

Appendix H: Introduction

NYSAA Frameworks

ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

New York State Alternate Assessment
(September 2010)

NYSAA Frameworks for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies (HS only)

The New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) is a datafolio assessment that documents student achievement in the content areas of English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies (HS only). The datafolio is a collection of student performance data based on the core curriculum for grades 3–8 and high school for ELA and mathematics, grades 4, 8, and high school for science, and high school for social studies.

The NYSAA Frameworks represent the alignment of Alternate Grade Level Indicators (AGLIs) with the core curriculum established for all students by the Board of Regents. Teachers of students who have been designated for NYSAA should use the Frameworks to help plan and implement daily content, instruction, and assessment tasks that are based on grade level core curriculum. For a student with a severe cognitive disability, the grade level expectations may be modified in depth and breadth, but must parallel the curriculum, materials, and instruction that the student’s nondisabled peers are learning about as part of their classroom instruction. For example, a teacher instructing a student about Shakespeare uses a modified text version of a Shakespearean play. This ensures that students with severe cognitive disabilities are being held to grade level expectations and therefore high expectations of academic achievement.

By using the NYSAA Frameworks teachers can assess students on tasks that are aligned to the grade level content found in the New York State core curriculum. For each content area, the Frameworks include

- test blueprints;
- essences of grade level performance expectations;
- AGLIs; and
- Sample Assessment Tasks.

NYSAA Test Blueprints

The next section of the Frameworks includes a test blueprint for each content area that indicates the grade level content to be assessed. The teacher uses the blueprint to identify the components on which the student will be assessed. Each blueprint has both required and choice components. The top table in each blueprint reflects the required components for the assessment; the bottom table reflects the choice components for the assessment. To assess a student at Grade 3, for example, a teacher determines that the student will be assessed on two content areas: ELA and mathematics. For ELA, the teacher identifies that the two required components are “reading” and “listening.” The bottom table indicates that the teacher can select one component from either “reading for literary response and expression” or “reading for social interaction” and one component from either “listening for literary response and expression” or “listening for social interaction.”

Similarly for Grade 3 mathematics, the teacher identifies that the two required components are “number sense and operations” and “measurement.” The bottom table indicates that the teacher can select one component from either “number systems” or “operations” and one component from either “units of measurement” or “units/estimation.” Once

the content areas and components for assessment have been identified, the teacher will review the essences of student performance expectations at the student’s grade level.

Grade Level Frameworks

The next section includes the individual grade levels of the Frameworks. Each grade contains the specific content areas that are required to be assessed, starting with ELA, then mathematics, then science (if applicable), and finally social studies (HS only). Each of the content Frameworks for the grade levels contains the essences of the grade level student performance expectations derived from the core curriculum (see below), the AGLIs, and the sample assessment tasks (SATs). There is a header at the top right of each page to indicate the section of the Frameworks, the grade, and the content area.

The Essences of Grade Level Student Performance Expectations (GLIs and Essences)

The grade level performance expectations of the core curriculum and the essences of those expectations are provided in the next section. The performance expectations show the portion of the core curriculum that was selected by the stakeholder workgroup to be included in the Frameworks. The workgroup, including curriculum experts, identified the essences or major understandings of the performance expectations. The page numbers indicate where these expectations are located in the core curriculum guide.

Alternate Grade Level Indicators

The next section includes the AGLIs that are based on the essences of the core curriculum. Each bulleted AGLI describes student performance expectations for students with severe cognitive disabilities. The AGLIs vary in complexity, from less complex to more complex, to provide various entry points for the student to access the grade level core curriculum. This progression in most cases starts with the beginning skill of simply attending to something or recognizing something with very minimal to no distracters; it then moves to identifying or selecting something from choices with multiple distracters, and then to describing, sorting, etc., which requires the student to demonstrate some increased knowledge, skills, and abilities. A teacher must select one AGLI from this section for each required component. When reviewing the AGLIs, start from the most complex level and work backward to the point that is most appropriate for the student.

Each AGLI has a five-digit AGLI code associated with it. This is for reporting purposes. The AGLI codes are not necessarily consecutively ordered due to some of the additions and edits made to the AGLIs for each content area. Be sure to carefully transfer the AGLI code and corresponding AGLI text to the Data Summary Sheets.

Sample Assessment Tasks (SATs)

Finally, the teacher may use the SATs in the following section to select an assessment task. The tasks are arranged from less complex to more complex and correspond to an AGLI. Each SAT has a code in the column before it to indicate the AGLI code that it aligns to. For example, in Grade 3 ELA, SAT12107 “The student will read or attend to various genres during reading time” is aligned to AGLI code 12107 “read or attend to various genres as they are read aloud (poetry, prose, fiction, nonfiction, drama).” Every AGLI has at least one corresponding

SAT and some AGLIs may have more than one SAT.. If there is more than one SAT for an AGLI, the SAT code has an A, B, or C after the five-digit number. The SATs only go with the preceding set of AGLIs.

Teachers may use the tasks listed on the Sample Assessment Tasks pages, modify one of the tasks listed, or develop an original task. It is important to note that the tasks are just samples and are not required to be used; however, the tasks are written with best practices in demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and understanding of the AGLI being assessed and are already aligned with grade level expectations in the core curriculum. Some tasks are very specific, and it is important to confirm that the verifying evidence demonstrates the task as written. Tasks that are not listed may not be aligned and are at risk of not being connected to grade level content. One way to ensure alignment when writing an original task is to use the verb and direct object from the chosen AGLI.

Also provided next to each SAT are **Possible** Datafolio Products and Verifying Evidence Assessment Strategies. These are also only suggestions of some ways to show different types of evidence demonstrating the assessment tasks. It is important to note that the possible evidence and assessment strategy bullet is referring to only one piece of verifying evidence; teachers must ensure that the verifying evidence included in a datafolio meets any “and,” “or,” and “and/or” qualifying statements or plurals contained in the task.

The remainder of the Frameworks for each content area is organized in the same manner. Teachers are encouraged to review the contents and make decisions that will lead to assessing students by using challenging tasks based on the core curriculum and linked to the student’s grade level.