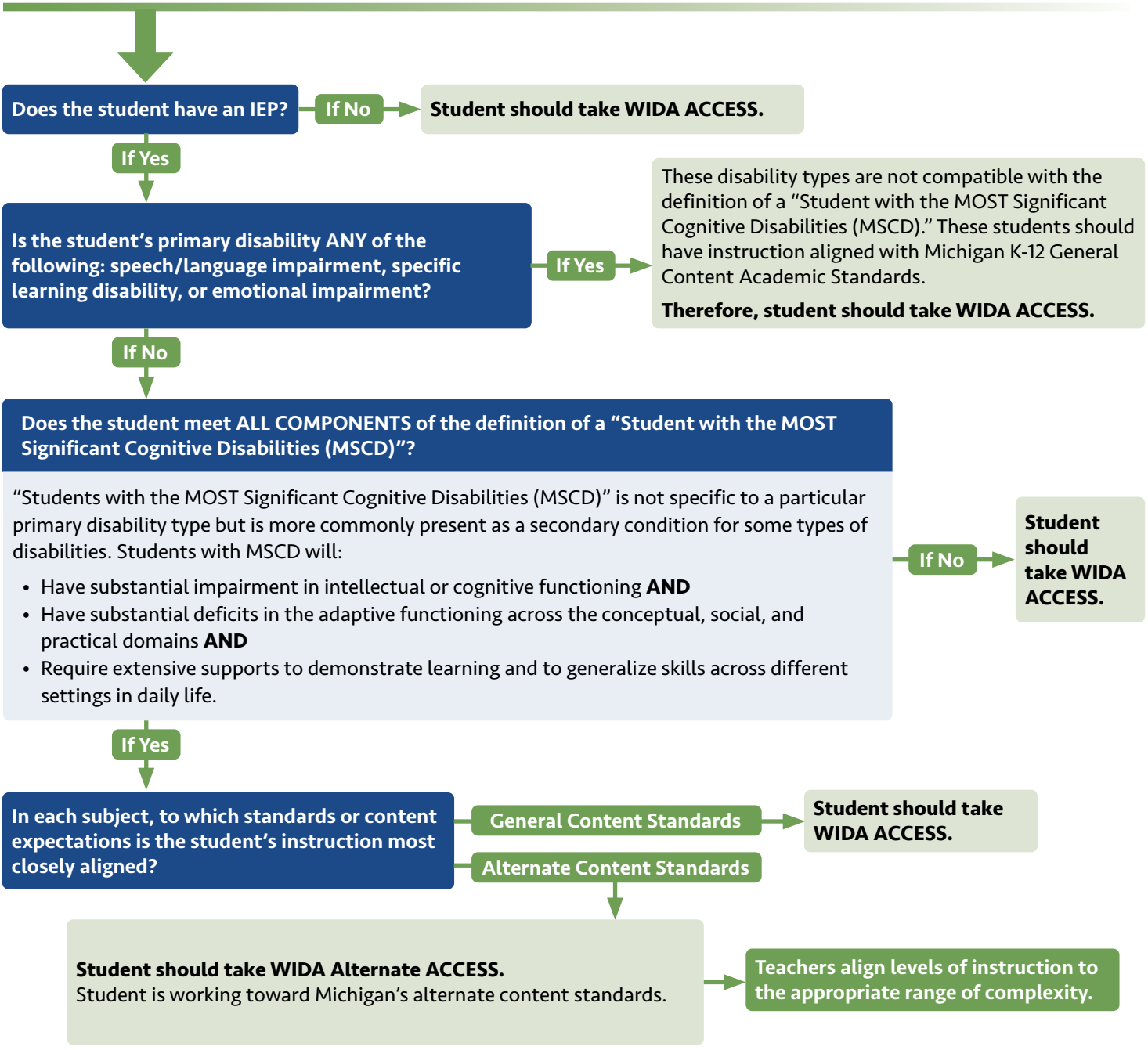
Should My Student Take the Alternate WIDA Assessment?

WIDA Alternate ACCESS is Michigan's alternate English language proficiency assessment based on WIDA's English Language Development standards (https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld) and uses WIDA's Alternate Proficiency Level Descriptors (https://wida.wisc.edu/resources/alternate-proficiency-level-descriptors). The Michigan guidelines to determine if a student should be working toward alternate content expectations and taking the alternate assessment are provided below and detailed in the rubric referenced on page 2. Students who are English learners and are also students with disabilities are required to take either the general WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment until they achieve proficiency. These summative WIDA assessments are not replacements for required content area assessments in each grade level, so students are still required to take the M-STEP, MI-Access, and MME assessments.

The IEP team has the front-line role in determining which assessment a student should take, but the decision-making process must follow federal law and state policy.



IEP teams are strongly encouraged to use the Rubric for Assigning Students to Alternate Standards for Instruction and Assessment (https://tinyurl.com/m9ktjdjr). This rubric explores the four criteria in greater depth; additionally, the rubric provides guidance to IEP teams in using evidence to support the four criteria to determine if a student meets the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities. A training module (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9qCLKmpeb0) is available for teams on using the rubric.

Reminder: Students with specific learning disabilities, speech/language impairments, and/or emotional impairments do not meet the definition of "Students with the MOST Significant Cognitive Disabilities (MSCD)" and should have specially designed instructional aligned with the Michigan K-12 General Content Academic Standards, measured by M-STEP or MME.

Factors to Consider
(ALL MUST BE TRUE)

- Student has an IEP
- Student has substantial impairment to intellectual or cognitive functioning
- Student has substantial impairment to adaptive functioning and skills across the daily life domains of conceptual, social, and practical adaptive behaviors
- Student requires extensive individualized instruction and supports
- Majority of student's primary instructional goals are based on the alternate content expectations (i.e., Michigan's Essential Elements)
- Student does not demonstrably show learning or growth using general assessments, even with optimizing available universal or designative testing accommodations

Factors Not to Consider
(NONE SHOULD BE USED AS A DETERMINING FACTOR)

- Type of program in which student is placed
- Anticipated poor performance or lack of proficiency on the general WIDA ACCESS assessment
- Need for accommodation (universal, designated, or otherwise) while testing
- Social, cultural, linguistic, or environmental factors
- Administrative decisions purely to reduce the percent of students taking alternate assessments
- Anticipated emotional issues or disruptive behaviors during testing
- Anticipated impact on school accountability determinations

For ALL students working toward alternate content expectations:
Parent Notification Required: If the IEP team determines that WIDA Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate state level English language proficiency assessment for any given student, **then the school should provide information to that student's parents regarding any implication this decision may have on the student completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma.**