



Who Should Participate in the Kansas Alternate Assessment?

A Slide Presentation Tool for Administrators – 1% Toolkit



Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.



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A Slide Presentation Tool for Administrators

This resource has been customized for Kansas using the resource:

Hawes, M., Thurlow, M. L., D'Agord, C., Mentan, C., Strunk, K., & Lazarus, S. S. (2019). *Who should participate in your state's alternate assessment? A slide presentation tool for administrators* (NCEO Tool #6). National Center on Educational Outcomes.

<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool6DistrAdmPPT.pdf>

The resource was developed through the work of the National Center on Educational Outcomes 1.0% 2019 Peer Learning Group (PLG) 3, "Building Capacity of IEP Teams and Parents/Guardians in Making Decisions about Assessment Participation", which took place October-December, 2019. Kansas and 45 other states participated in the PLG 3.





Who Should Participate in Your State's Alternate Assessment?

A Slide Presentation Tool for Administrators

The 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), includes a 1.0% cap on state-level participation rates in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). No limit was placed on district or school rates, but districts must provide justifications if they expect their rate to be above the 1.0% threshold. In addition, states are to provide oversight to districts.

These requirements mean that states and districts need to examine their data on AA-AAAS participation as a basis for having discussions about the data and whether state guidelines are being followed and appropriate decisions are being made for individual students. This resource may be adapted by states to reflect their unique circumstances. It intends to provide administrators with clear and concise information about the alternate assessment, federal law, and the importance of making appropriate decisions for the participation of students with disabilities in the AA-AAAS. The slide presentation may be used to support administrator knowledge, train educators, and communicate with parents. It is intended to be a versatile resource, one that may be used for in-person trainings, webinars, handouts, or as a website publication.





Federal Law

Alternate assessments were first developed in response to the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which required that all states and districts develop, by the year 2000, alternate assessments for those students with disabilities unable to participate in regular assessments even with accommodations. IDEA did not define who the students were who could participate in an alternate assessment, nor did it use the term “significant cognitive disability.” In 2003, regulations added to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) allowed states to count as proficient those students with significant cognitive disabilities who participated in the alternate assessment and met rigorous alternate achievement standards set by the state.

In 2015, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA reaffirmed that an AA-AAAS is the appropriate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. ESSA placed a 1.0% cap on the state participation rate for each subject, based on the total number of all students in the state assessed in the subject (34 CFR 200.6(c)(2)). ESSA specified that states cannot place a cap on the participation rates of local education agencies (LEAs) in any subject (34 CFR 200.6(c)(3)(i)). This means that LEAs can exceed 1.0% participation in an AA-AAAS in a given subject, but the state as a whole cannot exceed 1.0% AA-AAAS participation in any subject.

ESSA required LEAs expected to exceed 1.0% AA-AAAS participation to submit information justifying the need to exceed 1.0%. In addition, the state must provide oversight and monitoring of LEAs that submit justifications (34 CFR 200.6(c)(3)(ii-iii)).





Introduction

This resource is one of three developed by states and technical assistance centers working together in NCEO's 2019 1.0% Peer Learning Group (PLG 3). The two other documents that were developed can support this tool for administrators on who should participate in your state's alternate assessment.¹ They include:

- *Start With the End in Mind: An Infographic for Educators and Parents/Guardians* uses clear language to help explain how assessment participation decisions can affect a child with a disability's future. This tool may be used to begin the important conversation about the participation of students in the state's AA-AAAS.
- *IEP Team Resource: Making Decisions about Participation in the Alternate Assessment* provides IEP team members (including teachers, school psychologists, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, paraprofessionals, parents, administrators, and others who may participate in the IEP team meeting) with supports to help with the decision about whether a student with a disability should participate in a general assessment or an AA-AAAS.

¹All tools may be found at <https://nceo.info/Resources/tools>





Purpose of Tool

The purpose of this tool is to support the need for administrators to have access to brief but substantive information about who should participate in the state's alternate assessment. The resource highlights the purpose of the alternate assessment, the implications of a student taking the alternate assessment, strategies for talking with parents, and identification of students who should participate in the alternate assessment. The slide presentation tool is intentionally short with a focus on the information that is perhaps most important for administrators to know. In addition to serving as an information resource for administrators, it may be used for in-person or webinar trainings for educators, and as a handout for educators and parents.



Alternate Assessment Participation

Kansas Guidance
on Who Should
Participate in the
*Dynamic Learning
Maps Alternate
Assessment*





Presentation Objectives

- Purpose of the *Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment*
- Implications for a student who takes the *Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment*
- Talking with parents about the *Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment*
- Supporting decisions about which students should participate in *The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment*





Alternate Assessment Purpose

- The *Dynamic Learning Maps* is one part of our state's assessment system for school-age children
- The *Dynamic Learning Map* is designed specifically for those students with "the most significant cognitive disabilities." It is based on alternate achievement standards, which means the performance expected is different.





Federal Law Requirements

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides funds for our state's elementary and secondary education system. We must adhere to ESSA requirements, including those about state and district assessments
- ESSA placed a 1.0% state-level cap on participation in the *Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment*, by subject area, across all grades.





Implications for Districts

- ESSA requires districts with more than 1.0% participation in the *Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment* in a subject area to provide to the state:
- Assurance that IEP teams are adhering to the state's participation guidelines
- Justification for the participation rate over 1.0%
- Assurance that parents are informed about implications for their child of participation in the *Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment*





Implications for Students

- Short-term: Student's instruction is in less depth, breadth, and complexity than the instruction of other students
- Long-term: Student may not meet the requirements for the state's graduation diploma
- Longer-term: Student may not be eligible for some post-secondary training institutions, military service, or jobs





Which Students Should Participate?

- Only those students with the "most significant cognitive disabilities"
- Most of these students (but not all) have intellectual disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities
- Many of these students (but not all) were identified for special education services prior to entering kindergarten
- The decision about which students should participate in the *Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment* is often very difficult.



National and State Data



National data on disability categories

Categories of Disabilities of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment

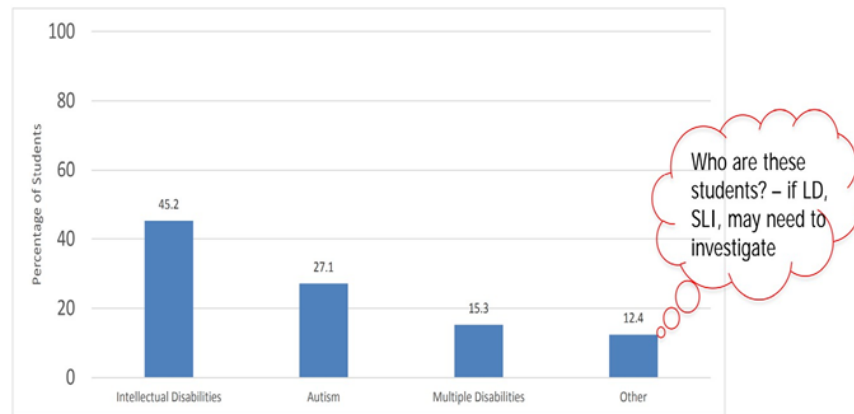
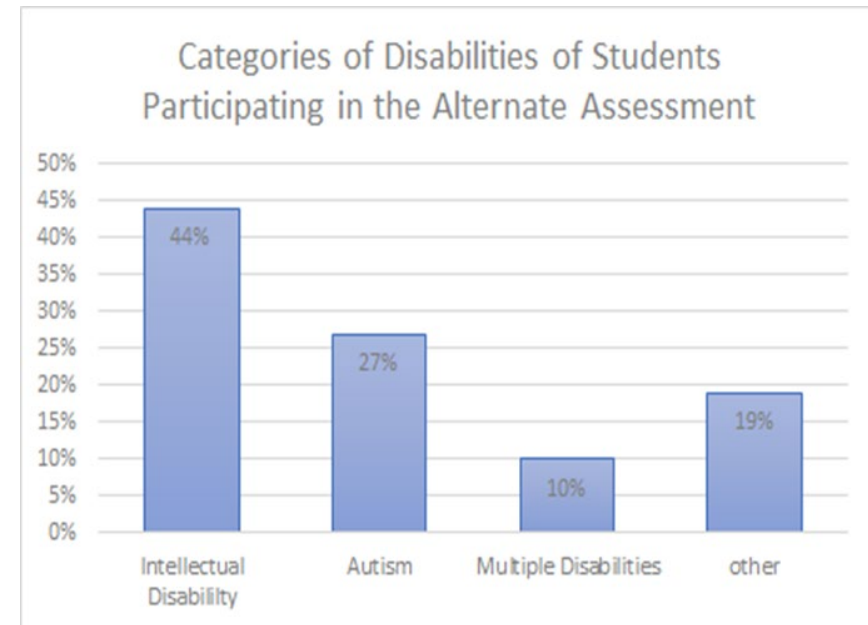


Figure includes data from 15 states (see Thurlow et al., 2016)

Slide from Thurlow & Lazarus (2017):

<http://nceo.umn.edu/docs/Presentations/1percentCap042717.pdf>

Kansas data



Based on Kansas 2018-2019 Assessment Data



Kansas Participation Guidelines

1. Cognitive assessment data supports a most significant cognitive disability (intellectual disability) Typically 2.5-3 standard deviations below the mean.
2. Adaptive assessment data supports a most significant deficit in adaptive behavior. Those skills and behaviors essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life. Typically functioning 2 ½ - 3 SD below the mean





KS Participation Guidelines (cont.)

3. Present levels and measurable goals listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade level DLM Essential Elements and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.
4. The student requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is neither temporary nor limited to specific content areas.

AND

The student uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across multiple settings.





Parent/Legal Education Decision-Maker Notification

- The differences between the alternate achievement standards and academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled, including any effects of State and local policies on the student's education resulting from taking an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards;

AND

- That the student's achievement will be measured based on alternate achievement standards;

AND



Parent/Legal Education Decision-Maker Notification (continued)

- How the student's participation in alternate standards and assessment(s) may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma;

AND

- That the student will not be prevented from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma.

AND

- The LEA provided the parent(s)/legal education decision-maker with ALL of the above information in an understandable and uniform format and in a written language or oral translation that the parent(s)/legal education decision-maker can understand.





Resources to Assist with Alternate Assessment Decisions.

- [Participation Guidelines](#)
- [Rubric for Determining Student Eligibility for the Kansas Alternate Assessment \(DLM\)](#)
- [Kansas Alternate Assessment Flow Chart](#)
- IEP Team Resources





Participation Decision-Making Process

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams make the decision about which assessment a student takes
- Parents and guardians are key to the decision
- School professionals should not make decision without parent or guardian input
- The Kansas Alternate Assessment Notification should be shared with parent or guardian
- IEP teams need training and resources to help with making the participation decision





Communicating with Parents and Guardians

- Listen to them and respect their views!
- Treat them as equal partners in the education of their child
- Show up where they are (e.g., community events), partner with community organizations, and engage community liaisons
- Use interpreters to bridge potential cultural and linguistic barriers



Helpful Resources

- Kansas Resources:
<https://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=887>
<https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/kansas>
- 1% Toolkit from the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO):
<https://nceo.info/Resources/tools>





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