Alternate Scoring Process Guide
2021 Edition

Alternate Scoring for English Learners with Disabilities Whose IEP or 504 Precludes Assessment in One or More Domain on WIDA's ACCESS for ELLs®

Alaska has established alternate scoring procedures to calculate an overall composite proficiency level (CPL) for English learners (ELs) with a disability whose disability precludes their assessment in one or more domain on WIDA's ACCESS for ELLs®. The calculation of the CPL allows the student to be considered for exit from EL status, as well as be included in calculations for growth on the EL Progress Indicator of our statewide accountability system, the System for School Success.

In determining which student situation might be eligible for alternate scoring, administrators and teachers must determine that:

- The student has a documented disability or impairment (IEP or 504) applicable to the domain(s);
- Even with available accommodations, the student cannot engage with (access) the domain; and
- The 504 plan or IEP team, in consultation with the educator(s) supporting student's English language development, have established a need for a domain exemption.

It is essential that the team include participants who have the requisite knowledge of the child's English language development needs. The determination to exempt a domain must be documented and approval for alternate scoring must be obtained from DEED.

Timeline for Applying for Alternate Scoring:

Sep 1 – Dec 31	Districts complete and submit the request for alternate scoring to DEED
Jan 1 – Jan 31	DEED responds to district requests
Jan 31 – Mar 1	Districts may appeal DEED's decision
Feb 1 – Mar 31	Administer ACCESS for ELLs
Mid-late June	DEED provides manually calculated overall proficiency level (CPL) to districts for *approved* students

Process for Applying for Alternate Scoring:

Step 1: Determine if the student for which you are applying for alternate scoring meets all three of the required criteria listed on page 1.

Step 2: Watch the [Alternate Scoring for ELs with Disabilities video](#) and read through the FAQ on pages 3-5 of this document.

Step 3: Complete the application by clicking the link below. Be prepared to provide the following information:

- District
- School
- AKSID
- Student name
- Student date of birth
- Student grade
- Primary disability
- Domain(s) in which the student is exempted
- Reason for exemption

Step 4: Use the button on the bottom of the application to submit the application securely through ZendTo.

Instructions for sending files securely through ZendTo can be found on pages 5-8 of this document.

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD APPLICATION](#)

All cases of alternate scoring are subject to monitoring or review by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Frequently Asked Questions about Alternate Scoring

Q: Who are the candidates for alternate scoring?

A: Candidates for alternate scoring are English learners with a documented disability that does not allow them to engage with the domain, even with available accommodations. For example, a student who is deaf might be exempt from taking the listening domain or a student who is nonverbal might be exempt from taking the speaking domain. However, a student with a speech impediment that hampers clear articulation, but engages in verbal exchange, should participate in assessing her or his English speaking skills. A student who can access a domain, even if supporting educators question the soundness of the subsequent scores due to the nature of a student's response, are *not* candidates for alternate scoring.

Q: Who should be part of the student team responsible for making the decision to exempt a student from a domain and apply for alternate scoring?

A: It is recommended that the following members be included on the decision making team:

- At least one expert on the student's English language acquisition
- At least one expert on the student's special education goals and services
- At least one expert on the student's general education content achievement
- At least one family member (and any requisite interpreters/cultural liaisons to ensure family members' full participation in the team)
- Any related service providers who work with the student

Q: Can a student who is reading multiple grades below grade level be exempted from the reading domain?

A: A student may be excused from a domain only if he or she is unable to participate in that domain due to their disability and not a lack of instruction or opportunity to learn. For example, it may be appropriate to exempt a student who is blind and cannot read Braille from the reading domain. However, an English learner (EL) reading below grade level is still a reader and would not qualify for an exemption. In some cases, recently arrived ELs have had no previous language instruction, even in their native language, and so may just be beginning to develop fundamental reading skills such as phonological awareness or decoding skills. These students would not qualify for alternate scoring unless teams have evidence that it is the student's disability that is causing their inability to access the reading domain and not the student's lack of previous instruction or opportunity.

Q: For a student to receive alternate scoring, should the decision to exempt the student from a particular domain be documented?

A: Yes. It is the responsibility of the district to determine eligibility and to document the domain exemption. Domain exemption decisions should be made and documented with input from Special Education leadership or relevant 504 coordinators. All cases of alternate scoring are subject to monitoring by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Q: Will I have to apply each year for the same student, even though their disability is unchanging?

A: Yes. Because IEP and 504 goals can change, you will have to apply each year.

Q: If a student is granted alternate scoring, how will the overall composite proficiency level (CPL) be calculated?

A: The CPL will be calculated using redistributed weighting. Currently, the listening and speaking domains each account for 15% of the CPL. Reading and writing each account for 35%. The table below outlines the redistributed

weights based on a single exempted domain. If more than one domain were exempted, a similar table would be used.

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
All domains	15%	15%	35%	35%
No Listening	X	18%	41%	41%
No Speaking	18%	X	41%	41%
No Reading	23%	23%	X	54%
No Writing	23%	23%	54%	X

Q: What is the exit criteria for a student who is granted alternate scoring?

A: The current statewide exit criteria, which applies to ALL English learners, is an overall composite proficiency level of 4.5 or higher on tier B or tier C of ACCESS for ELLs.

A student with alternate scoring would exit English learner status if they met minimum overall composite score after redistribution of the weights. Table 1 below shows an example of a student with alternate scoring for an exemption in the speaking domain who met exit criteria. Table 2 shows a similar example for a student with alternate scoring for an exemption in the reading domain who did *not* meet exit criteria.

Table 1	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Overall
Score	4.1	X	6.0	4.1	4.7

Table 2	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Overall
Score	4.1	3.8	X	4.1	4.0

How to Drop-Off Files Securely Using ZendTo

1. Go to [ZendTo](https://drop.state.ak.us/drop) (drop.state.ak.us/drop)
2. Click on "Drop-off"

3. On the next page, enter in your name, your school district, and your email address.
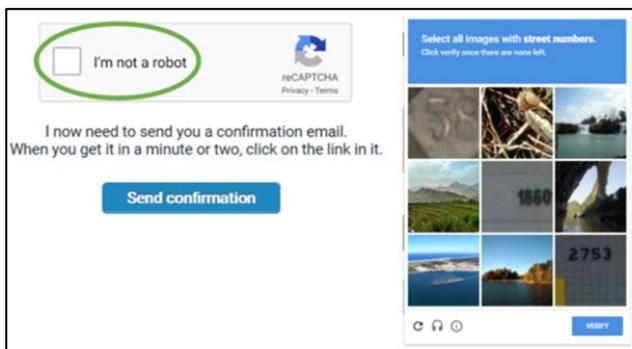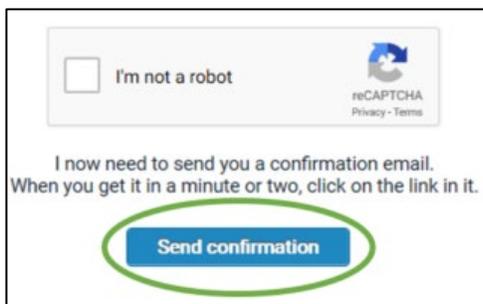

4. At the bottom of the screen, you will be asked to confirm that you are a *real* person by clicking the Captcha box "I'm not a robot", you may be asked to verify with photos.

5. Click "Send Confirmation".

6. The next page confirms that an email has been sent to the email you entered from ZendTo. This email should arrive just moments after this screen.

7. This is an example of what this email referenced above looks like. Click on link to be re-directed to the

ZendTo site.

8. In the pop up window under "Name", type "EL Alternate Score Request". For "Email", type EL.AlternateScoring@alaska.gov.
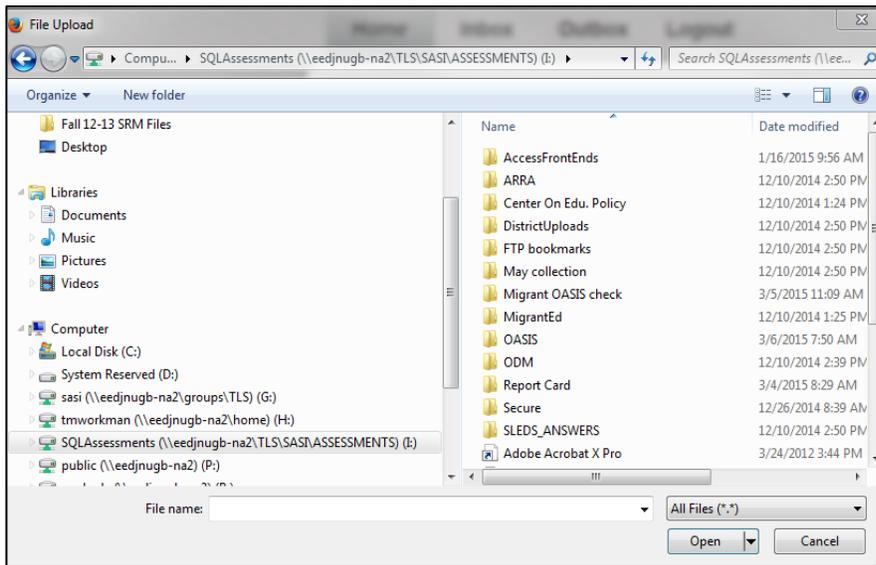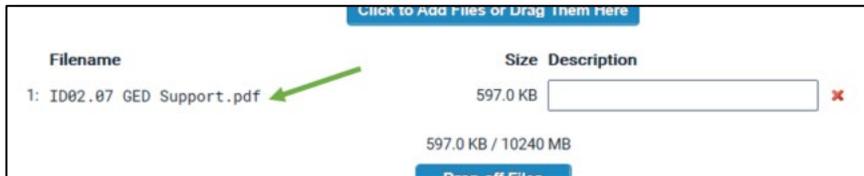

The recipient will appear in the 'To' field.
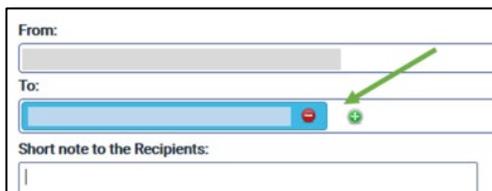
9. Attach the file you wish to send by dragging the file onto the screen or clicking "Click to Add Files or Drag Them Here."
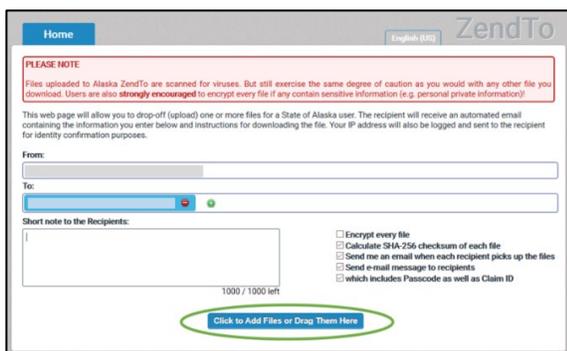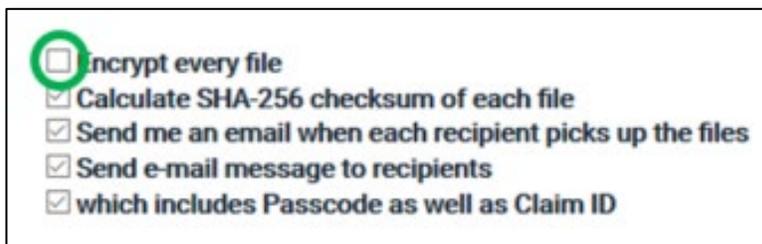

10. If you choose to click to Add Files, then select the file you wish to send.

11. After you select a file, it will appear under Filename. Follow steps 9 and 10 for each file you wish to send.

12. Should your file include Personally Identifiable Information (PII) choose box next to "Encrypt every file", and leave other boxes checked.
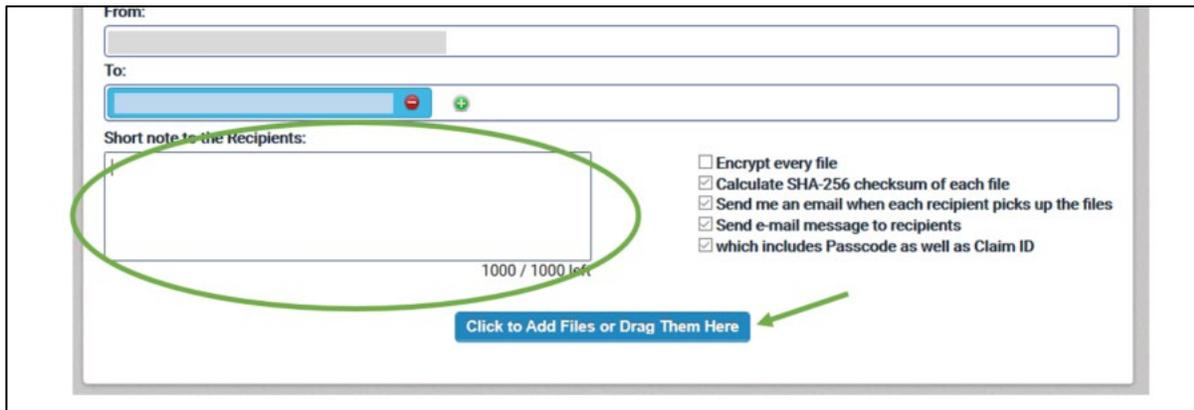

13. If encrypting, choose a passphrase that is at least 10 digits long. You will enter it twice.
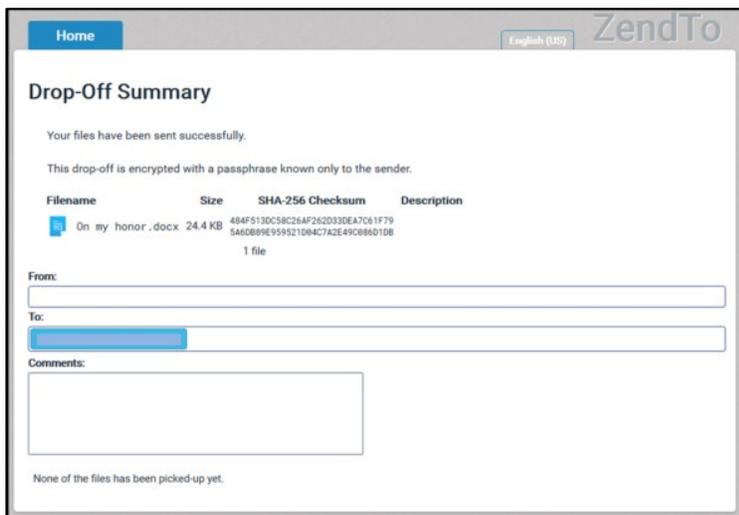

14. Email the passphrase to EL.AlternateScoring@alaska.gov.
15. After you are finished uploading files, you may choose to write a short note to the recipient(s) in the box. When you are finished, click 'Drop off Files'.

16. You will receive a notice of drop-off summary when items have been dropped.

Note: If the file does not load when you hit the 'Drop Off File' button you may need to turn off the "pop-up blocker" in your Internet browser. If you turn off the "pop-up blocker' and the file still does not load, try a different web browser.