessment.

3. Can a student with a profound disability be excused from participating in the state assessment system?

No. All students must participate. It is likely that a student with profound disabilities would be administered the CRT-Alternate. Refer to the CRT Eligibility Criteria on page 7 of this document for determining participation in the CRT-Alternate.

4. Who decides if a student with disabilities will participate in the regular CRT or the CRT-Alternate?

In accord with IDEA requirements, it is the IEP team that makes the decision.

5. Can the IEP team decide that a student with disabilities will not participate in the state assessment?

No. In accord with state and federal requirements, all students with disabilities must be included in the state assessment system.

6. Is reading the reading test to the student for the CRT an allowed accommodation?

Yes, if the student’s IEP team has determined that this accommodation must be provided. Such an accommodation is considered to be a non-standard accommodation.

7. If the reading test is read to the student, how is the student’s score reported?

Because reading the reading test to the student is a non-standard accommodation, students taking the test with a nonstandard accommodation will not be counted as a participant and results for the content area test **will not** be calculated in averages for AYP.

8. If a student takes the regular CRT using a non-standard accommodation, must the student also take the CRT-Alternate in that subject area?

No. The student's participation in the regular CRT, even with the use of a non-standard accommodation, is all that is required.

9. How will the student receive the accommodation(s) determined appropriate by the IEP team to participate in the regular assessment?

The school is responsible for establishing a process that ensures students with disabilities receive the required accommodations identified as necessary by the IEP team. It is critical that the test administrator have such information prior to test administration. When accommodations are given, they must be reported on the student response form in accord with instructions in the test administrator's handbook.

10. What documentation is required on the IEP to address a student's participation in state-level assessments?

In accord with 34CFR 300.347, the IEP must document (identify) if the student will participate in the regular state-level assessment (CRT) or the alternate assessment (CRT-Alternate): and

If the regular assessment (CRT): The team must also document any individual accommodations, if any, that must be provided in order for the student to participate in the regular assessment.

If the alternate assessment (CRT-Alternate): The team must also document:

- The reason why the regular assessment (CRT) is not appropriate for the student; and

The IEP team must also ensure that the student's parents are informed that their child's performance will be based on expanded benchmarks and alternate achievement standards [reference 34 CFR 200.6(A)(2)].

11. If we already had an IEP team meeting this school year or last spring and determined that the student will take the alternate test, is it necessary to reconvene another IEP meeting?

The CRT incorporates a 'universal' design and allows an extremely broad range of accommodations. Therefore, it is expected that the vast majority of students with disabilities will participate in the regular assessment (CRT). The regular CRT is available in Braille and large print format and allows for any accommodation that a student may require (e.g., assistive technology, interpreter, reader, extended time, etc.). It is critical that the special education teacher review the student's current IEP, ensure that the IEP appropriately documents the student's participation in the assessment (whether regular or alternate) and also addresses the other requirements for documenting participation in the state CRT assessment.

If the IEP does not include all of the required assessment documentation and/or it is felt that the student may participate in the assessment in a different manner than was previously determined (e.g., instead of the alternate, the student can participate in the regular assessment (CRT) with accommodations), the student's IEP must be amended to address how the student will participate.

12. Are the scores of students with disabilities who participate in the CRT-Alternate assessment included in AYP calculations?

Yes. In accord with the Title I final regulations found in 34 CFR, Part 200

16. Is it permissible to give equal weight to proficient and advanced performance based on the CRT-Alternate assessment scores in calculating school and district AYP?

Yes, if it does not exceed 1 percent of all students in the grades tested calculated at the district level.

17. Is the 1 percent cap applied to only the number of proficient and advanced scores achieved on the CRT-Alternate?

Yes.

18. Is it permissible for a student with disabilities to take the CRT-Alternate in one but not both subject areas?

No. The decision as to whether the student will participate in the CRT-Alternate must be based on the CRT-eligibility criteria (The worksheet is on page 7 of this document.) and applies to all subject areas tested.

19. Where can I find the final regulations for the inclusion of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in Title I assessments?

The final regulations can be found at the following Web site:

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/news.html

CRT Eligibility Criteria Worksheet

This form is intended to assist IEP teams in determining whether the student should participate in the regular CRT or the CRT-Alternate and to address documentation requirements under IDEA. The IEP team must decide which test (CRT or CRT-Alternate) the student will participate in. This form, when completed, must be attached to the student's IEP.

Student: _____ **District:** _____ **Grade/Age:** _____

For each of the statements below, circle yes or no		
Does the student have an active IEP and receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?	YES	NO
Do the student's demonstrated cognitive abilities and adaptive behavior require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum?	YES	NO
Do the student's learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application of skills, as illustrated in the student's IEP's annual goals and short-term objectives?	YES	NO
Does the student require direct and extensive instruction to acquire, maintain, generalize and transfer new skills?	YES	NO

If you answer "NO" to any of the above questions, the student must participate in the regular CRT. If all answers are yes, the student is eligible to take the alternate and considered to be a student with a significant cognitive disability.

<p style="text-align: center;">The decision to determine a student's eligibility to participate in the CRT-Alternate <u>may not be based on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive or extended absence; • Disability category; • Social, cultural or economic difference; • The amount of time receiving special education services; and • Academic achievement significantly lower than his or her same age peers.
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<p>DOCUMENTATION OF THE IEP TEAM'S DECISION (check the one that applies)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student will participate in the <u>regular CRT</u> with no accommodations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student will participate in the <u>regular CRT</u> with the accommodations noted in the student's IEP.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The student will not participate in the regular CRT, but instead will be assessed using the <u>CRT-Alternate</u>.</p>
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Accommodations (standard and non-standard) for Participation in the Montana CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST

Scheduling Accommodations
1. Change in Administration Time: Test is administered at a time of day or a day of the week based on student needs.
2. Session Duration: Test is administered in appropriate blocks of time for individual student needs, followed by rest breaks.
3. N/A
Setting Accommodations
4. Individual Administration: Test was administered in a one to one situation.*
5. Small Group Administration: Test was administered to a small group of students.*
6. Reduce Distracters: Student is seated at a carrel or other physical arrangement that reduces visual distraction.
7. Alternative Setting: Test is administered to the student in a different setting.*
8. Change in Personnel: Test is administered by other personnel known to the student (e.g., LEP, Title I, special education teacher).*
9. Home Setting: Test is administered to the student by school personnel in their home.
10. Front Row Seating: A student is seated in the front of the classroom when taking the test.*
11. N/A

Equipment Accommodations
12. Magnification: Student used equipment to magnify test materials.
13. Student (not groups of students) wears equipment to reduce environmental noises.
14. Template: Student uses a template.
15. Amplification: Student uses amplification equipment (e.g., hearing aid or auditory trainer) while taking test.
16. Writing Tools: Student uses a typewriter or word processor (without activating spell checker).
17. Voice Activation: Student speaks response into computer equipped with voice activation software.
18. Bilingual Dictionary: Student uses a bilingual dictionary (Note: Bilingual dictionary could include a simplified English dictionary or glossary, subject area vocabulary list).*
Recording Accommodations
19. Dictation: The student dictates answers to a Test Administrator who records them in the Test Booklet.
20. Writing Tools: The student marks or writes answers with the assistance of a technology device or special equipment. The students' answers are transferred by the Test Administrator to the Test Booklet.
21. Assistive Technology: Another form of assistive technology routinely used by the student (that does not change the intent or content of the test) was used by the student (not groups of students).

Modality Accommodations

22. Oral Presentation Science and Mathematics: Tests were read to the student by the Test Administrator. For the reading test, reading passages may **not** be read aloud. Note: Readers must read test items/questions to the student word-for-word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to the student regarding the meaning of words, intent of test questions, or responses to test items/questions.

23. Test Interpretation: Tests, including directions, were interpreted for students who are deaf or hearing-impaired (with the exception of interpreting the reading test).*

24. Test Directions with Verification: An administrator gave test directions with verification (by using a high lighter) so that the student understood them.*

25. Test Directions Support: An administrator assisted students in understanding test directions, including giving directions in native language.*

26. Braille: A Braille version of the test was used by the student.

27. Large Print: A large print version of the test was used by the student.

28. Other: With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation was used by a student.

* Accommodation suggested as appropriate for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students

Non-standard CRT Accommodations (for Students with an IEP)

Nonstandard accommodations are changes in the way testing is presented or in the way a student responds to test questions that may alter what the test measures. Teams should exercise caution in considering whether a student requires a nonstandard accommodation. Nonstandard accommodations are only available for a student with IEP/504/LEP plans.

- Students taking a nonstandard accommodation will not be counted as a participant and results for the content area test **will not** be calculated in averages for AYP.

The following is a partial listing, by example, of methods of administration that would be considered to be non-standard.

Nonstandard Accommodations
29. Reading aloud the reading passages to a student or the student uses text-reader software for reading passages. A student for which this type of nonstandard accommodation might be used would be a student with a learning disability in reading who without the text being read, could not participate in this portion of the test.
30. Student uses a calculator, number chart, arithmetic table, or manipulative on the no calculator sections of the mathematics test. A student for which this type of nonstandard accommodation might be used would be a student with a learning disability in mathematics who, without the use of a calculator, would not be able to perform any mathematics calculations or functions.
31. Other - Reading: With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation was used by a student.
32. Other - Mathematics: With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation was used by a student.
33. Other - Science: With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation was used by a student.