



Instructional Consultation Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

4:45 p.m.

3SE06

MINUTES

Items Requiring Consultation:

RESPONSE

D.3 REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE SERVICE CONTRACT AGREEMENTS TO CONTINUE SERVICES FOR THE PROJECT REALITY GRANT

Office of Academic Services,
Andrew Houlihan

RESPONSE:

Adam Stephens and Elizabeth Philippi introduced the item to the committee. Ms. Philippi shared that the item had been awarded in October 2014, and it is routine to renew to secure funding before the contract can be processed. There were no concerns from the committee.

F.4 APPROVAL TO CLOSE FRANCIS HARPER ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL (ITEM WITHDRAWN ON 3/9/16)

Office of Student Support,
Mark Smith

RESPONSE:

Susan Kaler and Gloria Cavazos introduced the item to the committee. Zeph Capo/HFT expressed serious concerns and confusion as to why this item was suddenly placed on the agenda; was this a managerial decision, what is the rationale and program design. He asked if there may be new evidence that HISD may have not been following civil laws or is out of compliance and now Harper is going to be closed. He also wants to know what is driving the placement, ideology; how will HISD make sure the principals and administration have the appropriate support, have schools been identified and will staff follow students. Mr. Capo also asked if this is a way to assign student campus codes? HFT is also very concern about the detriment to students.

Andy Dewey also expressed support of the concerns above regarding students and safety for all. He also expressed concerns regarding how students will get to school, student progress and curriculum strategies.

A concern in regards to teacher/student ratio was asked of the committee.

Michael Weber, Joan Anderson, Susan Kaler and Gloria Cavazos responded to the concerns:

- The closure of Harper will help reintegrate students into a more positive learning environment*
- Students will be able to reintegrate easier in MS/HS setting where more learning possibilities are accessible*
- Staff will be trained to assist transferred students*
- Administrative support will be assigned to campuses*
- Looking into staff following students*
- There is a 6:1 teacher/student ratio*
- Schools have not yet been identified*
- Cavazos will ask Mark Smith for follow up*

On March 8, 2016, Susan Kaler responded via e-mail that "There is no additional follow-up needed -Mark Smith has talked to Zeph Capo."

Please note: This item was withdrawn on 3/9/16.

K.1 PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY FMF(LOCAL), STUDENT ACTIVITIES: CONTESTS AND COMPETITION— SECOND READING

Office of Student Support,
Mark Smith

RESPONSE:

Marmion Dambrino introduced this item and asked committee if there were any concerns, this item was brought up last month for first reading. There were no concerns from the committee.

CHT Item(s):	RESPONSE
<p>CHT Employee Investigations</p> <p>1. Why has an investigator in Employee Relations been put in charge of employee reassignments? Are all internal investigations of teachers now being handled by district staff? Is there a typical/median window of time for a reassigned employee to remain at home?</p>	<p>Office of Human Resources, Gloria Cavazos</p>
<p>RESPONSE (written response provided by Jeff McCanna): <i>The Employee Relations department simply facilitates temporary reassignments of contract employees by providing assistance with memorandum creation, identification of alternate work locations, and communication of duties and responsibilities while on temporary reassignment. The decision to request a reassignment of a contract employee is the sole responsibility of the Chief School Officer (CSO). The Chief Human Resources Officer must approve the CSO's request before an extended reassignment can occur.</i></p> <p>Discussion: <i>Dr. Esther Omogbehin and Elneita Hutchins-Taylor added that many factors are dependent on the investigation; some investigations, therefore, will be in-house and some out-sourced.</i></p> <p><i>Zeph Capo thanked CHT and HR for immediate attention to concern and responses.</i></p>	
<p>CHT Crossing Guards – Pershing MS</p> <p>2. Is Pershing Middle School using teachers as crossing guards?</p>	<p>Chief School Officer, Michael Cardona</p>
<p>RESPONSE (written response provided by Rosa Hernandez): <i>The Campus Officer and the Administration team is primary responsible for traffic control before and after school. In addition, teachers are assigned duty spots to ensure the overall safety of the campus. This is part of her 7.75 work schedule. However, there was a need for additional assistance before and after school with traffic, students safely crossing the street, and overall monitoring students during these times. Therefore, a few teachers volunteered to assist with traffic before and after school to ensure that students cross the street safely. The principal then decided to compensate those teachers with before/after school with hourly pay.</i></p> <p>Discussion: <i>HFT and CHT both have continued concerns with teachers' liability when they are being used as traffic control guards. Zeph Capo requested that it be noted for the record in Instructional Consultation minutes that he brought this up last month. Mr. Capo has concerns regarding the loss of sovereign immunity for HISD and all involved employees in any instance involving a motor vehicle- especially in cases where untrained personnel are used or volunteer to direct traffic.</i></p> <p><i>Rosa Hernandez responded that teachers are not directing traffic, and if so, that will ease. Teachers are supervising students and may be assisting them cross the street. Teachers trained by the campus safety officers, are being compensated and are also covered under general HISD coverage for work-related injuries should they occur.</i></p>	
<p>CHT Magnet Application System</p> <p>3. Are district officials aware of problems stemming from the implementation of the online magnet application system (e.g. email notifications and the scheduling of fine arts auditions)?</p>	<p>Office of Student Support, Mark Smith</p>
<p>RESPONSE (written response provided by Noelia Longoria): <i>We interviewed and reviewed fine arts magnet schools processes with the online application system and their audition schedules.</i></p> <p><i>Schools are informing parents and students via email if they qualified with the 78 average of the core classes from the previous year. The coordinators email parents to inform them if they meet the Fine Arts Middle School magnet criteria to qualify for an audition in middle school.</i></p> <p><i>HSPVA is strictly audition without an academic criteria to the audition.</i></p> <p><i>Middle Schools notify parents via email if a student qualifies for an audition and also confirms audition dates and times and follows up on missed audition and opportunities for a make-up audition.</i></p> <p><i>We did find that one of the middle schools sent an accidental email for students to audition that had not qualified. The coordinator recognized his mistake and contacted parents to rectify the error. The Magnet coordinator is not only new to the school, but new to the process. All parents were informed of the error.</i></p>	

HFT Item(s):	RESPONSE
<p>HFT SpED Alternate Assessment</p> <p>1. According to the new HISD SpED policy on alternative assessment (ATTACHMENT #1) only students having a composite IQ of lower than 60 and two functional domains lower than 60 qualify for the STAAR-alt. The Federation has two concerns with these guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First: It takes decision making away from the ARD committee, the new policy means that parents have no say in assessment of their kids unless they want to take it to a hearing officer. • Second: It is going to be incredibly difficult for a child with a 61 composite IQ to pass STAAR. How will we serve these kids? Are they going to be in a general education class focusing on academics while we ignore functional skills? Or are we going to keep them with an alternative curriculum that has a focus on the functional and just assume the failing score? 	<p>Office of Academic Services, Andrew Houlihan</p>
<p>RESPONSE: <i>James Faber, Special Education teacher, had the opportunity to share class concerns. Michael Weber and Joan Anderson addressed the concerns clarifying the conversation regarding the student next steps/assessments start when they have only met "60" and shared copies of the STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements with committee, attached is a copy. (ATTACHMENT 4)</i></p>	
<p>HFT Elementary School Recess</p> <p>2. Attached (ATTACHMENT #2) is a consultation agreement between the AFT affiliate in Austin and AISD. Also attached (ATTACHMENT #3) is the two-page recess policy from the HISD 2015-2016 School Guidelines. The Federation proposes that HISD simplify its recess policy to match the proposal in Austin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All elementary schools will provide 30 minutes of unstructured recess. • The withholding of recess will not be used as a punishment. 	<p>Office of Academic Services, Andrew Houlihan</p>
<p>RESPONSE (written response provided by Lance Menster): <i>In Elementary Physical Education, students should receive a minimum of either 30 minutes daily or 135 minutes weekly. For recess, students should receive at least 30 minutes daily. Recess does not replace physical education time.</i></p> <p>Discussion: <i>Committee members discussed using "should" vs. "will" in the recess policy also that recess should not be taken away as a punishment. HFT have been receiving many calls regarding this issue. Mr. Dewey also mentioned that this should not interfere with tutoring.</i></p>	
<p>HFT Clarification on RIF's</p> <p>3. We already have members being notified that they are being let go due to budget cuts. Are there any criteria being followed to determine which positions will be cut first or is it entirely up to a campus principal?</p>	<p>Office of Human Resources, Gloria Cavazos</p>
<p>RESPONSE (written response provided by Jeff McCanna): <i>The campus principal would work with the schools office to determine positions that would be cut or changed based on their staffing needs and budget.</i></p> <p>Discussion: <i>Zeph Capo asks if the RIF's criteria would be based on employee performance, age and ethnicity. Ms. Cavazos explained that it was more on change of programs and loss of enrollment. Ms. Cavazos mentioned that the Interim Superintendent shared some of the criteria at the morning's Principals' Meeting. Mr. Capo requested a copy of the speech or video. None are available, but Ms. Cavazos/Elneita Hutchins-Taylor will follow up with the Interim Superintendent for notes they can share with HFT and CHT.</i></p>	

HFT

Gifted and Talented Budget

4.

Section 42.156 of the Texas Education Code requires a .12 weighted allowance for a Gifted and Talented Student. According to the HISD budget FAQ the district intends to decrease that weight to .06. How is HISD getting around the .12 weighted allowance? The law and FAQ are posted below.

Sec. 42.156. GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT ALLOTMENT.

(a) For each identified student a school district serves in a program for gifted and talented students that the district certifies to the commissioner as complying with Subchapter D, Chapter 29, a district is entitled to an annual allotment equal to the district's adjusted basic allotment as determined under Section 42.102 or Section 42.103, as applicable, multiplied by .12 for each school year or a greater amount provided by appropriation.

HISD Budget FAQ

What are the WADA changes and how will they affect campuses?

The weight for economically disadvantaged or at-risk students would increase from .075 to .10, and the weight for homeless and refugee students would increase from .05 to .20. **The weight for gifted and talented students would decrease from .12 to .06.**

Because campuses are different sizes and have different-sized weighted populations, the financial impact would vary. Changes in WADA do not affect magnet funding.

Office of Finance

RESPONSE (written response provided by Glenn Reed/Adam Stephens):

Chapter 42 of the education code is the section that defines how school district receive their funding from the state. Those are the state weights. Chapter 42 doesn't require that school districts use the same formulas in funding their districts internally. In fact HISD is the only district in Texas that has a funding formula using weights and a per pupil distribution. Other districts allocate resources based off a staffing formula and non-salary allocation method which varies by district. Schools districts have the autonomy to fund internally as they see fit, they just have to meet minimum expenditures in each of the categories (State Comp Ed, Special Ed, Bilingual, CTE, and GT). HISD also has two additional weights that the state does not have, homeless and refugee.

The district will receive about \$6m for GT in 2015-2016 but the weight distributes \$13m due to the fact that we identify more than 5% of our Average Daily Attendance (ADA) as GT. The state caps our revenues at 5%, so we are currently supplementing GT funding in the district.

HFT

Lesson Plans

5.

Despite the new EEP (Regulation) we continue to have principals demand lesson plans far in excess of what is provided for in the regulation. We will bring examples to the meeting.

Chief School Officer,
Esther Omogbehin

RESPONSE:

HFT provided several copies of lesson plans to Dr. Esther Omogbehin. CHT stated that despite the lesson plan template on the HISD Hub, teachers are being asked to submit other formats.

Zeph Capo would like to give Chief Karla Loria special thanks for working with HFT to resolve some of these issues.

Ms. Cavazos will discuss with CSO at next meeting.

On March 7, 2016, Dr. Omogbehin responded via email: "The Chiefs have met with the SSO's to discuss and rectify the lesson plan violations."

HFT Teaching Assignments

6. Now that test-prep season is upon us we have reports of teachers being removed from their regular teaching duties to be used as test prep tutors. They no longer meet with their regular students yet are still the teacher of record and told to record grades assigned by someone else.

**Chief School Officer,
Esther Omogbehin**

RESPONSE:

Gloria Cavazos and Dr. Esther Omogbehin will discuss with CSO at the next meeting and will follow up with HFT and CHT.

On March 7, 2016, Dr. Omogbehin responded via email: "The Chiefs have requested names of schools where the teacher of record is being pulled out for test prep and replaced by a substitute teacher. We will be better able to follow up with concerns stated relating to this topic, by HFT."

HFT Teacher Aids in Power Up Schools

7. Teacher Aids in Power Up schools often travel from room to room and have no computer that they can easily access. They are required however, to be able to access and use the HUB. This is very difficult. Why are teacher aids in this situation given a laptop?

**Office of Information
Technology,
Lenny Schad**

RESPONSE (written response provided by Kevin Hodges):

The list of eligible positions to receive a PowerUp teacher laptop was created by leaders in the HS Office and approved by the PowerUp Steering Committee.

Schools do have the option of issuing Teacher Aids and other staff members' laptops and/or providing access to desktops from devices they have procured using their budgets and/or grant funds.

The district also provided each school with a number of new laptops and desktops as part of the "Win7" project. Many schools issued these new devices to their Teacher Aids and other staff members.

Discussion: *Gloria Cavazos will discuss with Lenny Schad and follow up with HFT and CHT.*

Meeting started at 4:45PM and ended at 5:35PM

Meeting:

Next Meeting:

Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 4:45 p.m. in 3SE06



Instructional Consultation Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

4:45 p.m.

3SE06

SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	SIGNATURE	GROUP/DEPARTMENT
ANTLEY, Steve	Present ✓	CHT (Congress of Houston Teachers)
ROBINSON, Charles	Charles Robinson	CHT (Congress of Houston Teachers)
CAPO, Zeph	Zeph Capo	HFT (Houston Federation of Teachers) ✓
DEWEY, Andrew	Andrew Dewey	HFT (Houston Federation of Teachers)
SPENCER, Jason GLORIA CAVAZOS	Present	Chief of Staff Human Res. (Facilitator)
Philippiz Liz	Liz Philippiz	Lib. Media Serv.
Pambrino, Marion	Marion Pambrino	Arts/Music
Spencer, Jason	Jason Spencer	HR
Ruede, Katherine	Katherine Ruede	ELE1
Paty Palacios	Paty Palacios	ELE1
James Faber	James Faber	HFT
Andy Dewey	Andy Dewey	HFT
Noelia Longo	Noelia Longo	
Andre Walker	Andre Walker	Athletics
Michael Webb	Michael Webb	Sped.
Joan Andersen	Joan Andersen	Special Educ
RECORDER:		



Instructional Consultation Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

4:45 p.m.

3SE06

SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	SIGNATURE	GROUP/DEPARTMENT
Susantaler	<i>[Signature]</i>	Stn Supp
Willie Spencer	<i>Willie Spencer</i>	Student Support
Rosa Hernandez	<i>[Signature]</i>	Director / SSO
Michelle Fennick	<i>Michelle Fennick</i>	SSO
Esther Onogho	<i>Onogho</i>	CSO
Lance Menster	Present	
Adam Stephens	Present	

RECORDER:

Gloria M. Martinez

[Signature]



Guidance for Determining Eligibility for Alternate Curriculum and Alternate Assessment

Purpose

This document provides general guidance to the campus-based ARD/IEP Committee on how to determine which students with cognitive disabilities are eligible to participate in Houston ISD's alternate curriculum and the state's alternate assessment. Houston ISD implements the Unique Learning System (ULS) for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The ULS is aligned with alternate state standards and the alternate assessment, State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness – Alternate (STAAR-Alternate 2).

Background

Students with disabilities are part of the state and federal accountability systems that measures proficiency, progress, closing the achievement gap, and college/career readiness. They also participate in local, national, and international assessments.

The newly signed Every Student Succeeds Act places a 1% participation cap of all students assessed. This equates to about 10% of students with disabilities.

Over the past three school years, the number of students with disabilities participating in the alternate assessment in Houston ISD has steadily increased to **17%, well above the state and federal target of 10%**, and students with cognitive disabilities continue to be served overwhelmingly, in separate instructional settings for more than 40% of the school day.

When choosing an appropriate assessment an important consideration is that students who participate in an alternate assessment may have limited post-secondary opportunities upon graduating high school. Their options for attending the college of their choice or seeking gainful employment may get narrower.

Based on trend data for the last five years, here are some assumptions about why there is an increased reliance on more restrictive environment and alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities:

- Placement in a self-contained program is based upon disability category and this influences participation in alternate assessment.
- Decisions about the type of curriculum students with disabilities will access are based primarily on the disability category of the student. Students with cognitive disabilities typically attend

Skills for Learning and Living (SLL), Preparing Students for Independence (PSI), and Structured Learning Class (SLC).

- The elimination of the STAAR Modified resulted in a decision to include more students with disabilities in the STAAR Alternate 2 assessment.

Considerations for Eligibility to Participate in the Alternate Curriculum and Assessment

The ARD/IEP Committee must thoroughly review the assurances in the STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements document. This review ensures that the decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 is based on the educational needs of the student.

Here are additional considerations for determining participation in the ULS and STAAR-Alternate 2:

- Rely on the student's **strengths** and **needs** to better inform placement, not their disability category.
- Confirm that the student exhibits a **full scale IQ and two areas of Adaptive Behavior** below 60.
- Verify that the student **requires extensive support to access the general curriculum** in a variety of settings that includes assistance with communication, response style, physical access or daily living skills.
- **Carefully review** the student's most recent Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE), Present Levels of Academic and Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP, and IEP goals and objectives.
- Ensure that the student **routinely demonstrates** knowledge and skills by methods other than paper-and-pencil tasks.
- **Confirm** that the student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability that prevents the student from accessing the standard curriculum with accommodations, supplemental supports, and adaptations.
- Prior to finalizing decision about a student's eligibility to participate in the alternate curriculum and assessment, review the [Worksheet for Alternate Curriculum Access](#).

Skills for Learning and Living (SLL), Preparing Students for Independence (PSI), and Structured Learning Class (SLC).

- The elimination of the STAAR Modified resulted in a decision to include more students with disabilities in the STAAR Alternate 2 assessment.

Considerations for Eligibility to Participate in the Alternate Curriculum and Assessment

The ARD/IEP Committee must thoroughly review the assurances in the STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements document. This review ensures that the decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 is based on the educational needs of the student.

Here are additional considerations for determining participation in the ULS and STAAR-Alternate 2:

- Rely on the student's **strengths** and **needs** to better inform placement, not their disability category.
- Confirm that the student exhibits a **full scale IQ and two areas of Adaptive Behavior** below 60.
- Verify that the student **requires extensive support to access the general curriculum** in a variety of settings that includes assistance with communication, response style, physical access or daily living skills.
- **Carefully review** the student's most recent Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE), Present Levels of Academic and Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP, and IEP goals and objectives.
- Ensure that the student **routinely demonstrates** knowledge and skills by methods other than paper-and-pencil tasks.
- **Confirm** that the student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability that prevents the student from accessing the standard curriculum with accommodations, supplemental supports, and adaptations.
- Prior to finalizing decision about a student's eligibility to participate in the alternate curriculum and assessment, review the [Worksheet for Alternate Curriculum Access](#).

**CONSULTATION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
AND EDUCATION AUSTIN**

SUBJECT: RECESS

Pending approval of the Board of Trustees, the parties hereby agree that beginning School Year 2016-17 that:

1. all elementary school will provide 30 minutes of unstructured recess, and
2. the withholding of recess will not be used as a punishment.

Dr. Paul D. Cruz, Ph.D.
AISD Representative

Ken Zarifis
EA Representative

Date

Date

RECESS

Structured and unstructured physical activities have been shown to have positive implications in the development of the whole child. Active play supports areas of growth concerning academic achievement and physical health.

In accordance with Texas Education Code 28.002, “a school district shall require students enrolled in kindergarten or a grade level below sixth grade to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes throughout the school year as part of the district’s physical education curriculum or through structured activity during a school campus’ daily recess.

If a school district determines, for any particular grade level below sixth, that this requirement is impractical due to scheduling concerns or other factors, students in that grade level may participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 135 minutes during each school week.”

The state further requires the following: “The local school health advisory council shall consider and make policy recommendations to the district concerning the importance of daily recess for elementary school students. The council must consider research regarding unstructured and undirected play, academic and social development, and the health benefits of daily recess in making the recommendations. The council shall ensure that local community values are reflected in any policy recommendation made to the district under this subsection.”

Therefore, the Houston Independent School District recommends that recess guidelines per campus reflect the values of the school’s community:

- **The HISD School Health Advisory Council strongly recommends a daily schedule for grades PK-5 that includes 30 minutes of recess per grade level.**
- Each school should determine what time of day the recess should be scheduled and collaborate with the Physical Education teacher to develop building-level guidelines to ensure adequate supervision and safety precautions.
- Recess will be thirty minutes including time leaving and returning to the classroom. Twenty minutes will be used for dependent and independent student activity through the use of structured and unstructured activity based upon the recess goals established by the responsible teacher within the weekly lesson plan.
- Dedicated time for structured recess should be strongly considered by schools that do not meet the minimum Physical Education requirement:
Chapter 103: Health and Safety, Subchapter AA-Commissioner’s Rules Concerning Physical Fitness

103.1003. Student Physical Activity requirements and Exemptions. (a) In accordance with the Texas Education Code (TEC), 28.002(1), all students in kindergarten-grade 8 must participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous daily physical activity subject only to the limitations or exemptions specified in this section.

(1) For a student enrolled in any grade level below grade 6, the school district or open-enrollment charter school may require a student to participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 135 minutes during each school week as an alternative.

- A certified educator must be responsible for monitoring students to prevent accidents.
- The student/teacher ratio must be appropriate to ensure adequate supervision.
- Each school will develop an alternative plan for recess on inclement weather days.
- Recess will be held outside if weather permits.
- Building principals will ensure that recess will not interfere with the Physical Education program.
- Recess and physical education will be in the daily program.
- Recess cannot be restricted to support classroom punishment.

Definitions

- **Physical Education:** A physical fitness lesson that adheres to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards planned, monitored and assessed by a certified teacher.
- **Structured Physical Activity:** Supporting lessons, recess and other fitness opportunities that adhere to the Physical Education guidelines stipulated by the state of Texas, to ensure that students receive a minimum allotment of 135 minutes of weekly exercise.
- **Structured Recess:** A physical fitness recess where students are to participate in independent activity guided by a certified educator.



STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Student Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

Name of District Personnel Completing Form _____ Position _____

Step 1: Review the Eligibility Criteria for STAAR Alternate 2

Prior to reviewing the eligibility criteria for STAAR Alternate 2, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee must understand all assessment options, including the characteristics of each assessment and the potential implications of each assessment choice.

According to 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §101.27(b), school districts are required to follow the procedures specified in the applicable test administration materials. As a result, the ARD committee must use this form to document its assessment decisions.

*If STAAR Alternate 2 is being considered, the ARD committee must review the four criteria below and select **Yes** or **No** if applicable to the student. To be eligible to participate in STAAR Alternate 2, the answer to all four of the questions below must be **Yes**. If the answer to any of the questions is **No**, the student is not eligible to participate in STAAR Alternate 2 and must participate in one of the other statewide assessments. Each **Yes** answer requires a justification that contains evidence that the student meets the criterion.*

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Does the student have a significant cognitive disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No

A significant cognitive disability is determined by the ARD committee and must be based on evaluation information performed by a qualified evaluation team. The significant cognitive disability must affect the student's intellectual potential and be documented as such in the student's individualized education program (IEP). A student with a significant cognitive disability has limited potential to reach grade-level expectations; whereas, a student with a learning disability has the potential to reach grade-level expectations, but has difficulty doing so due to his or her disability.

Justification:

2. Does the student require specialized supports to access the grade-level curriculum and environment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Federal regulations mandate that all students have access to and be assessed on grade-level curriculum. To access the state-mandated grade-level or course curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills or TEKS, a student with a significant cognitive disability needs specialized academic instruction as well as support throughout the day in areas such as expressing his or her needs, getting from place to place, eating lunch, negotiating social situations, and/or taking care of personal needs.

Justification:

3. Does the student require intensive, individualized instruction in a variety of instructional settings? ☐ Yes ☐ No

The student needs specialized academic instruction and techniques over a period of time to ensure that he or she can learn, retain information, and transfer skills to other settings.

Justification:

4. Does the student access and participate in the grade-level TEKS through prerequisite skills? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Access to the grade-level curriculum is mandated by the federal government. A student with a significant cognitive disability requires access to the TEKS through prerequisite skills that are linked to the grade-level curriculum.

Justification:

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills-Alternate (TAKS-Alt)

Descriptors for the Participation Requirements for TAKS-Alt

Students receiving special education services who have the most significant cognitive disabilities and are unable to participate in the other statewide assessments even with substantial accommodations and/or modifications will be assessed with TAKS-Alt.

Admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees may decide that a student's knowledge and skills can best be assessed with TAKS-Alt if the student meets **all** of the following participation criteria.

The student

- **requires supports to access the general curriculum that may include assistance involving communication, response style, physical access, or daily living skills,**
- **requires direct, intensive, individualized instruction in a variety of settings to accomplish the acquisition, maintenance and generalization of skills,**
- **accesses and participates in the grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) through activities that focus on prerequisite skills,**
- **demonstrates knowledge and skills routinely in class by methods other than paper and pencil tasks, and**
- **demonstrates performance objectives that may include real life applications of the grade-level TEKS as appropriate to the student's abilities and needs.**

▶ Students qualifying for TAKS-Alt must first meet the description provided in the box at the left before the five bulleted requirements listed below it are considered. Significant cognitive disability is determined by the ARD committee and is not linked to a specific disability.

▶ The way a student is routinely assessed (multiple choice or performance-based) should be considered when the ARD is determining a student's TAKS-Alt eligibility.

▶ According to federal regulations all students must be assessed on grade-level curriculum. Students with significant cognitive disabilities need specialized academic help as well as help throughout the day in areas such as expressing his/her needs, getting from place to place, eating lunch, and/or taking care of personal needs.

▶ The student needs specialized instruction and techniques over a period of time to ensure that he or she can learn, retain information, and transfer skills to other settings.

▶ Access to the TEKS is mandated by the federal government. Students with significant cognitive disabilities may require access through prerequisite skills that are linked to the grade-level curriculum.

▶ The student may be able to perform some paper-and-pencil tasks (tracing words, copying spelling words, completing simple worksheets, even writing simple phrases or sentences). However, these students are typically evaluated by methods other than paper and pencil such as by observing student performance, using manipulatives, verbalizing responses, and/or activation of augmentative communication devices.

▶ The student may demonstrate academic skills by applying them in environments where the needed skill may naturally occur such as the use of reading, math and science skills during a cooking activity in a kitchen.

Worksheet for Determining Participation in the Alternate Curriculum and Assessment

Prior to determining if the alternate curriculum is appropriate for a student with a significant cognitive disability, the admission, review and dismissal (ARD) / Individual Education Program (IEP) committee must understand the characteristics of the disability that warrants participation in the alternate curriculum and the potential future implications of this decision.

In order for the alternate curriculum to be considered the ARD/IEP committee must review these four criteria. To be eligible to participate in the alternate curriculum, **the answer to all four questions must be "Yes"**. If the answer to any of the questions is "No", review additional data including progress made towards IEP goals, classroom work samples and additional information from the student's Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE) to determine if accessing the alternate curriculum is appropriate and necessary for the student.

Decisions regarding participation in the alternate curriculum or transitioning from the alternate curriculum to a standard curriculum is an ARD/IEP committee decision and should be made when it is in the best interest of the student.

THE STUDENT:

Exhibits a Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) and two areas of Adaptive Behavior below 60.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Look at most recent FIE.

Note: The FSIQ threshold of near 70 or below is used for determining Intellectual Disability. Students with significant cognitive disability typically have an FSIQ below 60.

Requires supports to access the general curriculum in a variety of settings that may include assistance involving communication, response style, physical access, or daily living skills.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Look at most recent FIE, Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP), IEP goals and objectives.

Demonstrates knowledge and skills routinely in class by methods other than paper-and-pencil tasks.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Look at teacher observations and current classroom work products.

Demonstrates performance objectives that may include real-life applications of the grade-level TEKS as appropriate to the student's abilities and needs.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Look at IEP goals and objectives.