



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District Superintendents

**FROM:** Elizabeth Jones, Director  
Office of Assessment

John R. Payne, Director  
Office of Special Education Services

**DATE:** March 24, 2015

**RE:** Alternate Assessment Options for ACT WorkKeys®

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance to districts regarding options for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to participate in an alternate assessment to ACT WorkKeys®. The South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation in 2014, Acts 155 and 200, requiring that all students entering the 11th grade for the first time in school year 2014–15 and subsequent years be administered the ACT WorkKeys®. Federal statute and regulations (34 C.F.R. § 300.160) require the administration of alternate assessments to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in statewide and district-wide assessments. Students who are eligible for an alternate assessment to ACT WorkKeys® are those who meet the criteria for participation in state alternate assessments and are age sixteen. ACT Inc. does not offer an alternate assessment aligned to ACT WorkKeys®.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulation (34 C.F.R. § 300.320(b)(1)) requires age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. In compliance with IDEA regulations, transition assessments which meet the intent and purposes of a career-readiness assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities should be in place in all districts.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) surveyed all districts regarding the transition assessments currently used for compliance with IDEA regulations. Additionally, the SCDE convened a stakeholder workgroup of South Carolina educators, parents, other agency

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representatives, and higher education personnel with expertise in transition planning and assessments to identify critical elements that transition assessments would need to have in order to serve as an alternate to ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> (attached). The workgroup applied these elements to transition assessments commonly in use in the state to develop a list of allowable transition assessments that may serve as an alternate to ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup>. Based on information from the survey and input from the stakeholder workgroup, a list of allowable transition assessments and criteria to evaluate additional assessments were developed.

For the 2015 administration, school districts should select an assessment from the attached list of approved transition assessments or submit a request to use another transition assessment as an alternate to ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup>. Procedures for requesting approval for additional transition assessments will be provided to district directors of special education and district test coordinators for alternate assessment.

To capture required data fields to ensure students' participation in an approved alternate assessment, as required by federal regulations, a reporting spreadsheet must be completed and submitted to the SCDE by **June 1, 2015**. Instructions for submitting the report will also be sent to district directors of special education and district test coordinators for alternate assessment.

For districts using a transition assessment that does not meet the attached criteria as an alternate for ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup>, the SCDE is offering technical assistance on the use of an approved no-cost assessment. If your district needs assistance implementing a transition assessment, contact Mary Etta Taylor [metaylor@ed.sc.gov](mailto:metaylor@ed.sc.gov), (803) 734-0705 or Kim Watkins in the Office of Special Education Services, [kawatkins@ed.sc.gov](mailto:kawatkins@ed.sc.gov), (803) 734-6028. Contact Jill Christmus in the Office of Assessment for assistance in implementing a transition assessment or with any additional questions regarding the alternate to the ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> assessment at [mchristmus@ed.sc.gov](mailto:mchristmus@ed.sc.gov), (803) 734-8048.

cc: District Directors of Special Education  
District Test Coordinators  
District Test Coordinators for Alternate Assessment

Attachments: Criteria for Career Readiness Assessments for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities  
Transition Assessments Approved as an Alternate to ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup>