

New Hampshire Alternate Learning Progression Assessment (NH ALPs)

Introduction:

As parents/guardians, we want our children to be provided with every opportunity to succeed. In school, this includes learning to read and write as well as learning mathematics and science. The goal is for all children to graduate from High School with a diploma, able to read, write, and communicate; ready to pursue college or a career of their choosing. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA- also known as No Child Left Behind) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that schools not only provide expectations for student learning, but also assess to determine if students are making progress.

These expectations for learning also apply to all children, even those with significant disabilities. Both the ESEA and IDEA, require all New Hampshire children participate in statewide assessments. In NH, the two accountability assessments are the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and the NH Alternate Learning Progressions Assessment (NH ALPs).

What is the New Hampshire Alternate Learning Progression Assessment (NH ALPs)?

NH ALPs is the acronym for New Hampshire's alternate statewide assessment. The NH ALPs is intended for children with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The "most significant cognitive disabilities" may include students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, multiple disabilities, etc. It is required that children who participate in the NH ALPs are instructed and assessed on the same content that their grade level peers are learning but with alternate achievement expectations for their performance on those standards. This means that assessments are age appropriate, challenging, and individualized to each child's current performance level.

Who and how is it decided that my child will participate in the NH ALPs?

The IEP Team (of which parents are a member) considers specific criteria and may use a worksheet developed by the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) to answer specific questions about your child's participation in the NH ALPs. You can find the worksheet at: <http://www.measuredprogress.org/participation> (2012-2013 participation of students with disabilities in Statewide Assessment - Decision Making Worksheet).

If the IEP Team is considering the NH ALPs or considering transitioning from the NH ALPs to the NECAP, your child may take the NECAP on a trial basis to help inform this decision. IEP Teams can find more information about this process in the NH ALPs Administration Manual.

What does the NH ALPs assess?

All children need to demonstrate their knowledge and skills related to their current grade level in mathematics, reading, science and writing. Children participating in the NH ALPs are assessed on the same academic standards that all children are expected to learn. They are allowed to show their academic knowledge and skills at a lower level of depth and complexity than their same-age peers. The NH ALPs allows your child to show a more gradual achievement of the challenging academic standards expected to be met by peers in the same general curriculum.

What content areas are assessed in the NH ALPs?

Grade	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
2	Yes	Yes	-	-
3	Yes	Yes	-	-
4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes	-	-
6	Yes	Yes		
7	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
8	-	-	-	Yes
10	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
11	-	-	-	Yes

How does the NH ALPs assess my child?

The NH ALPs is a portfolio assessment, using video as evidence of performance on academic standards. The IEP Team works together all year to capture the "highest and best" performance of your child and puts it together in the portfolio. The portfolio is then reviewed by a team of objective, trained scorers to determine the results.

The NHDOE provides school districts with guidelines on what needs to be included in the NH ALPs portfolio. (<http://www.measuredprogress.org/The-Test>) The NHDOE also provides support materials, like descriptions of different levels of academic performance and what to expect at each level. See for example:

<http://www.measuredprogress.org/documents/10157/17184/ReadingChallengeLevels.pdf>.

These materials may be helpful in identifying and prioritizing academic learning goals.

How does video data collection make the NH ALPs assessment more valid?

Video captured of your child's performance provides real time examples of what your child has learned and how they show it. Children who take the alternate assessment may have a variety of difficulties with motor control, communication, attention and sensory regulation. Video data helps the assessment scorers see and hear what your child can do which increases the validity of the assessment.

When is the NH ALPs administered?

The formal window for this assessment is December - May. Since it is a portfolio process, it is essential that the IEP Team start the process as early as possible each school year to ensure time to collect data that represents your child's best performance.

How and when do I find out the results of my child's performance?

You will receive a NH ALPs Student Report that describes your child's individual performance for each of the content areas assessed. Reports of the results of the spring administration of the NH ALPs are usually returned to the school and parents/guardians the following fall. You should contact your child's IEP Team if you have questions about the Student Report or for more information on your child's overall growth.

Is Assistive Technology allowed as part of the NH ALPs?

Yes if Assistive Technology is part of your child's IEP. Assistive Technology should be used during the NH ALPs when Assistive Technology is part of your child's normal routine during instruction and assessment.

What is my role in the NH ALPs?

Parents/guardians have a role in many parts of the NH ALPs process. It is important to work with the IEP Team to collaborate and support your child throughout the entire assessment process.

- Assessment Decision: As the parents/guardians you are a member of the IEP Team and therefore participate in the decision about which assessment is appropriate for your child. You must also give consent for your child to participate in the NH ALPs by signing the IEP.
- Instruction & Assessment Data Collection: Throughout the school year, you can collaborate with the IEP Team to ensure that your child is being taught the general education curriculum, that the supports (like Assistive Technology) are in place for your child to benefit from that instruction, and that data is collected to show how and what your child is learning.
- Final Portfolio Review: When the portfolio is completed you are asked to review and comment on the content of the portfolio and your child's academic progress. You will also be asked to sign a Parent/Guardian Portfolio Review Statement prior to the school submitting the NH ALPs portfolio for scoring.

Why is it important for me and my child's IEP Team to work together in the NH ALPs?

Portfolios take the least amount of time when there is ongoing collaboration between all IEP Team members regarding the development of tasks, planning activities, and data collection methods.

Portfolios are the most difficult and time consuming when there is minimal collaboration, when special educators work in isolation, and when the academics taught have a weak connection to the general curriculum or are not standards-based.

What if I want more information about the NH ALPs?

New Hampshire Department of Education

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http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/assessment/alt_assess/index.htm

Parent Information Center on Special Education

603-224-7005 or 1-800-947-7005

www.nhspecialed.org

Measured Progress

<http://measuredprogress.org/>