

# Alternate Assessment Red Flags

## WHAT IS THE FIRST CONTACT SURVEY?

The First Contact survey is the first step once students are enrolled and rostered for the DLM. The First Contact survey consists of learner characteristics and covers a variety of areas, including communication, academic skills, and attention. The first contact survey is completed by the special education teacher for every student taking the DLM. This survey must be completed before teachers can choose Essential Elements and linkage levels for the fall test window. For students who took the DLM the previous school year, the survey must be reviewed, updated, and submitted each year. No testlets can be assigned until it is submitted.

## WHAT IS A RED FLAG?

The NDDPI Office of Specially Designed Services analyzes variables from the NDAA First Contact survey to assist districts in making sure only those students with the most significant cognitive disability are taking the alternate assessment. A red flag is a data point that stands out or looks questionable when thinking about the most significant cognitive disability. Some students identified with red flags from the first contact survey may be more appropriately challenged by taking the ND A + with accommodations. IEP teams should review the red flags to ensure the first contact survey is accurate.

## VARIABLES ANALYZED

### **1.Primary Disability**

Three primary disabilities that will trigger a flag include speech and language impairment, specific learning disability, and emotional disturbance. The first requirement for a student to participate in the NDAA is that the student has a most significant cognitive disability – a review of student records indicates a disability that significantly impact intellectual functioning. Students must have a deficit in the student's ability to plan, comprehend, and reason. While a student with only a specific learning disability, speech impairment, or emotional disturbance may have significant academic challenges, he or she has the intellectual potential to reach grade-level expectations. The second requirement is the student has significant deficits in adaptive behavior – those skills and behaviors essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life. These limit a student's ability to apply social and practical skills such as personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing and eating, using money, and other functional skills across life domains. It is unlikely to see these deficits in a student with a high-incidence disability only, such as a specific learning disability, speech-language impairment, or emotional disturbance.

- Is the primary disability marked on the First Contact survey correct?
- Is this the most appropriate primary disability for the student? We know students with a most significant cognitive disability continue to need supports in adult life.

### **2. Instructional reading level with comprehension**

- If a 3rd-grade student can read with comprehension at a pre-primer to 1st-grade level in the fall, is this a most significant cognitive disability?

- If a 4th or 5th-grade student can read with comprehension at a 1st to 2nd-grade level in the fall, is this a most significant cognitive disability?

- If a student can read with comprehension at a 2nd to 3rd-grade level or above a 3rd-grade level, is this a most significant cognitive disability?

### **3. Computation skills**

- If a 3rd – 5th-grade student can add and subtract consistently (at least 80% of the time) using numerals, is this a most significant cognitive disability?

- If a student can consistently multiply and divide (at least 80% of the time) using numerals, is this a most significant cognitive disability?

### **4. Writing skills**

- If a 3rd -5th-grade student can write sentences or complete ideas without copying using spelling, is this a most significant cognitive disability?

- If a student can write a paragraph-length text without copying using spelling, is this a most significant cognitive disability?

### **5. Performance Level**

- Districts should look at this data even though the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction is not including it in the red flags.

- It is also important to check the individual score report. Did the student master the majority of the target linkage level or above? If they only mastered one or two EEs at the target level or above this may still be an appropriate assessment. If they are mastering the majority of the EEs at the target or successor level, is this still the most appropriate assessment for the student?