# IEP File Review Rubric

The alternate assessment is an option for students with the *most significant* cognitive disabilities. When making decisions regarding assessment eligibility, teams must determine if a student meets all three of the following criteria.

# Criterion One: Significant Cognitive Disability

In making decisions regarding assessment participation, teams must first determine if a student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability. Below are some considerations teams must address to ensure decisions are based on a holistic view of the student and do not focus purely an IQ score as there are many factors that can impact assessment performance.

When reviewing a student file, rate the following considerations using the scale:

1 = No evidence to support the IEP team decision

3 = Minimal evidence or inconclusive support of the IEP team decision

5 = Clear evidence to support the IEP team decision

| **Evidence of Considerations Used to Determine Eligibility** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **Additional Considerations** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **The team completed all the evaluation procedures to help determine the presence of a significant\* cognitive disability.**   (\* “Significant” indicates that there is a high level of severity associated with the cognitive disability.) |  |  |  |  |  | 1. Evaluation included all relevant areas associated with a cognitive disability, following intellectual disability evaluation procedures ([here](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/eligibility/se_eligibility_intellectual_dis.pdf)). |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The Exclusionary Factors Worksheet was completed as part of the evaluation, or the evaluator adequately addressed each exclusionary factor. See Appendix J of the Intellectual [Disability Evaluation Guidance Document](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/eligibility/se_intellectual_disability_evaluation_guidance_document.pdf). |  |
| 1. **There is no reason to suspect that the IQ score is lower than the student’s true ability.**   **For example:**   * ***Communication or behaviors impacted testing performance.*** * ***Other areas of functioning indicate higher ability (e.g., improved language or academic achievement, a history of higher ability).*** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. Review of all past evaluations completed. The evaluator addressed differences in any assessment results and none of the differences reflected higher abilities than the student’s current IQ score/test performance. (*e.g., language, academics, and daily living skills possibly indicating higher levels of ability compared to cognitive assessment results).* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The team completed the Tennessee assessment instrument selection form or provided other documentation of how assessments were chosen based on the unique needs of the student in order to obtain the most valid estimate of ability. |  |
|  | | | | | 1. Based on the evaluation results, factors that may have negatively impacted test performance were considered *(e.g., influence of language, behavior, or motor delays)*   *Example: If language may impact testing, a nonverbal cognitive assessment (e.g., UNIT-2, WNV, CTONI, TONI, and Leiter) was administered to rule out the impact of language deficits.* |  |
| 1. **The best estimate of the student’s cognitive ability represents a significant\* cognitive disability.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The best estimate of the student’s cognitive ability took into consideration other factors that may have impacted performance on the cognitive assessment. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. There is evidence that the student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability. |  |
| 1. **The adaptive behavior scores are consistently, significantly low compared to same-aged peers for both parent and teacher raters.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The adaptive measure addresses all three domains of adaptive behavior (i.e., conceptual, practical, and social domains). |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. If the adaptive behavior scores were inconsistent, the assessment specialists documented systemic observation indicating which scores were most consistent with the student’s adaptive behavior. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The student’s adaptive behavior scores and observations reflect an inability to independently demonstrate daily living skills. |  |

**Criterion Two: The student is learning content linked to (derived from) Tennessee Academic Standards.**

For students who meet criterion 1, the team must then determine if the student is engaging in learning linked to the Tennessee Academic Standards. Below are some considerations to guide teams in making this determination.

When reviewing a student file, rate the following considerations using the scale:

1 = No evidence to support the IEP team decision

3 = Minimal evidence or inconclusive support of the IEP team decision

5 = Clear evidence to support the IEP team decision

| **Evidence of Considerations Used to Determine Eligibility** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **Additional Considerations** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **The student’s disability impacts their *active* participation in instruction that is aligned to state standards.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The student participates in daily standards-based instruction in the areas of English language arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The instructional design must include significant supports, accommodations, and/or modifications to engage the student in the learning. Engagement may include:  * *using content vocabulary,* * *connecting concepts,* * *demonstrating a concept or idea, and/or*   *physically communicating interest and engagement (i.e., laughing, pointing, excitement).* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The student requires supports, scaffolds, or modifications to ask questions for more information or to build understanding. |  |
| 1. **The instruction is designed to support the student’s active participation.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. Accommodations are built into the lesson or designed for the student’s individual access and participation. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. There is evidence of a system or strategy used to modify the instruction. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. Specific strategies are used to engage and elicit responses and support student learning. |  |
| 1. **Grade-level state standards are broken down into smaller skills, steps, or units to support student learning.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. Modifications are directly aligned to the grade-level standards. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. Planning reflects the belief that all students will make progress towards grade-level standards, incorporating accommodations and modifications as needed. |  |
| 1. **The IEP indicates where, when, and how the student will actively participate in instruction aligned to state standards.**   *(All students, regardless of least restrictive environment (LRE), should be provided meaningful instruction aligned to grade-level standards.)* |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The IEP clearly addresses participation in ELA, math, science and social studies.  * *Clear indication of where the student will be taught standards-based instruction* * *Clear indication of who, if anyone, is needed to support* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The accommodations and/or modifications are individualized for student engagement, access, and learning. |  |
| 1. **Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives support increased opportunities for learning within the grade-level standards.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The skills in the IEP goals and short-term objectives are generalizable across subjects and settings. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. At least one goal is sufficiently designed to increase the student’s literacy skills. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. At least one goal is sufficiently designed to increase the student’s communication skills. |  |
| 1. **There is evidence of student progress on IEP annual goals, short-term objectives (when present), *and* within instruction aligned to state standards.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. There is formal and informal evidence of student progress toward mastery of standards-based instruction  * *Curriculum-based measures* * *Content-based projects/assessments.* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. There is formal and informal evidence of student progress towards mastery of IEP goals and objectives. |  |

# Criterion Three: The student requires extensive, directly individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.

For students who meet Criteria One and Two, the team must then determine if the student requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports. Below are some considerations to guide teams in making this determination.

When reviewing a student file, rate the following considerations using the scale:

1 = No evidence to support the IEP team decision

3 = Minimal evidence or inconclusive support of the IEP team decision

5 = Clear evidence to support the IEP team decision

| **Evidence of Considerations Used to Determine Eligibility** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **Additional Considerations** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **The LRE determination is based on current, comprehensive data.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. Sufficient data is included within the present levels of educational performance (PLEPs) to determine where and how the student will participate in instruction. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The data supports the LRE determined for each subject/class. For students whose LRE includes a special education setting, there is adequate evidence that general education was the first option considered by the IEP team. (*e.g., evidence of accommodations and modifications attempted within the general education setting in the past paired with evidence of little to no progress made).* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. The evidence and data support the use of selected accommodations and/or modifications to support or increase meaningful participation. |  |
| 1. **There is clear evidence that the IEP team made an individualized decision based on student strengths and needs.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The student’s identified strengths in the IEP are related to learning and academics. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. Student strengths have been considered in the selection/use of interventions, accommodations, modifications, or supports *(e.g., a student with strong social skills using peer tutoring as an accommodation; a student with strong auditory memory skills using audio supports, etc.).* |
| 1. **The selected accommodations, modifications, services, and/or supports identified in the IEP increase the student’s active participation in instruction.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. Accommodations and/or modifications are subject-specific. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. Accommodations and/or modifications are setting-specific. |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. Evidence of changes to the accommodations, modifications, services, and/or supports as the student learns additional skills, language, and content each year. |
| 1. **There is evidence that the student requires extensive and substantial specific accommodations, modifications, services, or supports.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The IEP contains sufficient evidence and data to indicate a student requires *substantial* accommodations, modifications, services, and supports.  * *PLEPs* * *Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives* * *Communication needs or fluent use of an augmentative, assistive communication system (Primary language fluency and skill level (English learner) and the impact of learning a second language on the student’s performance.)* |  |
| 1. **A process is in place to ensure the accommodations, modifications, services, or supports are appropriate for the student.** |  |  |  |  |  | 1. The impact of an accommodation, modification, service, or support been verified. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1. There is evidence that the student actively uses the accommodation, modification, service, or support when engaged in learning. |  |