

# Ohio's Tiered Supports and Monitoring of District Alternate Assessment Participation Data



September 2024



**Department of  
Education &  
Workforce**

## Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) reflects the intent to extend educational accountability and reform to all students, including those with disabilities. This legislation, along with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Ohio legislation (OAC 3301-13-03), mandates that students with disabilities be included in general state- and district-wide assessment programs. These laws provide clear expectations that states will align achievement assessments with academic content standards. In Ohio, there are three ways to assess student achievement of academic content standards:

1. Participation in the general assessment with universal or designated supports (most students)
2. Participation in the general assessment with allowable accommodations (some students with disabilities and English learners)
3. Participation in an alternate assessment (small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities)

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (Department) is committed to ensuring each student is assessed using the appropriate assessment whether that be a [general or an Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities \(AASCD\)](#). This resource serves as a companion document to the [District Alternate Assessment Self-Reflection Guide](#), offering an overview of the Department's initiatives to assist and supervise local education agencies (LEAs), specifically regarding alternate assessment participation data. Alternate assessment tiered support and monitoring consists of three tiers and is achieved through various means, including training initiatives, the development of resources, and the provision of technical assistance. For an in-depth understanding of how the Department supports and monitors LEAs alternate assessment participation, please refer to the Department's most recent [One Percent Waiver Extension Request](#).

### **Tier 1: Universal Support and Monitoring – LEAs at or below an AASCD Reading, Mathematics, or Science Participation Rate of 1.0%**

As part of Ohio's general supervision responsibilities, the Department helps ensure that educational agencies meet the data reporting requirements of IDEA. IDEA requires that the Department report state, educational agency and building-level data about enrollment, student environment, personnel, student discipline, student assessments, reasons for students exiting special education, procedural safeguards, and fiscal maintenance of effort.

The Department identifies and notifies LEAs that they fall into Tier 1 if its reading, mathematics, or science AASCD participation rate is at or below 1.0 percent. Tier 1 consists of universal supports provided to all LEAs through the [District Justification and Assurance form](#). The alternate assessment justification and assurance process takes place during the months of February through June of each school year.

- **Alternate Assessment District Justification:** Any LEA accepting IDEA Part B funds that anticipates testing over 1.0 percent of its total tested student population in an AASCD must submit an alternate assessment justification form with its projected data and inform the Department of its internal practices. LEAs testing less than 1.0 percent of its total tested student population in an AASCD must also submit an alternate assessment justification form, but without data.
- **Alternate Assessment Assurances:** Any LEA accepting IDEA Part B funds are required to read and confirm the alternate assessment assurances. These include decision rules for determining alternate assessment eligibility and how to implement a compliant AASCD process that ensures the individualized education program (IEP) team is knowledgeable and trained to make decisions for alternate assessment participation.
- The District Justification form includes an opportunity for LEAs to request technical assistance from the Department.

Annually, the Department is required to publicly report LEAs [alternate assessment participation data](#) by posting this information to the [alternate assessment website](#) each fall. This data is organized by LEA type, [state support team region](#), content area (reading, mathematics, and science), total alternate assessment participants, total student count, total LEA alternate assessment percentage, and alternate assessment tiered support and monitoring status (starting in school year 2024-2025).

#### Department Resources for All Tiers

- Department Alternate Assessment email: [AAParticipation@education.ohio.gov](mailto:AAParticipation@education.ohio.gov)
- [Families of Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Alternate Assessment website](#)
- [Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool](#)
- [Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool FAQ's](#)
- [Alternate Assessment Teacher and Family Resources](#)
- [Engaging Families in the Alternate Assessment](#)
- [Ensuring Access to the General Curriculum for ALL Students](#)
- [Accessibility for Ohio's State Tests](#)
- [Alternate Assessment Test Portal](#)
- [Ohio Learning Standards – Extended](#)

- [Alternate Assessment Performance Standards](#)
- [Alternate Assessment District Participation Data](#)
- [Alternate Assessment District Justification and Assurance Form Template](#)
- [Alternate Assessment Test Administration Certification Course](#)
- [NCEO: Start with The End in Mind](#)

## **Tier 2: Targeted Support and Monitoring – LEAs at 1.1%-2.9% AASCD Reading, Mathematics, or Science Participation Rate**

Tier 2 support and monitoring is a continuous process that occurs throughout each school year. The Department identifies and notifies LEAs that they fall into Tier 2 if their reading, mathematics, or science AASCD participation rate is 1.1-2.9 percent. The Department provides support and monitoring to Tier 2 LEAs by collaborating with statewide systems of support such as the [state support teams](#) and [Education Service Centers \(ESC\)](#) to provide technical assistance. The [District Alternate Assessment Self-Reflection Guide](#) is a product of this collaboration, supporting Tier 2 LEAs to address escalation toward Tier 3 identification.

This level of technical assistance activities provided by the Department includes hosting one-on-one meetings with LEAs, quarterly meetings with regional support teams and AASCD office hours before, during and after the Spring testing window.

Another layer of support is providing programmatic updates and reminders at committee meetings such as the Ohio Statewide Testing and Students with Disabilities Advisory Meetings, the Ohio Test Steering Committee, [State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children \(SAPEC\)](#), [Alternate Assessment Content and Fairness](#), regional and state conferences, and more.

### **Additional Department Resources for Tier 2**

- [Alternate Assessment District Self-Reflection Guide](#)
- [State Support Team Consultants](#)

## **Tier 3: Intensive Support and Monitoring**

The Department identifies and notifies LEAs that they may be placed into Tier 3 through the [Special Education Profiles](#) based on multiple factors including:

- Reading, mathematics, or science AASCD participation rate at or above 3.0 percent
- Unsubmitted district justification and/or assurance form
- Reading, mathematics, or science AASCD participation rate increased over the last three school years

- Disability type anomaly
- Regional State Support Team and Department feedback

Every year, LEAs receive a [Special Education Profile](#) that shows whether Special Education Indicators are being met, over time, for students with disabilities. The Department sends emails to superintendents, special education contacts and community school sponsors with instructions to access their profiles through the [Secure Application for Enterprise \(OH|ID\) web portal](#).

**Please note that not all LEAs placed in Tier 3 with a participation rate at or above 3.0 percent will be monitored in the release of the special education profiles.**

### **Tier 3 required action steps include:**

- Submission of policies, practices, and procedures with regard to collecting and reporting data
  - Feedback will be provided so that the outcome of the PPP review can be included in the Indicator Analysis and Improvement Plan
- Verifying Data Appeals
- Completing an Indicator Analysis (*previously known as the Self-Review Summary Report or SRSR*)
- Completing an Improvement Plan with signatures of participation of the district or community school team and the state support team consultant prior to Department submission
- Submitting evidence of systemic improvement to include verification of training and evidence of completion of all improvement plan activities

District required actions with regard to the [Special Education Profile](#) are federally mandated and monitored by the Department. More comprehensive details about the required action steps can be found in the Alternate Assessment Indicator Manual, located within the Special Education Profile. Beginning in March of each school year, the Department will review and approve the Tier 3 LEAs Indicator Analysis and Improvement Plan or request the LEA revise and resubmit. Once the Indicator Analysis and Improvement Plan are approved, LEAs are encouraged to begin implementing the Improvement Plan and submit the Systemic Improvement by the end of September of each school year.

<b>Additional Department Resources for Tier 3</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ohio's Special Education Profiles</a></li> <li>• Special Education Profile email: <a href="mailto:OEC.Profile@education.ohio.gov">OEC.Profile@education.ohio.gov</a></li> <li>• Alternate Assessment Participation Indicator Manual: Addresses LEAs with data reporting errors and required actions for exceeding the alternate assessment</li> </ul> |
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participation threshold(s). This manual is housed within the Special Education Profile for Tier 3 LEAs. Please email [OEC.Profile@education.ohio.gov](mailto:OEC.Profile@education.ohio.gov) to request a copy of the indicator manual.

- [Alternate Assessment website](#)
- [District Alternate Assessment Participation Data](#)
- [District Alternate Assessment Self-Reflection Guide](#)

## Federal Regulation

- **ESSA 1.0 Percent Cap Regulation:**
  - [ESEA section 1111\(b\)\(2\)\(D\)](#) and [34 CFR 200.6\(c\) and \(d\)](#) contain requirements for the participation of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the AA-AAAS. ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) limits the total number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed **Statewide** with an AA-AAAS to 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the **State** who are assessed in that subject. As described in 34 CFR 200.6(c)(3), **a State may not prohibit an LEA from assessing more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students with an AA-AAAS.** However, **a State must** require an LEA that assesses more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any subject with an AA-AAAS to **submit information to the State justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent threshold.**
- **IDEA Assessment Decision-Making Regulation:**
  - [Section 300.320\(a\)\(6\): \(i\)](#) A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and districtwide assessments consistent with section 612(a)(16) of the Act; and [\(ii\)](#) If the IEP Team determines that the child must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular regular State or districtwide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why—
    - [\(A\)](#) The child cannot participate in the regular assessment; and
    - [\(B\)](#) The particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child;

Please note that federal guidance can be updated at any time which may lead to changes in the way states support and monitor their local education agencies.

