March 17, 2022

The Honorable Cade Brumley
Superintendent of Education
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5243

Dear Superintendent Brumley:

I am writing in response to the Louisiana Department of Education’s (LDOE’s) request on November 5, 2021 (updated with additional information on March 6, 2022), for a one-year extension of the State’s waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) which stipulates that a State may not assess using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in reading/language arts (R/LA) and mathematics.

After reviewing LDOE’s waiver request, I am granting, pursuant to my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA, for school year 2021-2022, a one-year extension of the State’s waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the ESEA so that the State may assess with an AA-AAAS more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in R/LA and mathematics.

As part of this waiver, LDOE assured that it:

- Will continue to meet all other requirements of section 1111 of the ESEA and implement regulations with respect to all State-determined academic standards and assessments, including reporting student achievement and school performance, disaggregated by subgroups, to parents and the public.
- Had assessed in 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 at least 95 percent of all students and students with disabilities who are enrolled in grades for which the R/LA and mathematics assessments are required.
- Will require that a local educational agency (LEA) submit information justifying the need of the LEA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any such subject with an AA-AAAS.
- Will provide appropriate oversight of an LEA that is required to submit such information to the State.
- Will verify that each LEA that is required to submit such information to the State is following all State guidelines in 34 CFR § 200.6(d) – excluding (d)(6) and will address any subgroup disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS.
• Will implement, consistent with the plan submitted in LDOE’s waiver request, system improvements and will monitor future administrations of the AA-AAAS to avoid exceeding the 1.0 percent cap.

I want to remind you of the requirement in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(3)(iv) that the State must make publicly available the information submitted by an LEA justifying the need of the LEA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students on the AA-AAAS, provided that such information does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. I also encourage you to make available your State’s plan and timeline and your progress to date in reducing the percentage of students taking the AA-AAAS. I would also like to remind you that this waiver does not alleviate any of the State’s obligations in meeting all of the requirements found in section 612(a)(16) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which address assessment participation, assessment accommodations, alternate assessments, and reporting for children with disabilities.

I appreciate the work you have undertaken to reduce the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS in the 2020-2021 school year when compared to the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. I am pleased to see the positive results from your workplan and I want to thank you for your continued efforts in achieving this. We hope this will be the last year that Louisiana believes it needs this waiver.

I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for students in Louisiana. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

James F. Lane Ed. D.  
Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary  
Delegated the Authority to Perform the  
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Meredith Jordan, LDOE Executive Director, Diverse Learners
To: David Cantrell, Ph.D.
Acting Director, Office of Special Education Programs
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education

Patrick Rooney
Director, School Support and Accountability
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

From: Meredith Jordan
Executive Director, Diverse Learners
Louisiana Department of Education

Date: November 5, 2021

Subject: Extension Waiver Request for the Cap on the Percentage of Students Who May Be Assessed with an Alternate Assessment Aligned with Alternate Academic Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics

Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) amended a provision of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 related to students participating in alternate assessments of each state education agency’s (SEA’s) statewide assessment. ESSA allows for SEAs to request a waiver from the 1.0 percent cap on participation requirement if SEAs anticipate exceeding the alternate assessment participation cap for any tested subject in the upcoming school year. The United States Department of Education (ED) will review the waiver request, and if granted, will waive the cap for that subject, pursuant to ESEA section 8401(b), for one year.

Requirements for what states are to submit in their waiver requests were described in regulation (§200.6(c)(4)). The regulation also describes what states are to do if they need to submit a request for an extension of their waiver. Specifically, the state is to meet the requirements of §200.6(c)(4)(i) - (iv), as well as show substantial progress toward the achievement of each component of the previous year’s plan and timeline.

LDOE is requesting an extension of the waiver granted in 2020 for the 2021-2022 school year. In this request, the LDOE will:

● Provide updated information regarding each requirement in the previous years’ submissions;
● Demonstrate the ways in which the State has continued to meet each requirement associated with the first waiver it received from this requirement; and
● Provide evidence that the State has demonstrated substantial progress towards achieving each component of the prior year’s plan and timeline and explain any disruptions due to COVID-19.
State-level Data on the Participation of Students to Show the Number and Percentage of Students Who Took the Alternate Assessment

Louisiana follows the federal participation requirement that the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students is measured through a statewide assessment. For the 2020-2021 school year, Louisiana’s participation rate for all students was 97.7 percent on ELA assessments and 97.8 percent on mathematics assessments. The participation rate for students with disabilities was 95.6 percent for ELA assessments and 95.3 percent for mathematics assessments, which ensures that statewide assessment results measure progress for all children.

Table 1. Participation Rate for Statewide Assessments, All Students and Students with Disabilities in ELA and Mathematics for the 2020-2021 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>All Students Tested</th>
<th>All Students Enrolled</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>363,768</td>
<td>372,488</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>364,833</td>
<td>372,975</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities Tested</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities Enrolled</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>45,833</td>
<td>47,943</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>45,905</td>
<td>48,159</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in grades 3-8 and high school take either the general statewide assessment, known as the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) 2025, or the AA-AAAS, known as the LEAP Connect assessment. Students who take the general statewide assessment are measured in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students who take the alternate assessment are measured in ELA, mathematics, and science. In 2020-2021, the alternate assessment forms were updated to align to revised Louisiana Student Standards. These updates required that there be standard setting, which resulted in new scale scores for four levels of performance: below goal, near goal, at goal and above goal.
Table 2. Estimated Number of Students Taking the Regular Assessment, 2020-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Total Tested</td>
<td>370,659</td>
<td>368,079</td>
<td>370,153</td>
<td>369,630</td>
<td>358,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Total Tested</td>
<td>369,225</td>
<td>369,225</td>
<td>370,039</td>
<td>369,622</td>
<td>359,663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Since Regular Assessments Were Not Administered Counts are Estimates

Tables 3 and 4 below show the participation of students in the general statewide assessments and AA-AAAS, by subject, for the 2017-2018 school year, the 2018-2019 school year, and the estimated percentages for the 2019-2020 school year since regular assessments were not administered, and the 2020-2021 school year. For the 2019-2020 school year, the total number of students taking the regular assessment was estimated for each subgroup using percentages based on total enrollment for the school year, (i.e. 42.5% of enrolled students are Black or African American, so this percentage was used to calculate the number of students that would be taking the regular assessment for each subgroup which served as the denominator for the alternate assessment participation rate).

Table 3. Students Assessed on Statewide Assessments (3-8, HS), Including the Alternate Assessment, in ELA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Students taking Regular Assessment 2017-2018</th>
<th>Students taking Alternate Assessment 2017-2018</th>
<th>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2017-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>363,946</td>
<td>5,813</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>159,268</td>
<td>2,548</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>163,478</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>23,853</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>254,502</td>
<td>4,072</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,580</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>7,203</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>362,600</td>
<td>5,773</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>156,837</td>
<td>3,157</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>161,746</td>
<td>2,129</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>25,728</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>256,862</td>
<td>4,879</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,185</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>6,631</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>369,630</td>
<td>5,707</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>157,095</td>
<td>3,154</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>161,353</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>31,775</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>264,955</td>
<td>4,816</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>14,324</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>6,485</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Estimated Students Taking Regular Assessment 2020-2021</td>
<td>Estimated Students Taking Alternate Assessment 2020-2021</td>
<td>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2020-2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>363,768</td>
<td>5,191</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Students taking Regular Assessment 2017-2018</td>
<td>Students taking Alternate Assessment 2017-2018</td>
<td>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2017-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>153,896</td>
<td>2,896</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>157,693</td>
<td>1,814</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>32,621</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>265,230</td>
<td>4,451</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>13,547</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>7,552</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Students Assessed on Statewide Assessments (3-8, HS), Including the Alternate Assessment, in Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>363,157</td>
<td>5,779</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>158,782</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>163,275</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>23,810</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>254,626</td>
<td>4,074</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,558</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>7,946</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>361,308</td>
<td>5,772</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>156,667</td>
<td>3,154</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>160,976</td>
<td>2,130</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>25,598</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>256,356</td>
<td>4,876</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,186</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>6,648</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Estimated Students Taking Regular Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Estimated Students Taking Alternate Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>369,622</td>
<td>5,707</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>157,498</td>
<td>3,154</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>161,201</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>31,682</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>265,666</td>
<td>4,816</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>14,473</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>6,521</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Estimated Students Taking Regular Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Estimated Students Taking Alternate Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>364,833</td>
<td>5,170</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>154,949</td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>157,869</td>
<td>1,809</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>32,445</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>265,946</td>
<td>4,429</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| English Language Learner | 13,336   | 66  | .5%
| Homeless            | 7,626    | 114 | 1.5%

**Request for a Waiver 90 Days Before Alternate Assessment Testing Window for the Relevant Subject**

Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. S 200.66(c)(4), the LDOE requests a waiver extension of the requirement that would limit the number of students who participate in the ELA and mathematics alternate assessment at 1.0% for the 2021-2022 school year. The LDOE has one testing window for the alternate assessment during the spring of each school year which begins on February 14, 2022, and concludes on March 18, 2022. The LDOE is submitting this request 90 days prior to the start of the testing window.

**Assurance from the SEA that it Verified Specific Information for Each LEA that Exceeded the 1.0 Percent Threshold**

The LDOE reviewed alternate assessment participation data for the state and each local education agency (LEA). At the state level, the LDOE concluded that 1.4 percent of students participated in the ELA and mathematics alternate assessments in 2020-2021. In 2019-2020, the LDOE concluded that 1.5 percent of students participated in the ELA and mathematics alternate assessments. In 2018-2019, the LDOE concluded that 1.6 percent of students participated in the ELA and mathematics alternate assessments. Less than 1.0 percent of students participated in the science alternate assessment in all three school years. The LDOE used 2020-2021 school year assessment results to determine that 128 school systems exceeded the 1.0 percent participation threshold in one or more tested subjects. The LDOE will provide the school systems with their assessment data, including alternate assessment participation data. If the participation rate exceeded the 1.0 percent participation threshold, the LEA is required to take additional actions. For the review of 2020-2021 school year data, each LEA will:

- Provide written justification describing the specific reason(s) the percentage of students taking the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent of eligible students;
- Provide written assurance that the LEA trained IEP teams on participation criteria;
- Provide written assurance that the LEA followed the State’s guidelines (described further below) for participation in the alternate assessment; and
- Provide written assurance that the LEA would address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking an alternate assessment.

**Evidence of Substantial Progress**

The State has continued to support LEAs in implementing updated criteria for eligibility to participate in the alternate assessment. During Fall 2018, the LDOE convened a team of experts from across the state to review and revise the State's guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment. The group’s
recommendations went to the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) in November 2018. SEAP endorsed the changes with minor revisions. Louisiana’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved the revised eligibility criteria in December 2018. The LDOE continues to support LEAs in using revised eligibility criteria. It was initially implemented beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. The policy removed the ability to qualify for an alternate assessment based on adaptive assessment results alone, and phased in criteria designed to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the alternate assessment. The LDOE began communicating the BESE-approved revisions to LEAs in February 2019, and provided TA via webinars in April 2019 and October 2019, via a live presentation in June 2019, as well as in webinars in 2020.

LDOE continues to use a statewide Special Education Reporting (SER) system that allows for consistent documentation, reporting and monitoring capabilities. SER enhancements in 2018-2019 required all LEAs to document cognitive and/or adaptive evaluation results, including the name of the assessment, date administered, and assessment results. SER then prepopulates those results in the IEP form where IEP teams document whether a student meets the State’s eligibility criteria. This provides IEP teams with clear, transparent data to make better informed decisions. Previously, IEP teams would have to locate and interpret paper-based evaluation results. In addition, the LDOE included a reporting function that allows LEAs to generate a report to quickly look at students’ scores and compare these scores against the State’s eligibility guidelines. This function provides the LDOE and LEAs the ability to increase oversight and implement supports to ensure students meet the State’s guidelines and participate in the most appropriate assessment of their knowledge.

During the 2020-2021 school year, LDOE provided individually tailored feedback on evaluation eligibility to each LEA that submitted files for monitoring. The Department hosted regional office hours to discuss nuances in policy interpretation and promote best practices in advance of the administration of the AA-AAAS in the spring of 2021. The Department also included support sessions around this topic at our annual convening of Louisiana Educators, Louisiana Teacher Leader Summit.

As a result of the LDOE’s actions to improve implementation of the State’s guidelines, provide effective monitoring and oversight, and address any disproportionality, Louisiana’s alternate assessment participation rate declined from 1.6 percent in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years to 1.5 percent in the 2019-2020 school year and to 1.4 in the 2020-2021 school year. These outcomes demonstrate progress towards achieving each component of the prior year’s plan and timeline, as outlined in the sections below. The LDOE expects to see a further decrease in participation rates over time as LEAs continue to fully implement the revised eligibility criteria, and IEP teams use more accurate and up to date information to make eligibility decisions.

The SEA’s Plan and Timeline to Improve Implementation of State Guidelines

Progress Towards Achieving the Plan to Improve Implementation of State Guidelines

The Department is continuing to support LEAs with updated criteria for eligibility to participate in the alternate assessment. The 2020-2021 school year was the second full year of implementation for the revised eligibility criteria. Based on targeted monitoring results, the LDOE focused on improving the
understanding and implementation of the State’s revised participation criteria. The LDOE took the following actions:

- **Required all LEAs to document cognitive and adaptive evaluation results, including the name of the assessment, date administered, and standard deviation, in the (SER) system. SER then prepopulates those results in the IEP form where IEP teams document whether a student meets the State’s eligibility criteria. This provides IEP teams with clear, transparent data to make better informed decisions. Previously, IEP teams would have to locate and interpret paper-based evaluation results. SER enhancements were deployed in July 2018 and LEAs entered scores before 30 days prior to the opening of the testing window to document evaluation results for all students assessed on the alternate assessment;**
- **Provided training and support to LEAs across the state to clarify the State’s revised eligibility criteria including:**
  - Provide technical assistance and make available training documents on our Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities library, including presentations and a comprehensive eligibility criteria flowchart;
  - Monthly Special Education Leader webinars that bring together special education directors, coordinators, and other special education leaders for updates on key initiatives across the agency and targeted information on special education-related priorities;
  - Monthly Accountability and Assessment webinars that provide information on assessment priorities, including alternate assessment data and participation;
  - Monthly School System Planning Calls that provide LEA leaders with key updates and information needed for the current month, or in the near future. Key participants include chief academic officers, assessment coordinators and curriculum directors; and
  - Weekly newsletters that provide LEA leaders and practitioners detailed information on upcoming events and important deadlines.
- **Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities webpage, links to tools and resources for educators and families, including: family resources, classroom supports, assessment resources, high school pathways information and BESE policy Bulletins;**
- **Resource library for students with significant cognitive disabilities that provides specific guidance to LEAs and IEP teams (for students entering high school before or after Fall 2020) to understand whether participation in the alternate assessment is appropriate based on the State’s guidelines and the student’s unique needs and educational goals;**
- **Provided individualized support and recommendations to LEAs when monitoring results of student-level files indicated IEP teams decisions were not consistent with the State’s alternate assessment participation criteria;**
- **Revised the empirical evidence documentation that IEP must have to support determination that the alternate assessment is appropriate for students with deficits in adaptive behavior and cognitive functioning that falls between 2.0 and 2.29 standard deviations below the mean. This additional evidence is part of the LEAP Connect form in our SER system and is now based on the...**
Learner Characteristics Inventory. This revised tool provides IEP teams with a learner characteristics rating scale to help better determine if the alternate assessment is appropriate;

- Deployed SER enhancements requiring IEP teams to identify the IEP instructional plan goals that are linked to the Louisiana Connectors standards (alternate academic achievement standards);
- Provide parent resources on alternate assessment, LEAP Connect, translated into multiple languages; and,
- Attend Council of Chief State School Officers, Alternate Assessment Standards and Education of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO ASES) sessions and OSEP technical assistance calls.

**Additional Plan and Timeline to Improve Implementation of State Guidelines**

The State believes the number of students participating in the alternate assessment will continue to decrease, and the State will continue to provide technical support and guidance to LEAs. This continued training and guidance will be provided through:

- Office hours as needed;
- Special Education Leader webinars;
- Further enhancements to the SER system, allowing for school systems to run reports and check that their students are eligible prior to registering them for the administration of the alternate assessment;
- Continued in-person and virtual collaborations;
- Individualized support to LEAs when monitoring results indicate IEP team decisions are not consistent with the State’s guidelines;
- Resources in our Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities resource library; and
- Spring statewide monitoring that includes a structured review of alternate assessment participation criteria.

**The SEA’s Plan and Timeline to Provide Support and Oversight to each LEA that the State Anticipates Will Exceed the 1.0 Percent Threshold**

**Progress Towards Achieving the Plan to Provide Support and Oversight**

The LDOE will:

1. Use the IDEA Self-Assessment Monitoring Guide to provide oversight and support with alternate assessment eligibility
2. Disseminate LEA data and require a justification and assurances for any LEA who exceeds the 1% cap
3. Conduct more in-depth data analysis to determine areas for future guidance

The LDOE uses an alternate assessment self-assessment domain on the IDEA Self-Assessment Monitoring Guide to provide LEAs with a structured review protocol to identify whether student-level files are compliant with the State’s participation criteria. LEAs engage in an analysis that reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the local special education program by evaluating its impact on student
achievement. The self-assessment helps LEAs identify the root causes of performance and compliance issues. All LEAs required to participate in IDEA self-assessment monitoring complete the alternate assessment domain. The LDOE reviews all self-assessments for compliance with the State’s eligibility criteria.

Previous compliance oversight mandated that LDOE could put LEAs on a corrective action plan (CAP). In order to exit the CAP, LEAs were required to correct instances of noncompliance, submit evidence that student-level noncompliance was remedied and address any systemic issues related to the noncompliance. All school systems placed on an alternate assessment CAP successfully completed the corrective actions and exited the CAP by 2018, however the Department still found instances of noncompliance in its monitoring. As a result, BESE policy was updated to indicate that if the alternate assessment review process finds that an ineligible student took the alternate assessment, the test score is voided for accountability purposes.

In previous years, the LDOE reviewed evidence to verify if LEAs met specific criteria outlined by ED’s ESSA waiver guidance, state eligibility policy, and the state’s alternate assessment review request requirements, including:

- Evidence of a LEA-level disproportionality review and a summary of the LEAs results of this review;
- Evidence IEP teams have been sufficiently trained on the participation guidelines;
- Evidence LEAs completed IEP file reviews to ensure that teams followed the State’s eligibility guidelines for participation; and
- Evidence to verify that monitored students met the State’s eligibility criteria including, but not limited to, current IEPs and current evaluations containing cognitive and/or adaptive assessment results, current IEPs with evidence of curriculum and goals aligned to Louisiana Connector standards, and evidence that assessment decisions are not based on factors (absences, disruptive behavior, English language status, etc.) outlined in the State’s criteria.

This process has been implemented for several years now. The LDOE anticipates that any LEA that exceeded the 1.0 participation threshold in the 2020-2021 school year would also exceed the threshold in the 2021-2022 school year, unless they experienced significant student population changes.

LDOE continues to communicate the requirements for the alternate assessment participation review process in the following ways.

- Monthly Special Education Leader Webinars (All all SPED Leader webinars can be accessed in our SWD Resource library)
- Assessment monthly calls
- Upcoming weekly newsletter announcements
- Alternate Assessment review process specific support
- Targeted technical assistance to LEAs to assist in completion of all requirements

In addition to the more individualized feedback given to each LEA in 2020-2021 that participated in the alternate assessment review process, LDOE was able to conduct more in-depth data analysis due to the
availability of more detailed information related to each student taking the AA-AAAS in SER. Data was examined by disability category, by range of scores (in SDs) of cognitive functioning, by assessment used to determine estimate of cognitive functioning, and by the student’s grade. This level of analysis will guide future guidance development and technical assistance given to LEAs, as well as inform possible future policy changes.

Additional Plan and Timeline to Provide Support and Oversight

The LDOE will continue to provide support and oversight through the self-assessment monitoring and alternate assessment review process in the 2021-2022 school year. Whereas in the fall of 2019, schools only received feedback on whether or not a student’s file was eligible or ineligible, in the fall of 2020, LEAs received specific information on why the student’s file was ineligible and recommendations for remedy. This provided LEAs with information to ensure students are taking the most appropriate assessments in the spring of 2021 and, when participating in the alternate assessment, that they are meeting the State’s eligibility criteria.

In addition, the LDOE is providing LEAs with continuous oversight and support by:

- Conducting monthly assessment and accountability calls. These targeted webinars provide guidance on how students with disabilities participate in Louisiana’s Assessment System to testing coordinators, school counselors, and special education personnel. Webinar topics include universal accessibility tools, embedded, and non-embedded accommodations available to students taking the LEAP Connect, and information regarding the alternate assessment options for students with the most significant cognitive impairments;
- Holding regular Assessment and Accountability office hours for LEAs to ask questions and get answers regarding assessment options, accommodations, and accessibility;
- Regularly updating the LDOEs Accommodations and Accessibility Features User Guide;
- Providing oversight and assistance to LEAs with the self-assessment structured review protocol to identify whether student-level files are compliant with the State's participation criteria; and
- Continually updating resources in our Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities resource library.
- Generating SER system reports that can be used by LEA’s to provide regular school-level oversight and compliance with the alternate assessment eligibility criteria; and
- Analyzing data from SER system reports to identify future areas for technical assistance and additional guidance.

The SEA’s Plan and Timeline to Address any Disproportionality in the Percentage of Students Taking an Alternate Assessment

Progress Towards Achieving the Plan to Address Disproportionality

At the state-level, the LDOE compared the participation rate across the tested subjects for ESSA subgroups. While participation rates across ESSA subgroups did not raise to the level of disproportionality, the LDOE believes that much work remains to ensure that IEP teams are positioned
to make well-informed decisions on a student’s participation in the alternate assessment, based on the State's guidelines and the student’s educational goals.

At the LEA-level, for the 2020-2021 school year, the LDOE completed targeted alternate assessment monitoring (both traditional districts and charter schools) that exceeded 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment. The LDOE required LEAs to submit evidence of a LEA-level disproportionality review and a summary of the LEAs results of this review, including:

- a list of individuals (with titles) involved in the disproportionality review,
- the date(s) the review took place,
- process utilized for reviewing data,
- the outcome of the review, including any subgroups in which the LEA identified disproportionality, and
- if disproportionality was found, an action plan with dates.

The LDOE reviewed this evidence as part of the alternate assessment monitoring process.

**Additional Plan and timeline to address disproportionality**

To determine if disproportionality of students participating in the alternate assessment of Louisiana’s statewide assessments exists, the LDOE will analyze LEA-level participation rates of students taking the alternate assessment in each of the following subgroups outlined in the State’s ESSA Plan:

- Major racial/ethnic groups including Black or African-American, White, and Hispanic
- Economically disadvantaged status
- English language learner status
- Homeless status

Results from the LEA-level disproportionality reviews will inform additional oversight and support to LEAs to ensure equity in access and participation of students with significant cognitive disabilities in the alternate assessment. Additional support may include reviewing and refining guidance to LEAs, conducting additional targeted monitoring, and/or providing additional training and support to LEAs. The LDOE [webpage](#) includes resources to help LEAs train IEP teams to make assessment decisions for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Additionally, increased capacity for data analysis as provided by the enhancements to the SER system can enable more detailed analysis by subgroups for disproportionality. This will inform future areas of technical assistance and guidance provided by the Department, similar to the guidance developed for foster students.

**Notice of Intent for Public Comment**

SEAs are required to include evidence that the State requesting the waiver provided notice and reasonable opportunity for the public and LEAs to comment and provide input on the request.
The LDOE posted a notice of intent to request a waiver on its website. The information was additionally sent out in the LDOE Weekly newsletters.

The LDOE remains committed to ensuring that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, who meet the State’s participation guidelines, will participate in the alternate assessment.

We look forward to working with the ED to receive a positive response to this request. Please contact the Special Education Policy team at specialeducation@la.gov with any questions.

We thank you for your shared commitment to Louisiana’s students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Sincerely,

Meredith Jordan

Executive Director of Diverse Learners

CC: Dr. Cade Brumley, Superintendent of Education
    Dr. Quentina Timoll, Chief of Staff
    Dr. Jenna Chiasson, Assistant Superintendent
    Thomas Y. Lambert, Assistant Superintendent
Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) amended a provision of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 related to students participating in alternate assessments of each state education agency’s (SEA’s) statewide assessment. ESSA allows for SEAs to request a waiver from the 1.0 percent cap on participation requirement if SEAs anticipate exceeding the alternate assessment participation cap for any tested subject in the upcoming school year. The United States Department of Education (ED) will review the waiver request, and if granted, will waive the cap for that subject, pursuant to ESEA section 8401(b), for one year.

Requirements for what states are to submit in their waiver requests were described in regulation (§200.6(c)(4)). The regulation also describes what states are to do if they need to submit a request for an extension of their waiver. Specifically, the state is to meet the requirements of §200.6(c)(4)(i) - (iv), as well as show substantial progress toward the achievement of each component of the previous year’s plan and timeline.

LDOE is requesting an extension of the waiver granted in 2020 for the 2021-2022 school year. In this request, the LDOE will:

- Provide updated information regarding each requirement in the previous years’ submissions;
- Demonstrate the ways in which the State has continued to meet each requirement associated with the first waiver it received from this requirement; and
- Provide evidence that the State has demonstrated substantial progress towards achieving each component of the prior year’s plan and timeline and explain any disruptions due to COVID-19.
State-level Data on the Participation of Students to Show the Number and Percentage of Students Who Took the Alternate Assessment

Louisiana follows the federal participation requirement that the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students is measured through a statewide assessment. For the 2020-2021 school year, Louisiana’s participation rate for all students was 97.7 percent on ELA assessments and 97.9 percent on mathematics assessments. The participation rate for students with disabilities was 95.6 percent for ELA assessments and 95.4 percent for mathematics assessments, which ensures that statewide assessment results measure progress for all children.

Table 1. Participation Rate for Statewide Assessments, All Students and Students with Disabilities in ELA and Mathematics for the 2020-2021 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>All Students Tested</th>
<th>All Students Enrolled</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>363,768 (356,907)</td>
<td>372,488 (365,388)</td>
<td>97.7% (same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>364,833 (357,992)</td>
<td>372,975 (365,701)</td>
<td>97.8% (97.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities Tested</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities Enrolled</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>45,833 (44,759)</td>
<td>47,943 (46,804)</td>
<td>95.6% (same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>45,905 (44,835)</td>
<td>48,159 (47,006)</td>
<td>95.3% (95.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in grades 3-8 and high school take either the general statewide assessment, known as the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) 2025, or the AA-AAAS, known as the LEAP Connect assessment. Students who take the general statewide assessment are measured in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students who take the alternate assessment are measured in ELA, mathematics, and science. In 2020-2021, the alternate assessment forms were updated to align to revised Louisiana Student Standards. These updates required that there be standard setting, which resulted in new scale scores for four levels of performance: below goal, near goal, at goal and above goal.
Table 2. Number of Students Taking the Regular Assessment, 2020-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tested</td>
<td>370,659</td>
<td>368,079</td>
<td>370,153</td>
<td>369,630</td>
<td>358,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(351,716)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tested</td>
<td>369,225</td>
<td>369,225</td>
<td>370,039</td>
<td>369,622</td>
<td>359,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(352,822)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Since Regular Assessments Were Not Administered Counts are Estimates

Tables 3 and 4 below show the participation of students in the general statewide assessments and AA-AAAS, by subject, for the 2017-2018 school year, the 2018-2019 school year, and the estimated percentages for the 2019-2020 school year since regular assessments were not administered, and the 2020-2021 school year. For the 2019-2020 school year, the total number of students taking the regular assessment was estimated for each subgroup using percentages based on total enrollment for the school year, (i.e. 42.5% of enrolled students are Black or African American, so this percentage was used to calculate the number of students that would be taking the regular assessment for each subgroup which served as the denominator for the alternate assessment participation rate).

Table 3. Students Assessed on Statewide Assessments (3-8, HS), Including the Alternate Assessment, in ELA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Students taking Regular Assessment 2017-2018</th>
<th>Students taking Alternate Assessment 2017-2018</th>
<th>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2017-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>363,946</td>
<td>5,813</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>159,268</td>
<td>2,548</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>163,478</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>23,853</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>254,502</td>
<td>4,072</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,580</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>7,203</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>362,600</td>
<td>5,773</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>156,837</td>
<td>3,157</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>161,746</td>
<td>2,129</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>25,728</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>256,862</td>
<td>4,879</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,185</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>6,631</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>369,630</td>
<td>5,707</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>157,095</td>
<td>3,154</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>161,353</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>31,775</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>264,955</td>
<td>4,816</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>14,324</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>6,485</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Students taking Regular Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Students taking Alternate Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>363,768 <em>(351,716)</em></td>
<td>5,191 <em>(same)</em></td>
<td>1.4% <em>(1.5%)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Students Taking Regular Assessment 2017-2018</td>
<td>Students Taking Alternate Assessment 2017-2018</td>
<td>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2017-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>363,157</td>
<td>5,779</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>158,782</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>163,275</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>23,810</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>254,626</td>
<td>4,074</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,558</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>7,946</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Students Assessed on Statewide Assessments (3-8, HS), Including the Alternate Assessment, in Math
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>369,622</td>
<td>5,707</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>157,498</td>
<td>3,154</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>161,201</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>31,682</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>265,356</td>
<td>4,876</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>10,186</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>6,648</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Students Taking Regular Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Students Taking Alternate Assessment 2020-2021</th>
<th>Alternate Assessment Participation Rate 2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>364,833 (352,822)</td>
<td>5,170 (same)</td>
<td>1.4% (same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>154,949 (149,706)</td>
<td>2,880 (same)</td>
<td>1.9% (same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>157,869 (152,444)</td>
<td>1,809 (same)</td>
<td>1.1% (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>32,445 (31,622)</td>
<td>291 (same)</td>
<td>.9% (same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>265,946 (256,993)</td>
<td>4,429 (same)</td>
<td>1.7% (same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,336 (13,134)</td>
<td>7,626 (7,435)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66 (same)</td>
<td>114 (same)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.5% (same)</td>
<td>1.5% (same)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Request for a Waiver 90 Days Before Alternate Assessment Testing Window for the Relevant Subject**

Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 200.66(c)(4), the LDOE requests a waiver extension of the requirement that would limit the number of students who participate in the ELA and mathematics alternate assessment at 1.0% for the 2021-2022 school year. The LDOE has one testing window for the alternate assessment during the spring of each school year which begins on February 14, 2022, and concludes on March 18, 2022. The LDOE is submitting this request 90 days prior to the start of the testing window.

**Assurance from the SEA that it Verified Specific Information for Each LEA that Exceeded the 1.0 Percent Threshold**

The LDOE reviewed alternate assessment participation data for the state and each local education agency (LEA). At the state level, the LDOE concluded that 1.5 percent of students participated in the ELA and 1.4 percent in mathematics alternate assessments in 2020-2021. In 2019-2020, the LDOE concluded that 1.5 percent of students participated in the ELA and mathematics alternate assessments. In 2018-2019, the LDOE concluded that 1.6 percent of students participated in the ELA and mathematics alternate assessments. Less than 1.0 percent of students participated in the science alternate assessment in all three school years. The LDOE used 2020-2021 school year assessment results to determine that 128 school systems exceeded the 1.0 percent participation threshold in one or more tested subjects. The LDOE will provide the school systems with their assessment data, including alternate assessment participation data. If the participation rate exceeded the 1.0 percent participation threshold, the LEA is required to take additional actions. For the review of 2020-2021 school year data, each LEA will:

- Provide written justification describing the specific reason(s) the percentage of students taking the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent of eligible students;
- Provide written assurance that the LEA trained IEP teams on participation criteria;
- Provide written assurance that the LEA followed the State’s guidelines (described further below) for participation in the alternate assessment; and
- Provide written assurance that the LEA would address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking an alternate assessment.

**Evidence of Substantial Progress**

The State has continued to support LEAs in implementing updated criteria for eligibility to participate in the alternate assessment. During Fall 2018, the LDOE convened a team of experts from across the state to review and revise the State’s guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment. The group’s
recommendations went to the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) in November 2018. SEAP endorsed the changes with minor revisions. Louisiana’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved the revised eligibility criteria in December 2018. The LDOE continues to support LEAs in using revised eligibility criteria. It was initially implemented beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. The policy removed the ability to qualify for an alternate assessment based on adaptive assessment results alone, and phased in criteria designed to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the alternate assessment. The LDOE began communicating the BESE-approved revisions to LEAs in February 2019, and provided TA via webinars in April 2019 and October 2019, via a live presentation in June 2019, as well as in webinars in 2020.

LDOE continues to use a statewide Special Education Reporting (SER) system that allows for consistent documentation, reporting and monitoring capabilities. SER enhancements in 2018-2019 required all LEAs to document cognitive and/or adaptive evaluation results, including the name of the assessment, date administered, and assessment results. SER then prepopulates those results in the IEP form where IEP teams document whether a student meets the State’s eligibility criteria. This provides IEP teams with clear, transparent data to make better informed decisions. Previously, IEP teams would have to locate and interpret paper-based evaluation results. In addition, the LDOE included a reporting function that allows LEAs to generate a report to quickly look at students’ scores and compare these scores against the State’s eligibility guidelines. This function provides the LDOE and LEAs the ability to increase oversight and implement supports to ensure students meet the State’s guidelines and participate in the most appropriate assessment of their knowledge.

During the 2020-2021 school year, LDOE provided individually tailored feedback on evaluation eligibility to each LEA that submitted files for monitoring. The Department hosted regional office hours to discuss nuances in policy interpretation and promote best practices in advance of the administration of the AA-AAAS in the spring of 2021. The Department also included support sessions around this topic at our annual convening of Louisiana Educators, Louisiana Teacher Leader Summit.

As a result of the LDOE’s actions to improve implementation of the State's guidelines, provide effective monitoring and oversight, and address any disproportionality, Louisiana’s alternate assessment participation rate declined from 1.6 percent in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years to 1.5 percent in the 2019-2020 school year and to 1.5 in ELA and 1.4 in mathematics in the 2020-2021 school year. These outcomes demonstrate progress towards achieving each component of the prior year’s plan and timeline, as outlined in the sections below. The LDOE expects to see a further decrease in participation rates over time as LEAs continue to fully implement the revised eligibility criteria, and IEP teams use more accurate and up to date information to make eligibility decisions.

**The SEA’s Plan and Timeline to Improve Implementation of State Guidelines**

**Progress Towards Achieving the Plan to Improve Implementation of State Guidelines**

The Department is continuing to support LEAs with updated criteria for eligibility to participate in the alternate assessment. The 2020-2021 school year was the second full year of implementation for the revised eligibility criteria. Based on targeted monitoring results, the LDOE focused on improving the
understanding and implementation of the State’s revised participation criteria. The LDOE took the following actions:

- Required all LEAs to document cognitive and adaptive evaluation results, including the name of the assessment, date administered, and standard deviation, in the (SER) system. SER then prepopulates those results in the IEP form where IEP teams document whether a student meets the State’s eligibility criteria. This provides IEP teams with clear, transparent data to make better informed decisions. Previously, IEP teams would have to locate and interpret paper-based evaluation results. SER enhancements were deployed in July 2018 and LEAs entered scores before 30 days prior to the opening of the testing window to document evaluation results for all students assessed on the alternate assessment;

- Provided training and support to LEAs across the state to clarify the State’s revised eligibility criteria including:
  - Provide technical assistance and make available training documents on our Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities library, including presentations and a comprehensive eligibility criteria flowchart;
  - Monthly Special Education Leader webinars that bring together special education directors, coordinators, and other special education leaders for updates on key initiatives across the agency and targeted information on special education-related priorities;
  - Monthly Accountability and Assessment webinars that provide information on assessment priorities, including alternate assessment data and participation;
  - Monthly School System Planning Calls that provide LEA leaders with key updates and information needed for the current month, or in the near future. Key participants include chief academic officers, assessment coordinators and curriculum directors; and
  - Weekly newsletters that provide LEA leaders and practitioners detailed information on upcoming events and important deadlines.

- Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities webpage, links to tools and resources for educators and families, including: family resources, classroom supports, assessment resources, high school pathways information and BESE policy Bulletins;

- Resource library for students with significant cognitive disabilities that provides specific guidance to LEAs and IEP teams (for students entering high school before or after Fall 2020) to understand whether participation in the alternate assessment is appropriate based on the State’s guidelines and the student’s unique needs and educational goals;

- Provided individualized support and recommendations to LEAs when monitoring results of student-level files indicated IEP teams decisions were not consistent with the State’s alternate assessment participation criteria;

- Revised the empirical evidence documentation that IEP must have to support determination that the alternate assessment is appropriate for students with deficits in adaptive behavior and cognitive functioning that falls between 2.0 and 2.29 standard deviations below the mean. This additional evidence is part of the LEAP Connect form in our SER system and is now based on the Learner Characteristics Inventory. This revised tool provides IEP teams with a learner characteristics rating scale to help better determine if the alternate assessment is appropriate;
• Deployed SER enhancements requiring IEP teams to identify the IEP instructional plan goals that are linked to the Louisiana Connectors standards (alternate academic achievement standards);
• Provide parent resources on alternate assessment, LEAP Connect, translated into multiple languages; and,
• Attend Council of Chief State School Officers, Alternate Assessment Standards and Education of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO ASES) sessions and OSEP technical assistance calls.

Additional Plan and Timeline to Improve Implementation of State Guidelines

The State believes the number of students participating in the alternate assessment will continue to decrease, and the State will continue to provide technical support and guidance to LEAs. This continued training and guidance will be provided through:

• Office hours as needed;
• Special Education Leader webinars;
• Further enhancements to the SER system, allowing for school systems to run reports and check that their students are eligible prior to registering them for the administration of the alternate assessment;
• Continued in-person and virtual collaborations;
• Individualized support to LEAs when monitoring results indicate IEP team decisions are not consistent with the State's guidelines;
• Resources in our Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities resource library; and
• Spring statewide monitoring that includes a structured review of alternate assessment participation criteria.

The SEA’s Plan and Timeline to Provide Support and Oversight to each LEA that the State Anticipates Will Exceed the 1.0 Percent Threshold

Progress Towards Achieving the Plan to Provide Support and Oversight

The LDOE will:

1. Use the IDEA Self-Assessment Monitoring Guide to provide oversight and support with alternate assessment eligibility
2. Disseminate LEA data and require a justification and assurances for any LEA who exceeds the 1% cap
3. Conduct more in-depth data analysis to determine areas for future guidance

The LDOE uses an alternate assessment self-assessment domain on the IDEA Self-Assessment Monitoring Guide to provide LEAs with a structured review protocol to identify whether student-level files are compliant with the State's participation criteria. LEAs engage in an analysis that reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the local special education program by evaluating its impact on student achievement. The self-assessment helps LEAs identify the root causes of performance and compliance issues. All LEAs
required to participate in IDEA self-assessment monitoring complete the alternate assessment domain. The LDOE reviews all self-assessments for compliance with the State’s eligibility criteria.

Previous compliance oversight mandated that LDOE could put LEAs on a corrective action plan (CAP). In order to exit the CAP, LEAs were required to correct instances of noncompliance, submit evidence that student-level noncompliance was remedied and address any systemic issues related to the noncompliance. All school systems placed on an alternate assessment CAP successfully completed the corrective actions and exited the CAP by 2018, however the Department still found instances of noncompliance in its monitoring. As a result, BESE policy was updated to indicate that if the alternate assessment review process finds that an ineligible student took the alternate assessment, the test score is voided for accountability purposes.

In previous years, the LDOE reviewed evidence to verify if LEAs met specific criteria outlined by ED’s ESSA waiver guidance, state eligibility policy, and the state’s alternate assessment review request requirements, including:

- Evidence of a LEA-level disproportionality review and a summary of the LEAs results of this review;
- Evidence IEP teams have been sufficiently trained on the participation guidelines;
- Evidence LEAs completed IEP file reviews to ensure that teams followed the State’s eligibility guidelines for participation; and
- Evidence to verify that monitored students met the State's eligibility criteria including, but not limited to, current IEPs and current evaluations containing cognitive and/or adaptive assessment results, current IEPs with evidence of curriculum and goals aligned to Louisiana Connector standards, and evidence that assessment decisions are not based on factors (absences, disruptive behavior, English language status, etc.) outlined in the State's criteria.

This process has been implemented for several years now. The LDOE anticipates that any LEA that exceeded the 1.0 participation threshold in the 2020-2021 school year would also exceed the threshold in the 2021-2022 school year, unless they experienced significant student population changes.

LDOE continues to communicate the requirements for the alternate assessment participation review process in the following ways.

- Monthly Special Education Leader Webinars (All all SPED Leader webinars can be accessed in our SWD Resource library)
- Assessment monthly calls
- Upcoming weekly newsletter announcements
- Alternate Assessment review process specific support
- Targeted technical assistance to LEAs to assist in completion of all requirements

In addition to the more individualized feedback given to each LEA in 2020-2021 that participated in the alternate assessment review process, LDOE was able to conduct more in-depth data analysis due to the availability of more detailed information related to each student taking the AA-AAAS in SER. Data was examined by disability category, by range of scores (in SDs) of cognitive functioning, by assessment used
to determine estimate of cognitive functioning, and by the student’s grade. This level of analysis will
guide future guidance development and technical assistance given to LEAs, as well as inform possible
future policy changes.

Additional Plan and Timeline to Provide Support and Oversight

The LDOE will continue to provide support and oversight through the self-assessment monitoring and
alternate assessment review process in the 2021-2022 school year. Whereas in the fall of 2019, schools
only received feedback on whether or not a student’s file was eligible or ineligible, in the fall of 2020,
LEAs received specific information on why the student’s file was ineligible and recommendations for
remedy. This provided LEAs with information to ensure students are taking the most appropriate
assessments in the spring of 2021 and, when participating in the alternate assessment, that they are
meeting the State’s eligibility criteria.

In addition, the LDOE is providing LEAs with continuous oversight and support by:

- Conducting monthly assessment and accountability calls. These targeted webinars provide
guidance on how students with disabilities participate in Louisiana’s Assessment System to
testing coordinators, school counselors, and special education personnel. Webinar topics include
universal accessibility tools, embedded, and non-embedded accommodations available to
students taking the LEAP Connect, and information regarding the alternate assessment options
for students with the most significant cognitive impairments;
- Holding regular Assessment and Accountability office hours for LEAs to ask questions and get
answers regarding assessment options, accommodations, and accessibility;
- Regularly updating the LDOEs Accommodations and Accessibility Features User Guide;
- Providing oversight and assistance to LEAs with the self-assessment structured review protocol
to identify whether student-level files are compliant with the State’s participation criteria; and
- Continually updating resources in our Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities resource
library.
- Generating SER system reports that can be used by LEA’s to provide regular school-level
oversight and compliance with the alternate assessment eligibility criteria; and
- Analyzing data from SER system reports to identify future areas for technical assistance and
additional guidance.

The SEA’s Plan and Timeline to Address any Disproportionality in the Percentage
of Students Taking an Alternate Assessment

Progress Towards Achieving the Plan to Address Disproportionality

At the state-level, the LDOE compared the participation rate across the tested subjects for ESSA
subgroups. While participation rates across ESSA subgroups did not raise to the level of
disproportionality, the LDOE believes that much work remains to ensure that IEP teams are positioned to
make well-informed decisions on a student’s participation in the alternate assessment, based on the
State’s guidelines and the student’s educational goals.
At the LEA-level, for the 2020-2021 school year, the LDOE completed targeted alternate assessment monitoring (both traditional districts and charter schools) that exceeded 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment. The LDOE required LEAs to submit evidence of a LEA-level disproportionality review and a summary of the LEAs results of this review, including:

- a list of individuals (with titles) involved in the disproportionality review,
- the date(s) the review took place,
- process utilized for reviewing data,
- the outcome of the review, including any subgroups in which the LEA identified disproportionality, and
- if disproportionality was found, an action plan with dates.

The LDOE reviewed this evidence as part of the alternate assessment monitoring process.

**Additional Plan and timeline to address disproportionality**

To determine if disproportionality of students participating in the alternate assessment of Louisiana's statewide assessments exists, the LDOE will analyze LEA-level participation rates of students taking the alternate assessment in each of the following subgroups outlined in the State’s ESSA Plan:

- Major racial/ethnic groups including Black or African-American, White, and Hispanic
- Economically disadvantaged status
- English language learner status
- Homeless status

Results from the LEA-level disproportionality reviews will inform additional oversight and support to LEAs to ensure equity in access and participation of students with significant cognitive disabilities in the alternate assessment. Additional support may include reviewing and refining guidance to LEAs, conducting additional targeted monitoring, and/or providing additional training and support to LEAs. The LDOE launched a new webpage with resources to help LEAs train IEP teams to make assessment decisions for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Additionally, increased capacity for data analysis as provided by the enhancements to the SER system can enable more detailed analysis by subgroups for disproportionality. This will inform future areas of technical assistance and guidance provided by the Department, similar to the guidance developed for foster students.

**Notice of Intent for Public Comment**

SEAs are required to include evidence that the State requesting the waiver provided notice and reasonable opportunity for the public and LEAs to comment and provide input on the request.

- The LDOE posted a notice of intent to request a waiver on its website. The information was additionally sent out in the LDOE Weekly newsletters.
The LDOE remains committed to ensuring that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, who meet the State’s participation guidelines, will participate in the alternate assessment.

We look forward to working with the ED to receive a positive response to this request. Please contact the Special Education Policy team at specialeducation@la.gov with any questions.

We thank you for your shared commitment to Louisiana’s students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Sincerely,

Meredith Jordan

Executive Director of Diverse Learners

CC: Dr. Cade Brumley, Superintendent of Education
    Dr. Quentina Timoll, Chief of Staff
    Dr. Jenna Chiasson, Assistant Superintendent
    Thomas Y. Lambert, Assistant Superintendent
SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION REVIEW REQUEST

Complete and submit this review request only if the school system’s participation in the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent for the 2019-2020 school year.

Calcasieu school system is requesting an alternate assessment participation review to BESE Bulletin 903. Inclusion of Students in the Subgroup Competent Performance. The school system must provide the following assurances and submit, to the Department, an action plan or evidence of actions.

Please select Yes or No to each action listed below.

Yes 1. By checking yes, Calcasieu school system has verified that students participating in the alternate assessment met Louisiana’s participation criteria by verifying that all students who took the LEAP Connect alternate assessment had required evaluation results (cognitive and/or adaptive assessment(s)) corresponding to appropriate grade-based eligibility criteria entered in SER by the January 3, 2020 deadline. This verification report is titled Evaluation Results Report - Alternate Assessment and can be run from the Reports section in SER.

Yes 2. By checking yes, Calcasieu school system has verified they reviewed the data showing the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment for disproportionality.

   a. Describe the school system’s review process of subgroup data for possible disproportionality.

   Calcasieu Parish School Board used the following in determining possible disproportionality for the district: (1) Subgroups must have 10 or more participants, and, (2) Subgroups must exceed the 3% threshold used to determine disproportionality for discipline and evaluations. Based on this criteria, Calcasieu Parish School Board was not disproportionate.

   b. If applicable, describe the school system’s plan to address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

   Not applicable.

LEA Code: 010
Yes 3. By checking yes, Calcasieu school system has verified they completed training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria so that all students participate in the most appropriate assessment of their learning.

Provide dates of training and training topic(s) in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Date</th>
<th>Training Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 12-17, 2020</td>
<td>Using the Curriculum to Prepare for LEAP Connect</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 11, 2020</td>
<td>LEAP Connect: Criteria for Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 18, 2020</td>
<td>Administering the LEAP Connect Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yes 4. By checking yes, Calcasieu school system verifies they will complete training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria.

Describe the school system's plan to provide training.

Calcasieu Parish School Board will provide face to face training for any absent or newly employed IEP team member facilitating instruction for students participating in Alternate Assessment. Using the topics listed above, a team of IEP Facilitators will provide a three-five day training to address LEAP Connect criteria, format, and resources needed to enable students to perform successfully.

Yes 5. By checking yes, Calcasieu school system understands the Department will select a percentage of student files for review to verify whether the student is eligible for participation in the alternate assessment based on the State’s criteria. Accountability measures described in BESE Bulletin 111 will not be applied since regular assessments were not administered in the 2019-2020 school year. However, alternate assessment eligibility decisions for any student found ineligible will need to be addressed prior to administration of the 2020-2021 alternate assessment.

6. If applicable, provide a summary of any additional action(s) the school system plans to take in regard to ensuring only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments.

To ensure that only our most significant students participate in alternate assessments, the Director of Special Education will review each case prior to approval.

LEA Code: 010
Please provide a school system contact in the event there is a request by the Department for verification of any information provided in this review.

**Betty Washington**  
**Administrative Director**  
**Telephone:** 337-217-4980  
**Email:** betty.washington@cpsb.org

### Required Signatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Director</td>
<td>Betty Washington</td>
<td>August 21, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name</td>
<td>Betty Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Karl Bruchhaus</td>
<td>August 21, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name</td>
<td>Karl Bruchhaus</td>
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</table>

The alternate assessment participation review request is due by September 2, 2020. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP using the file name format, “LEACode_LEAName_ReviewRequest_2020”.

* Original signatures should be kept on file at the school system.
SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION REVIEW REQUEST

Complete and submit this review request only if the school system’s participation in the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent for the 2019-2020 school year.

Ascension Parish school system is requesting an alternate assessment participation review to BESE Bulletin §903. Inclusion of Students in the Subgroup Competent Performance. The school system must provide the following assurances and submit, to the Department, an action plan or evidence of actions.

Please select Yes or No to each action listed below.

1. By checking yes, Ascension Parish school system has verified that students participating in the alternate assessment met Louisiana’s participation criteria by verifying that all students who took the LEAP Connect alternate assessment had required evaluation results (cognitive and/or adaptive assessment(s)) corresponding to appropriate grade-based eligibility criteria entered in SER by the January 3, 2020 deadline. This verification report is titled Evaluation Results Report - Alternate Assessment and can be run from the Reports section in SER.

2. By checking yes, Ascension Parish school system has verified they reviewed the data showing the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment for disproportionality.

   a. Describe the school system's review process of subgroup data for possible disproportionality.

   The Special Education Leadership Team which included Director, Supervisors, Coordinators and Pupil Appraisal Coordinator reviewed all of the sub-group data related to Alternate Assessment. First, the data was reviewed at the District level and then it was reviewed at the individual school level. The Leadership Team looked for trends and areas of concern regarding disproportionality. Some areas of need included data that showed that Black or African American students, economically disadvantaged students and military-affiliated students in special education were over-identified to qualify for alternate assessment. The individual student information for those in these sub-groups was also examined, along with participation criteria and decisions for these students and alternate assessment eligibility.

   b. If applicable, describe the school system’s plan to address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

In order to address disproportionality in the percentage of students in any sub-group taking the alternate assessment, Ascension Parish will use a team-based approach to review individual student information in advance of IEP team meetings in order to determine if the student meets Alternate Assessment eligibility criteria by discussing and reviewing the following information:

1. Evaluation Results - Please note that when administering cognitive tests, the psychologist will choose the most appropriate testing instrument based upon the individual student in order to address potential racial or cultural biases in testing.
2. Least Restrictive Environment - The team will discuss the student’s current setting and whether the student’s needs are being met within that setting. The team will determine if supports can be increased in order to address
the regular education curriculum. The team will discuss whether additional or different support options may be available for the IEP team to consider.

3. Standardized Test Scores - The team will review all student State testing performance scores. The team will consider whether all necessary accommodations have been accessed by the student. The team will discuss whether there are any additional accommodations that might lead to increased student success, and have students try these accommodations during classroom testing scenarios.

4. Ascension Parish will continue to provide annual and on-going training to educate all IEP teams on the eligibility criteria for Alternate Assessment participation.

3. By checking yes, ____________ school system has verified they completed training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria so that all students participate in the most appropriate assessment of their learning.

Provide dates of training and training topic(s) in the table below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Training Date</th>
<th>Training Topic</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>9-6-2018</td>
<td>Pupil Appraisal Team – New Criteria for LEAP Connect/Alternate Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-13-2018</td>
<td>LEAP Connect Teachers Meeting - Review Alt Assessment FAQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-14-2018</td>
<td>Staff Development Training – Review new LEAP Connect Eligibility Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-4-2018</td>
<td>Pupil Appraisal Team – New Process for LEAP Connect/Alternate Assessment Eligibility</td>
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<td>1-17-2019</td>
<td>LEAP Connect Team – LEAP Connect Participation &amp; Assessment Guide</td>
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<td>5-14-2019</td>
<td>LEAP Connect Date &amp; Requirements Forms</td>
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<td>8-1-2019</td>
<td>New LEAP Connect Teacher Training – Alt Assessment Criteria</td>
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<td>9-13-2019</td>
<td>Staff Development Training – LEAP Connect/Alt Assessment Guidelines &amp; Procedures</td>
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<td>1-16-2020</td>
<td>LEAP Connect Assessment Training</td>
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<td>7/30 &amp; 7/31/2020</td>
<td>New SPED Teacher Training – LEAP Connect/Alt Assessment Guidelines</td>
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<td>7/30/2020</td>
<td>New LEAP Connect Teacher Training – LEAP Connect/Alt Assessment requirements</td>
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4. By checking yes, Ascension Parish school system verifies they will complete training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria.

Describe the school system’s plan to provide training.

Ascension Parish will continue to provide annual training on implementation of Bulletin 1530 section 505 implementation and guidelines for new special education teachers, for current special education teachers, for LEAP Connect teachers, for special education Coordinators & Lead Teachers, and for pupil appraisal teams. These trainings will ensure that all IEP team members have a solid understanding of appropriate implementation of Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria.

5. By checking yes, Ascension Parish school system understands the Department will select a percentage of student files for review to verify whether the student is eligible for participation in the alternate assessment based on the State’s criteria. Accountability measures described in BESE Bulletin 111 will not be applied since regular assessments were not administered in the 2019-2020 school year. However, alternate assessment eligibility decisions for any student found ineligible will need to be addressed prior to administration of the 2020-2021 alternate assessment.
6. If applicable, provide a summary of any additional action(s) the school system plans to take in regard to ensuring only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments.

Ascension Parish will continue to meet as a team (which will include SPED Coordinators, Pupil Appraisal Coordinators, Sped Director & Supervisors) in order to review all relevant individual student data to determine if the student demonstrates eligibility criteria for LEAP Connect/Alternate Assessment. In order to ensure that the evaluation data is uploaded and referenced on the IEP, the evaluation team will ensure that the Evaluation Assessment results are turned into the SER secretary and entered prior to the Re-evaluation/IEP meeting.
Please provide a school system contact in the event there is a request by the Department for verification of any information provided in this review.

Name: Lynn Hathaway
Telephone: (225) 391-7222
Position: Special Education Director
Email: Lynn.Hathaway@apsb.org

Required Signatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education Director Signature*:</th>
<th>Date: 9/1/2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Hathaway</td>
<td></td>
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<p>| Printed Name: Lynn Hathaway          |               |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superintendent Signature*:</th>
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<tr>
<td>David A. Alexander</td>
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The alternate assessment participation review request is due by September 2, 2020. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP using the file name format, “LEACode_LEAName_ReviewRequest_2020”.

* Original signatures should be kept on file at the school system.
SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION REVIEW REQUEST

Complete and submit this review request only if the school system’s participation in the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year.

Calcasieu Parish

_______ school system is requesting an alternate assessment participation review to BESE Bulletin §903. Inclusion of Students in the Subgroup Competent Performance. The school system must provide the following assurances and submit, to the Department, an action plan or evidence of actions.

Please select Yes or No to each action listed below.

1. By checking yes, ___________ school system has verified that students participating in the alternate assessment met Louisiana’s participation criteria by verifying that all students who took the LEAP Connect alternate assessment had required evaluation results (cognitive and/or adaptive assessment(s)) corresponding to appropriate grade-based eligibility criteria entered in SER by the January 2, 2021 deadline. This verification report is titled Evaluation Results Report - Alternate Assessment and can be run from the Reports section in SER.

2. By checking yes, ___________ school system has verified they reviewed the data showing the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment for disproportionality.

   a. Describe the school system’s review process of subgroup data for possible disproportionality.

      Calcasieu Parish School Board Department of Special Services reviews the LAA1 Code Report periodically to determine eligibility and subgroup participation. We verify the eligibility of every student and determine subgroup status through the use of JCampus. District staff are trained and use the train the trainer approach to ensure teachers use the correct procedures during IEP meetings to ensure criteria for participation is accurate.

   b. If applicable, describe the school system’s plan to address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

      Calcasieu Parish School Board Department of Special Services will review the disproportionality of students in subgroups by schools to determine if cluster sites can be re-examined. We will also review different graduation pathways for students who might be functioning at a higher level.

LEA Code: _______
Calcasieu Parish

3. By checking yes, ________________ school system has verified they completed training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. *Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria* so that all students participate in the most appropriate assessment of their learning.

Provide dates of training and training topic(s) in the table below.

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<tr>
<td>8/10/2020</td>
<td>LEAP Connect - Virtual Instruction, Setting up Blackboard, Evaluation/IEP Requirements, Participation Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/11-17/2020</td>
<td>LEAP Connect - Curriculum, Accommodations and Modifications, Evaluation/IEP Requirements, and Participation Criteria</td>
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</table>

Calcasieu Parish

4. By checking yes, ________________ school system verifies they will complete training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. *Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria*.

Describe the school system’s plan to provide training.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, staff of Calcasieu Parish School Board’s Department of Special Services provided training to all K-12 LEAP Connect teachers. A variety of topics were covered over a span of several days to accommodate the participants. Face to face and virtual formats were used with hands-on activities planned and executed. Teachers were trained to provide virtual learning, document virtual learning and accommodations on IEPs, and to implement Virtual Learning/Individual Contingency Plans. In early February, LEAP Connect test administration and security information was presented.

Calcasieu Parish

5. By checking yes, ________________ school system understands the Department will select a percentage of student files for review to verify whether the student is eligible for participation in the alternate assessment based on the State’s criteria. Alternate assessment eligibility decisions for any student found ineligible will need to be addressed prior to administration of the 2021-2022 alternate assessment.

6. If applicable, provide a summary of any additional action(s) the school system plans to take in regard to ensuring only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments.

LEA Code: ___________
Please provide a school system contact in the event there is a request by the Department for verification of any information provided in this review.

**Betty J. Washington**

**Administrative Director of Special Services**

**Email:** betty.washington@cpsb.org

**Telephone:** (337) 217-4980 ext. 2706

---

**Required Signatures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Education Director Signature</strong>:</td>
<td>2/8/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty J. Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superintendent Signature</strong>:</td>
<td>2/8/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Bruchhaus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The alternate assessment participation review request is by January 31, 2022. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP using the file name format, "LEACode_LEAName_AAReviewRequest_2021".

* Original signatures should be kept on file at the school system.
SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION JUSTIFICATION

The Department provided 2020-2021 school year alternate assessment data to school systems for review. If your school system assessed more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment in the 2020-2021 school year, LDOE anticipates that your school system will assess more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment in the 2021-2022 school year. School systems that exceed the 1.0 percent threshold must complete a justification and request a participation review. ESSA requires the Department to make these justifications publicly available, provided that it does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

School System: Calcasieu Parish School Board

Enter the percentage of students who participated in the alternate assessment during the 2020-2021 school year. This information was disseminated to your school system via FTP on or before January 11, 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Participation Percentage for the 2020-2021 SY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>LEAP Connect</td>
<td>1.20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>LEAP Connect</td>
<td>1.10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>LAA 1</td>
<td>0.70 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Explain why the school system exceeded an alternate assessment participation rate of 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year. School systems must select NA (Not Applicable) or Applicable for each option below. Applicable must be chosen for at least one of the following and may be chosen for more than one of the following options:

   a. **Applicable**

      If applicable, provide a brief description with supporting data that identifies specific programs or circumstances within the school system that may contribute to higher enrollments of students identified with significant cognitive disabilities that would result in an alternate assessment participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent. (Example: The school system has schools, community and/or health facilities that draw large numbers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.):

         Calcasieu Parish School Board has several nonpublic and charter schools in the area that will not provide instruction and support to students with moderate and significant cognitive disabilities, resulting in higher enrollments of students in these identified areas. The community and school system has a reputation of supporting students with moderate and significant cognitive disabilities from birth to post secondary, with programs such as CARC, ODD, FHP, LNS, and other community organizations located within the region.

   b. **NA**

      If applicable, briefly describe how a small overall student enrollment in the school system contributes to the likelihood that even a small number of students found eligible to participate in the alternate assessment would result in a participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent. (Example: The total tested population is less than 300 and the total number of students participating in the alternate assessment is 3 or less.):

   c. **NA**

      If applicable, briefly describe any other or additional justification of variables that may contribute to the school system’s alternate assessment participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent:
2. By submitting this form, the school system assures that it is taking these required actions:

- The school system verifies that all students participating in the alternate assessment meet Louisiana’s participation criteria.
- The school system verifies that any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment will be addressed.

Required Signatures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Director</td>
<td>Betty J. Washington</td>
<td>2/8/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name:</td>
<td>Betty J. Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name:</td>
<td>Karl Bruchhaus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION JUSTIFICATION**

The Department provided 2020-2021 school year alternate assessment data to school systems for review. If your school system assessed more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment in the 2020-2021 school year, LDOE anticipates that your school system will assess more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment in the 2021-2022 school year. School systems that exceed the 1.0 percent threshold must complete a justification and request a participation review. ESSA requires the Department to make these justifications publicly available, provided that it does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

**School System: Lafayette Parish School System**

Enter the percentage of students who participated in the alternate assessment during the 2020-2021 school year. This information was disseminated to your school system via FTP on or before January 11, 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Percentage for the 2020-2021 SY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA: LEAP Connect Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math: LEAP Connect Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science: LAA 1 Participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Explain why the school system exceeded an alternate assessment participation rate of 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year. School systems must select NA (Not Applicable) or Applicable for each option below. Applicable must be chosen for at least one of the following and may be chosen for more than one of the following options:

   a. If applicable, provide a brief description with supporting data that identifies specific programs or circumstances within the school system that may contribute to higher enrollments of students identified with significant cognitive disabilities that would result in an alternate assessment participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent. (Example: The school system has schools, community and/or health facilities that draw large numbers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.)

   b. If applicable, briefly describe how a small overall student enrollment in the school system contributes to the likelihood that even a small number of students found eligible to participate in the alternate assessment would result in a participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent. (Example: The total tested population is less than 300 and the total number of students participating in the alternate assessment is 3 or less.)

   c. If applicable, briefly describe any other or additional justification of variables that may contribute to the school system's alternate assessment participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent:

   IEP decisions were made using cognitive and/or adaptive scores, after reviewing assessment data and was part of planning and programming. These IEP decisions were made in the best interest of our students.
2. By submitting this form, the school system assures that it is taking these required actions:

- The school system verifies that all students participating in the alternate assessment meet Louisiana's participation criteria.
- The school system verifies that any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment will be addressed.

### Required Signatures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Director</td>
<td>Holly Ortego</td>
<td>2/17/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name</td>
<td>Holly Ortego</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent Signature</td>
<td>Irma Trosclair</td>
<td>2/17/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name</td>
<td>Irma Trosclair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) established a 1.0 percent cap on the percent of students at the state-level who can participate in the alternate assessment. A state cannot prohibit a school system from assessing more than 1.0 percent of its students with an alternate assessment, so ESSA outlines specific actions school systems must take justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent alternate assessment participation threshold in any content area.

In accordance with BESE Bulletin 111, if LEAs exceed the 1.0 percent participation threshold, they are required to request a participation review. This process includes two components:

1. School systems must provide assurances that the school system
   a. followed the State’s guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment and
   b. will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

2. School systems must also provide evidence that the school system
   a. analyzed participation data;
   b. trained IEP teams on participation criteria; and
   c. reviewed student data for compliance to eligibility criteria.

The alternate assessment participation review request documents are due by January 31, 2022. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP following the “LEACode_LEAName_AAResultRequest_2021” file naming format.

LEA Code: _______
Complete and submit this review request only if the school system's participation in the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year.

LPSS school system is requesting an alternate assessment participation review to BESE Bulletin §903. Inclusion of Students in the Subgroup Competent Performance. The school system must provide the following assurances and submit, to the Department, an action plan or evidence of actions.

Please select Yes or No to each action listed below.

1. By checking yes, ________________ school system has verified that students participating in the alternate assessment met Louisiana's participation criteria by verifying that all students who took the LEAP Connect alternate assessment had required evaluation results (cognitive and/or adaptive assessment(s)) corresponding to appropriate grade-based eligibility criteria entered in SER by the January 2, 2021 deadline. This verification report is titled Evaluation Results Report - Alternate Assessment and can be run from the Reports section in SER.

2. By checking yes, ________________ school system has verified they reviewed the data showing the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment for disproportionality.
   a. Describe the school system's review process of subgroup data for possible disproportionality.
      2a. District staff has analyzed subgroup data and prioritized each area and found that we are disproportionate in the following areas for ELA: African americans(2.5), economically disadvantaged(1.8), foster care (only 1 student), homeless (2.5)(9 students) and military affiliated(only 1 student). In the area of math: african americans(2.5), economically disadvantaged(1.8) foster care (only 1 student), foster care(2.5) (9 students) and military affiliated(only 1 student). In the area of science:
   b. If applicable, describe the school system's plan to address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.
      Programs specialist along with district staff has analyzed and prioritized each subgroup. District staff will provide professional development to support schools and staff on alternate assessment criteria.

LEA Code: _______
LPSS

3. By checking yes, ___________ school system has verified they completed training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. *Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria* so that all students participate in the most appropriate assessment of their learning.

Provide dates of training and training topic(s) in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Date</th>
<th>Training Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October/November</td>
<td>How to locate cognitive score in SER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October/November</td>
<td>Determining LEAP Assessment and Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>IEP Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. By checking yes, ___________ school system verifies they will complete training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. *Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria*.

Describe the school system’s plan to provide training.

District staff will provide training to campus level staff on the IEP process as it relates to implementing guidelines as provided for students who take the alternate assessment. Pupil appraisal staff will be updated at monthly meetings on results of the audit and provide professional development opportunities as needed.

5. By checking yes, ___________ school system understands the Department will select a percentage of student files for review to verify whether the student is eligible for participation in the alternate assessment based on the State’s criteria. Alternate assessment eligibility decisions for any student found ineligible will need to be addressed prior to administration of the 2021-2022 alternate assessment.

6. If applicable, provide a summary of any additional action(s) the school system plans to take in regard to ensuring only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments.

Continue trainings by the district’s IEP facilitator

LEA Code: ________
Please provide a school system contact in the event there is a request by the Department for verification of any information provided in this review.

**Name:** Miriam Hollier  
**Position:** Diverse Learner Specialist  
**Telephone:** 3375207221  
**Email:** mbhollier@lpssonline.com

**Required Signatures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signatory</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Director Signature*</td>
<td>2/17/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holly Ortego</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent Signature*</td>
<td>2/17/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irma Trosclair</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The alternate assessment participation review request is by January 31, 2022. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP using the file name format, “LEACode_LEAName_AAReviewRequest_2021”.

* Original signatures should be kept on file at the school system.

LEA Code: ________
ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION REVIEW PROCESS

SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION JUSTIFICATION

The Department provided 2020-2021 school year alternate assessment data to school systems for review. If your school system assessed more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment in the 2020-2021 school year, LDOE anticipates that your school system will assess more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment in the 2021-2022 school year. School systems that exceed the 1.0 percent threshold must complete a justification and request a participation review. ESSA requires the Department to make these justifications publicly available, provided that it does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

School System: St. Tammany Parish Public Schools

Enter the percentage of students who participated in the alternate assessment during the 2020-2021 school year. This information was disseminated to your school system via FTP on or before January 11, 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Percentage for the 2020-2021 SY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA: LEAP Connect Participation</td>
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<td>Math: LEAP Connect Participation</td>
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<td>Science: LAA 1 Participation</td>
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1. Explain why the school system exceeded an alternate assessment participation rate of 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year. School systems must select NA (Not Applicable) or Applicable for each option below. Applicable must be chosen for at least one of the following and may be chosen for more than one of the following options:

   a. If applicable, provide a brief description with supporting data that identifies specific programs or circumstances within the school system that may contribute to higher enrollments of students identified with significant cognitive disabilities that would result in an alternate assessment participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent. (Example: The school system has schools, community and/or health facilities that draw large numbers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.):

      STPPS is a large school system serving at least 35,000 students, including more than 7,000 students with disabilities. As such, within this population there may be a higher percentage of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

   b. If applicable, briefly describe how a small overall student enrollment in the school system contributes to the likelihood that even a small number of students found eligible to participate in the alternate assessment would result in a participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent. (Example: The total tested population is less than 300 and the total number of students participating in the alternate assessment is 3 or less.):

   c. If applicable, briefly describe any other or additional justification of variables that may contribute to the school system’s alternate assessment participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent:
2. By submitting this form, the school system assures that it is taking these required actions:

- The school system verifies that all students participating in the alternate assessment meet Louisiana's participation criteria.
- The school system verifies that any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment will be addressed.

Required Signatures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education Director Signature*: Kerri Soo</th>
<th>Date: 2/17/22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name: Kerri Soo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Superintendent Signature*:                      |               |
| Printed Name:                                   |               |
SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION REVIEW REQUEST AND ASSURANCES

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) established a 1.0 percent cap on the percent of students at the state-level who can participate in the alternate assessment. A state cannot prohibit a school system from assessing more than 1.0 percent of its students with an alternate assessment, so ESSA outlines specific actions school systems must take justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent alternate assessment participation threshold in any content area.

In accordance with BESE Bulletin 111, if LEAs exceed the 1.0 percent participation threshold, they are required to request a participation review. This process includes two components:

1. School systems must provide assurances that the school system
   a. followed the State’s guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment and
   b. will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

2. School systems must also provide evidence that the school system
   a. analyzed participation data;
   b. trained IEP teams on participation criteria; and
   c. reviewed student data for compliance to eligibility criteria.

The alternate assessment participation review request documents are due by January 31, 2022. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP following the “LEACode_LEAName-AAReviewRequest_2021” file naming format.

LEA Code: 052
SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION REVIEW REQUEST

Complete and submit this review request only if the school system’s participation in the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year.

St. Tammany Parish Public Schools

_Yes_ 1. By checking yes, ___________ school system has verified that students participating in the alternate assessment met Louisiana’s participation criteria by verifying that all students who took the LEAP Connect alternate assessment had required evaluation results (cognitive and/or adaptive assessment(s)) corresponding to appropriate grade-based eligibility criteria entered in SER by the January 2, 2021 deadline. This verification report is titled _Evaluation Results Report - Alternate Assessment_ and can be run from the Reports section in SER.

St. Tammany Parish Public Schools

_Yes_ 2. By checking yes, ___________ school system has verified they reviewed the data showing the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment for disproportionality.

   a. Describe the school system’s review process of subgroup data for possible disproportionality.

      A review of subgroup data indicated possible disproportionality may occur in the economically disadvantage subgroup. The parish has a high number of students on free and reduced lunch which may account for the higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

   b. If applicable, describe the school system’s plan to address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

      STTPS will continue to consider all determinant factors in regards to referral for evaluation and subsequent classification.

LEA Code: 052
3. By checking yes, the school system has verified they completed training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria so that all students participate in the most appropriate assessment of their learning.

Provide dates of training and training topic(s) in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Date</th>
<th>Training Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/8/21</td>
<td>IEP Process and Leap Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4/21</td>
<td>Factors for Consideration in Determining Alternate Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/7/21</td>
<td>Alternate Assessment Review Criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. By checking yes, the school system verifies they will complete training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria.

Describe the school system’s plan to provide training.

Development of a Google Slide Presentation within the Special Education Google Classroom along with a produced video. Each staff member who participates in IEPs will be assigned to watch and listen to the slide presentation and video and participate in a follow up questionnaire. Additionally, at monthly school special education PLC meetings, representatives from the special education department will review alternate assessment criteria, implications for students participating in alternate assessment, and development of data based rationale for participation.

5. By checking yes, the school system understands the Department will select a percentage of student files for review to verify whether the student is eligible for participation in the alternate assessment based on the State’s criteria. Alternate assessment eligibility decisions for any student found ineligible will need to be addressed prior to administration of the 2021-2022 alternate assessment.

6. If applicable, provide a summary of any additional action(s) the school system plans to take in regard to ensuring only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments.

Professional development and training of school staff; provision of student instruction in the least restrictive environment to the greatest extent possible; participation in researched based interventions and scaffolding strategies prior to determining alternate assessment.

LEA Code: 052
Please provide a school system contact in the event there is a request by the Department for verification of any information provided in this review.

Name: Kerri Soo  
Position: Director of Students with Exceptionalities  
Telephone: 985-898-3317  
Email: kerri.soo@stpsb.org

Required Signatures

Special Education Director Signature*: Digitally signed by Kerri Soo  
Date: 2022.02.17 08:50:37 -06'00'  
Printed Name: Kerri Soo

Superintendent Signature*:  
Date: 2/17/22  
Printed Name:

The alternate assessment participation review request is by January 31, 2022. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP using the file name format, “LEACode_LEAName_AARedReviewRequest_2021”.

* Original signatures should be kept on file at the school system.
SCHOOL SYSTEM ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION REVIEW REQUEST AND ASSURANCES

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) established a 1.0 percent cap on the percent of students at the state-level who can participate in the alternate assessment. A state cannot prohibit a school system from assessing more than 1.0 percent of its students with an alternate assessment, so ESSA outlines specific actions school systems must take justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent alternate assessment participation threshold in any content area.

In accordance with BESE Bulletin 111, if LEAs exceed the 1.0 percent participation threshold, they are required to request a participation review. This process includes two components:

1. School systems must provide assurances that the school system
   a. followed the State’s guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment and
   b. will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

2. School systems must also provide evidence that the school system
   a. analyzed participation data;
   b. trained IEP teams on participation criteria; and
   c. reviewed student data for compliance to eligibility criteria.

The alternate assessment participation review request documents are due by January 31, 2022. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP following the “LEACode_LEAName_AAReviewRequest_2021” file naming format.
Complete and submit this review request only if the school system’s participation in the alternate assessment exceeded 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year.

ReNEW Schaumburg Elementary
_________________________ school system is requesting an alternate assessment participation review to BESE Bulletin §903. Inclusion of Students in the Subgroup Competent Performance. The school system must provide the following assurances and submit, to the Department, an action plan or evidence of actions.

Please select Yes or No to each action listed below.

Yes 1. By checking yes, ReNEW Schaumburg Elementary has verified that students participating in the alternate assessment met Louisiana’s participation criteria by verifying that all students who took the LEAP Connect alternate assessment had required evaluation results (cognitive and/or adaptive assessment(s)) corresponding to appropriate grade-based eligibility criteria entered in SER by the January 2, 2021 deadline. This verification report is titled Evaluation Results Report - Alternate Assessment and can be run from the Reports section in SER.

Yes 2. By checking yes, ReNEW Schaumburg Elementary has verified they reviewed the data showing the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment for disproportionality.
   a. Describe the school system’s review process of subgroup data for possible disproportionality.

   ReNEW Schools’ Student Support Services team members reviews each subgroup for possible disproportionality. Team members must take into consideration the specialized programs such as community based instruction, substantially separate curriculum, and individualized programming for students with autism spectrum disorders. These programs draw larger numbers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Keeping this in mind, ReNEW Schools will perform internal reviews to ensure all students who are identified to take the LEAP Connect assessment are eligible based on the criteria set forth by LDOE.

   b. If applicable, describe the school system’s plan to address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment.

The disproportionality in the four subgroups may be attributed to the specialized programming that ReNEW Schools’ offers to students with low incidence disabilities, as well as, students with significant cognitive disabilities. These programs draw larger numbers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Moreover, our rate of students identified as an English Learner or Hispanic/Latino appears disproportionate; however, this percentage is based on one (1) student taking the LEAP Connect assessment.
3. By checking yes, ________________ school system has verified they completed training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. *Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria* so that all students participate in the most appropriate assessment of their learning.

Provide dates of training and training topic(s) in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Date</th>
<th>Training Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/17/2021; 1/21/2022</td>
<td>Follow Up: LEAP Connect Review and Testing Implications</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18/2021</td>
<td>Follow Up: Alternative Assessment Review and Qualification Requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>Various trainings were provided during the previous school term: Alternative Assessment: Criteria for Participation and Testing Implications; Alternative Assessment: How to collect and review data for all 3 criteria of LEAP Connect participation; End of year data review for students taking LEAP Connect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. By checking yes, ________________ school system verifies they will complete training for school staff who participate as members of the individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure the team understands and implements the guidelines established by BESE Bulletin 1530 §505. *Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria.*

Describe the school system’s plan to provide training.

The ReNEW network Student Support Services team provided training and guidance documents to school-based special education coordinators regarding Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria. The school-based special education coordinators provided ongoing professional development, training and guidance to school-based IEP Team Members.

5. By checking yes, ________________ school system understands the Department will select a percentage of student files for review to verify whether the student is eligible for participation in the alternate assessment based on the State’s criteria. Alternate assessment eligibility decisions for any student found ineligible will need to be addressed prior to administration of the 2021-2022 alternate assessment.

6. If applicable, provide a summary of any additional action(s) the school system plans to take in regard to ensuring only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments.

LEA Code: 369006
Please provide a school system contact in the event there is a request by the Department for verification of any information provided in this review.

Name: Mary Cole-Bush, Ph.D.  
Position: Chief of Student Support Services  
Telephone: 504-281-0360  
Email: mcole-bush@renewschools.org

Required Signatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education Director Signature*:</th>
<th>Date: 1/31/2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Printed Name: Mary Cole-Bush, Ph.D.</td>
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<th>Superintendent Signature*:</th>
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<td>Printed Name: Tanya Bryant, CEO</td>
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The alternate assessment participation review request is by January 31, 2022. When completed, please submit all responses and any pertinent supporting documents via FTP using the file name format, “LEACode_LEAName_AAReviewRequest_2021”.

* Original signatures should be kept on file at the school system.
Hi Kathy,

I have noted the updates to our data tables in our updated waiver in the attachment. The changes are in red, and I also had some updates to our narrative based on the updated numbers. Originally the 1.4% participation was for both ELA and mathematics, but after our update we have 1.5% participation in ELA and 1.4% in mathematics. Please let me know if you want me to send a fully corrected version without the original estimated numbers. I edited in this way for full transparency so you can see the updates from the original to the final data in red.

To answer your additional questions below regarding disproportionality in alternate assessment participation, currently school systems are determining that based on a review of their data and inquiry around student enrollment changes and other factors. We do suggest they look across years for noticeable changes. I am certainly open to processes and guidance other states use like risk ratios.

Our district justifications are posted to our Students with Significant Disabilities [website](#) in the section *Alternate Assessment Review Process*. We are finalizing our collections for this year, but you can find previous year justifications posted, and we will post this year's.

We are committed to continuing to improve and to ensuring that only the students with the most significant cognitive challenges are participating in our state's alternate assessment. Please let me know if you have further questions or guidance that can help us.

Meredith Jordan
Executive Director of Diverse Learners
Office of Teaching and Learning | Division of Diverse Learners
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Hi Jordan,

Thank you for the update.

I have a follow-up question regarding disproportionality. Can you tell us the criterion that districts use to reach the conclusion that disproportionality exists? I understand that they look to see if certain subgroups have larger participation rates than other subgroups but at what point do they stop and say “yes disproportionality is present for this subgroup”? Is it that districts determine this for themselves or does the State provide guidance in reaching that conclusion?

Also, the 1% cap waiver request indicates that the participation rate declined from 1.6% in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 to 1.4% in 2020-2021. Can you tell me if the subjects that this finding relates to?

Finally, are district justifications for exceeding the 1% threshold made posted on LDOE’s website? If not, does LDOE communicate to the public that these justifications are available upon request?

Kathy

Good Morning Kathy,

We are working internally to determine if we need any adjustments to the participation chart or if it is accurate as is. I should be able to respond to you today or tomorrow, at the latest. In the meantime, I wanted to answer your question regarding how we have school systems review their data for any disproportionality in alternate assessment participation in any subgroups. When they receive their data for overall participation in alternate assessment with their participation rates, they also receive alternate assessment participation data for each subgroup (black/African American, white, hispanic/latino, economically disadvantaged, English
Learners, homeless, foster care, and military affiliated). So, just as they are reviewing participation rates in each content, they are reviewing participation rates for each of those subgroups to determine if there are larger participation rates among certain subgroups. School systems are required to send assurances as well as their plans to review and determine if there is disproportionality within any subgroups, and if so, they must also submit their plan to address those disproportional alternate assessment participation rates.

I will get back with you soon regarding the data chart. Thank you so much!

Meredith Jordan
Executive Director of Diverse Learners
Office of Teaching and Learning | Division of Diverse Learners
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Good Afternoon Kathleen,

I hope this email finds you well. At the time we submitted the waiver, we were still working with school systems to certify their data, so I did want to indicate that in our table. I am working with our team internally to determine if we need to update the data table you reference or if the data is an accurate final number.

Thank you so much for following up with us.

Meredith Jordan
Executive Director of Diverse Learners
Office of Teaching and Learning | Division of Diverse Learners
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Hi Meredith,

I am the person doing the analysis on Louisiana’s 1% cap waiver request and I noticed that the waiver includes estimated values of participation for the 2020-2021 school year. See the screen shot below for ELA.

Please provide the Department with the actual numbers for ELA and Math for the 2020-2021 school year.
You can either: (1) update the State’s current waiver request with the actual data and send along the revised copy or (2) send along new data tables for ELA and Math. Which ever one
you choose is fine. We will add the additional information to your State’s waiver request in our internal system.

Kathy
Kathleen Banks kathleen.banks@ed.gov
Don Peasley donald.peasley@ed.gov
State Assessment Team, School Support and Accountability (SSA)
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)
US Department of Education
Email the OESE Assessment Team at ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov

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Good Evening Kathy,

I have inserted my responses below in blue, and I attached some sample responses from several districts and a charter regarding their review for disproportionality and their summary plan to address any disproportionality in participation. I appreciate your support, and I am also willing to connect via zoom or phone for further discussion. Have a great week.

Meredith Jordan
Executive Director of Diverse Learners
Office of Teaching and Learning | Division of Diverse Learners
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Hi Meredith,

Thank you for providing more information regarding Louisiana’s 1% cap waiver request. I met with Don this morning regarding the State’s request and we both agreed that more information is needed before the Department can move forward with a decision. Please respond to this email with answers to the following questions in red.

1. The waiver indicates that alternate assessment participation declined from 1.6% in 2017-18 and 2018-19 to 1.4% in 2020-21. **Can you tell us which subjects this decline was observed for?**
In our original waiver with the estimated numbers, this was observed for both ELA and mathematics. These numbers were updated once we looked at the estimated numbers we used in our original waiver and updated those with the actuals I previously sent. In ELA, in 2017-2018 our rate was 1.6, in 2018-2019 it was 1.6, in 2019-2020 it was 1.5 and in 2020-2021 it was 1.5 (table 3 in the waiver). In math, in 2017-2018, it was 1.6, in 2018-2019 it was 1.6, in 2019-2020 it was 1.5 and in 2020-2021 it was 1.4 (table 4 in the waiver).

2. There is still some confusion about how disproportionality is handled at the State-level.
   a. The waiver request states that Louisiana requires school districts to submit evidence of a district-level disproportionality review and summary which includes among other things, if disproportionality was found, an action plan with dates and that review of this evidence by the State is part of the alternate assessment monitoring process. Can you provide us with some examples of districts that determined disproportionately (meaning how did they reach the conclusion that disproportionality was present), and a brief summary of the action plans that they devised as a result? I attached some examples from several districts and a charter school. Number 2 in the document is where the district or charter explains how they examined the data for disproportionality and their plan to address it.
   b. The waiver request states that to determine disproportionality, the State will analyze district-level participation rates of students taking the alternate assessment in each of the subgroups outlined in the State’s ESSA Plan. Does this mean that the State also does a check for disproportionately? Please explain. Our review of participation data by subgroup has revealed for some time participation above 1% in the subgroups black/African American, Economically Disadvantaged, Homeless and we’ve begun looking at students in Foster Care. Our students participating in alternate assessment who are in foster care prompted the release of this guidance. Our participation rates among black/African American and Economically Disadvantaged students have not changed much over the years and those participation rates are a little higher than our overall participation rates, which I believe calls for additional attention and strategy.

Although the same language as indicated above for #2a and #2b was used in the State’s November 2, 2020 1% cap waiver request, each future waiver request should show growth in how the State works to reduce alternate assessment participation. Therefore, answering the questions above in red will help with completing the State’s request.

Kathy

From: Meredith Jordan (DOE) <Meredith.Jordan@LA.GOV>
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 9:34 PM
Hi Kathy,

I have noted the updates to our data tables in our updated waiver in the attachment. The changes are in red, and I also had some updates to our narrative based on the updated numbers. Originally the 1.4% participation was for both ELA and mathematics, but after our update we have 1.5% participation in ELA and 1.4% in mathematics. Please let me know if you want me to send a fully corrected version without the original estimated numbers. I edited in this way for full transparency so you can see the updates from the original to the final data in red.

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Office of Teaching and Learning | Division of Diverse Learners
Louisiana Department of Education
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Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Hi Jordan,

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Office of Teaching and Learning | Division of Diverse Learners
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

From: OESE.ESEA.Assessment <ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 1:28:03 PM
To: Meredith Jordan (DOE)
Cc: Jenna Chiasson; Cade Brumley (DOE); Quentina Timoll (DOE); Thomas Lambert (DOE); OESE.ESEA.Assessment
Subject: RE: LA's 1% cap waiver request: ED question

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Please do not click on links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Hello Meredith,

I am writing to follow-up on the email that I sent to you on January 25, 2022 asking for an updated 1% cap waiver request with your State’s 2020-21 participation numbers. Please see the original email at the end of this thread.

Kathy
Good Afternoon Kathleen,

I hope this email finds you well. At the time we submitted the waiver, we were still working with school systems to certify their data, so I did want to indicate that in our table. I am working with our team internally to determine if we need to update the data table you reference or if the data is an accurate final number.

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Kathleen Banks [kathleen.banks@ed.gov](mailto:kathleen.banks@ed.gov)
Don Peasley [donald.peasley@ed.gov](mailto:donald.peasley@ed.gov)
State Assessment Team, School Support and Accountability (SSA)
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