

## Slide 1

- Welcome to today's webinar on alternate assessment participation and thank you for joining us.
- This webinar will be recorded. We will be answering questions at the end of this webinar time permitting; please add any questions you may have to the chat box.
- This power point presentation is posted on the alternate assessment page on the ODE website. If you go to the ODE website at [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov) and keyword search *alternate assessment*, the first result will take you to that page. This power point is the 4<sup>th</sup> active link.

## Slide 2

The Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA brought a number of requirements for alternate assessment participation in states. Today we are going to review these requirements and provides updates for the 2018-2019 school year.

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The state participation rate for the 2017-18 school year in alternate assessment for reading was **1.72%**. The state participation rate in mathematics was **1.81**. The state participation rate in science was **2.0%**.

This is a .03% drop in reading and mathematics over last year, and .04% increase in science. As a state, we effectively had no change in our participation rate, we are still very much above the 1% cap and continue to be one of the states with the highest alternate assessment participation rates in the country.

We also wanted to note that there is a large discrepancy between the participation rates for reading and math. We want to remind teams that if a student qualifies for the alternate assessment, their cognitive disability is significant enough that it effects all content areas and therefore they must take the alternate assessment in all content areas. A student may not take the alternate assessment in one content area and the general assessment in another.

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A state must request a waiver extension if it expects to exceed 1% participation in the alternate assessment. As our state has had no significant drop in participation we will be requesting an extension.

Our waiver extension request must include:

- State-level data, from the previous school year, that shows:
  - Ohio tested at least 95 percent of all students and also 95 percent of students in the children with disabilities subgroup who are enrolled in assessed grades; and
  - The number and percentage of students in each subgroup of students who took the alternate.
- The Department must include assurances that we have verified that each district that anticipates assessing more than 1% of its students with the alternate assessment have

- Followed state guidelines for participation, and
- Will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.
- The Department must include a plan and timeline by which we will-
  - Improve the implementation of our guidelines for participation;
  - Take additional steps to support and provide oversight to districts to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an alternate assessment;
  - Address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking the alternate assessment.

And finally, the Department must provide evidence that it has made substantial progress towards achieving each component of the prior year's plan and making progress towards assessing only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities with the alternate assessment.

Ultimately, the state waiver request is the means by which the state informs the US Department of Education of our plan to ensure that only students who qualify for the alternate assessment are taking the assessment and what the Department is doing to support districts in this decision making. It is in the interest of districts to review the state waiver since ESSA requires the Department to provide oversight and support of districts that exceed 1% participation in the alternate assessment.

### **Slide 5**

ESSA requires that any district that anticipates exceeding 1% of its students taking the alternate assessment in any subject submit a justification. As a requirement under ESSA, districts should plan on this being an annual requirement. If a district is close to 1% participation, either over or under, it is better to submit a plan than not to. For example, if a district calculates that they will be at .9% or 1.09%, it would be best if they submit a justification. Districts whose actual participation rate was over 1% in the previous year and was over 1% again but who did not submit a justification will automatically be elevated to a higher tier for monitoring.

The Department must make all submitted justifications publicly available. To assist us in posting justifications, please do not include any student identifiable information in your justification. We need to redact every instance of identifiable information. This not only includes names, birthdays or SSID numbers but also identifiable items such as;

- "the twins in third grade"
- "lives across the street from the school"
- "parent is on the board"

Consider that if a parent from your school reads the justification and can infer who the student is from that information, please do not include it.

The justifications of all districts are available on the same alternate assessment page as the state waiver.

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603 districts and community schools exceeded the 1% participation rate in 2018. While this is a slight decrease from last year, from last year, this is still almost two thirds of all Ohio districts and community schools. Additionally, initial review of data shows that over 220 schools that were over 1% in 2016-2017 increased their alternate assessment participation rate in 2017-2018.

Of those 603 districts, 36 traditional districts had participation rates over 3%. Last year there were 37. Because of their small size, some community schools were far over that.

Ohio received 619 justifications last year. Those who did not submit justifications were contacted directly by the support and monitoring team.

Collecting justifications from every district and community school is a requirement of Ohio's waiver to exceed the 1 percent cap in ESSA.

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Districts are expected to submit a justification based on anticipated 2018-2019 participation.

Districts will submit their justifications via Cherwell. Cherwell is the same system we used last year for the justifications and we also use it for projects such as the technology readiness survey for testing and the Ohio Learning Standards update survey.

The link to each district's justification form will be sent to the superintendent. The link is specific to the district and can be only sent to the superintendent. The Office for Exceptional Children will also send an email to the District Test Coordinators and special education contacts on record in OEDS for the district, notifying them when the link has been sent to the superintendent.

Last year some districts reported not receiving a link to the survey. In almost all cases, local security protections prevented the email from being delivered or filtered it into a quarantine folder. If the email with the link does not arrive in your superintendent's email, please check spam, junk and clutter folders. If the email still cannot be located, contact the K-12 Help Desk at support@ohio-k12.help. Only superintendents will be sent the link to the justification.

The deadline for districts to submit their justification is **December 10**.

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The district justification form has been updated and new elements have been added. Elements that districts will be required to address include:

- The total number of students in the district who are anticipated to participate in testing, grades 3-8 and high school, during the 2018-2019 school year for both the general and

alternate assessments in ELA and math. Do not count any students who will be retaking the alternate assessment in high school or retaking any end-of-course assessment.

- A new requirement is to include the projected number of students who will be taking the alternate assessment in each IDEA disability category.
- A description of how the district is assuring that Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams are adhering to the criteria as outlined in the Participation Guidelines for Ohio's Alternate Assessment.
- Other relevant information or documentation that explains why a district expects to exceed the 1% threshold. For example, the district has a small overall student population and it takes only very few students to exceed 1.0 percent.

Districts may be subject to further review by the Department and asked to provide additional clarification or evidence regarding the submitted justification.

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Participation rates from the last two school years will be pre-populated in the form, like you see here. Districts need to provide their projected numbers for 2018-2019 in the last row and the survey will calculate the percentage in the gray box.

This part of the justification is intended to help districts look at their data over time. Is participation in your district increasing or decreasing? Do you see any patterns in the data?

Longitudinally, most districts should see a drop in the percentage of students taking the alternate assessment year to year.

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- When calculating participation in ELA, use participation data from Ohio's State Tests in grades 3-8 and end-of-course exams for ELA I and ELA II, plus any grade-level AASCD in ELA.
- The calculation for math is similar - use participation data from grades 3-8 and all high school end-of-course exams, plus any grade level AASCD in mathematics.
- Include ALL students counted within the district *even if they are served outside of the district*. Do not count students who do not count for you for accountability purposes, *even if they are served in your district*. Refer to your EMIS coordinator and the Where Kids Count Rules if you have questions about which students count for your district.
- Do not include any student retaking an end-of-course exam or high school alternate assessment. In other words, only count first time test takers in high school. In grades 3-8, even if a student repeated a grade and is retaking the same test, they do count for the school year.

### **Slide 11**

New this year is the requirement that districts break down their anticipated participation by identifying the disability category of each student they expect will take the AASCD.

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If the district is identifying students participating in the AASCD that would not traditionally participate (i.e. Speech and Language Impairment, Specific Learning Disability), they are required to explain how it was determined the student met the participation requirements.

## Slide 13

We would like to take the opportunity of this webinar to make some comments about determining eligibility for participation in the alternate assessment.

Occasionally we hear people say that according to the operating standards for the education of students with disabilities, a significant cognitive disability refers to an intelligence quotient of seventy or below. This is not true. Educators should never use IQ scores in isolation to determine eligibility.

The term Significant Cognitive Disability that is used in the participation guidelines does not refer to a disability category under IDEA and was never meant to.

The term **significant cognitive disability** was introduced when alternate assessment became required under NCLB. At the time NCLB was released, the term “**mental retardation**” was the disability category which later came to be called “**cognitive disability**”, which is what we currently refer to today as “**intellectual disability**”. Because of this overlap in terms, **significant cognitive disability** in the participation guidelines and **cognitive disability** as it has been used in Ohio, are often thought to be the same, but they are not. **Significant cognitive disability** is a broad term that could encompass multiple IDEA disability categories including **intellectual disability**.

As presented in the participation criteria for the alternate assessment, a student has a **significant cognitive disability** if their records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. This is not to say that IQ score cannot be a consideration and one piece of evidence when determining eligibility, but it should never be used in isolation. And no specific IQ cut score should be inferred as defining eligibility.

To assist teams in understanding the criteria in the participation guidelines, the department developed a companion document to the participation guidelines. This document helps IEP teams analyze the participation criteria in more detail.

Another key point that must be considered by IEP teams is to confirm what participation is **not** based on. There are criteria that students must meet to be eligible to take an alternate assessment and there are components that should **not be** considered when making the determination. The list in both the participation guidelines and companion document includes points that should not be considered by IEP teams to make the participation determination.

It is important also to note that while disability category is not a criterion, there are disability categories that are more likely to include students who participate in the alternate assessment

than others. There are some disability categories that will rarely, if ever, include students who are eligible for the alternate assessment. While we would expect many students with multiple disabilities and intellectual disabilities to take an alternate assessment, students with specific learning disabilities or emotional disturbances should rarely participate. It is unlikely that a student with a speech or language impairment would qualify as a standalone identification. If a district has large numbers of students taking alternate assessment in disability categories not typical of this population, the district needs to make sure IEP team members understand the participation criteria in order to make appropriate placement decisions. All student who take the alternate assessment should have an IEP.

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Data for three additional measures will be included in future special education profiles and ratings:

- The percent of students with disabilities graduating by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities;
- The percent of students participating in the Alternate Assessment for students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in math; and
- The percent of students participating in the Alternate Assessment for students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in English language arts.

Districts who significantly exceed 1.0% alternate assessment participation rates may be assigned to higher tiers of the monitoring and support plan.

Districts needing intervention will be required to complete a self-review summary report for alternate assessment participation.

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The Department will analyze levels of districts' and community schools' needs for tiered support beginning with reported counts of participating students. The Department will then consider the following factors:

- Participation rate that significantly exceeds 1 percent: This is the primary factor and districts with the highest participation rates will be targeted for further review and consideration for placement in tier three monitoring.
- The content of the justification submitted to the Department: While there are legitimate reasons for higher participation than 1%, if no explanation is given or if the reason given does not appear to be reasonable, this could assign a district to a higher tier of monitoring.
- Counts by disability category: Districts with high numbers of students in disability categories not normally associated with alternate assessment participation will need to revisit their IEP practices.

- Trend and subgroup data: If a district was at a low percentage rate and in a short time had a spike in participation with no clear cause or if a particular subgroup of students is significantly disproportionate, a district may be elevated to a higher tier of monitoring.
- Other factors may be considered when determining tier designation. Some include failure to submit a required justification, higher rates of participation in certain grades - specifically in grades 3 or high school; unjustified rates higher in one school compared to other schools within a district or other anomalies.

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The tiered approach to alternate assessment support for districts is based on a multi-tiered system of support model.

**Tier 1** support is provided to all districts and community schools regardless of percent participation in the alternate assessment.

This includes trainings, support materials, webinars, web-resources, guidance documents and on-line and phone support.

**Tier 2** support is provided to districts and community schools that are identified as needing moderate support. This includes continued Tier 1 support and could include additional support on data analysis, student records reviews, leadership coaching, IEP and ETR training materials, and analysis of disproportionality.

**Tier 3** support is provided to districts and community schools that are identified as needing significant support. This includes continued Tier 1 and 2 supports.

This tier can include constructing goals to be included in Strategic Improvement Plans, self-review summaries, comprehensive monitoring, records reviews, required trainings, policy and procedures reviews, root cause analysis and parent support processes.

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A sample of the justification form was posted earlier this month.

Beginning on November 5<sup>th</sup>, Superintendents will receive an email directly from the Cherwell system with a distinct link to the form for your specific district. A reminder; last year some of these emails were filtered into junk or spam email boxes.

Special education directors and testing coordinators will receive emails directly from the Department reminding them about the justification requirement and deadline.

We cannot send the district link to any personnel other than the superintendent.

### **Slide 18**

Resources that districts may find helpful include:

The US Department of Education's Memos to States. These memos provide the guidance that the department is following to meet these requirements.

The alternate assessment portal includes the alternate assessment participation guidelines and decision-making framework that IEP teams should be following when making alternate assessment participation decisions.

The Ohio Learning Standards - Extended Modules are resources that intervention specialists and others can access to learn more about instruction for students who participate in the alternate assessment.

The AASCD Companion Rubric is a document that teams can use with the alternate assessment participation guidelines and decision-making framework to assist in making alternate assessment participation decisions.

A new resource the department has developed is a 1 percent justification support worksheet for schools. It is an optional tool that districts can choose to use if they wish. It essentially asks schools for the same information that is required in the district justification form. Using the support worksheet with their school teams would allow districts to compile and analyze participation in state tests at the school level. As the support worksheet is optional, districts should not submit them to the state. It is for internal district use only.

Finally, districts have access to a template they can use prior to submitting their justification through Cherwell.

In addition to the recording of this webinar, we will be posting today's slides with live links to these resources.

### **Slide 19**

Questions about **calculating participation** can be sent to [accountability@education.ohio.gov](mailto:accountability@education.ohio.gov)

Questions about **completing the justification** and other questions about the 1 percent participation threshold: [AAparticipation@education.ohio.gov](mailto:AAparticipation@education.ohio.gov)