



# Illinois State Board of Education

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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 requires SEAs to submit waiver requests to the U.S. Department of Education in the event they have more than 1 percent of their students participating in the alternate assessment.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has conducted an extensive review of data from Illinois’ statewide alternate assessment, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), for school year 2017-18. The purpose of the review was to determine the participation rates of students taking the alternate assessments aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS), better known as DLM.

The data revealed that just over 1 percent of Illinois students participated in each of the content areas included on DLM in 2017-18. Table 1 below displays participation rates by subject for the 2017-18 DLM. Based on this data, the state anticipates exceeding the 1 percent threshold enacted by the ESSA for school year 2018-19.

Content Area	Students tested	Students required to test	Percent achievement measured for all students	Students with disabilities tested	Students with disabilities required to test	Percent achievement measured for students with disabilities
Reading	1,017,143	1,036,716	3.8	142,859	147,253	9.0
Math	1,020,405	1,040,624	3.2	142,814	147,367	7.7
Science	431,813	459,891	5.0	57,155	69,243	1.9

Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. 200.6(c)(4), the Illinois State Board of Education is seeking a waiver for all subject areas for the 2018-19 school year from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Illinois has one testing window for DLM during the spring of each school year. The start date for each subject is scheduled for March 13-May 8, 2019. Submission for the ISBE waiver request comes 90 days prior to the start of the first testing window.

Illinois follows the federal participation requirements for assessment and requires all students enrolled in public K-12 schools be assessed with accommodations, without accommodations, or with DLM. To date, **Illinois has met or exceeded the federal guidelines set at 95 percent participation rate of all students.** For the 2017-18 school year, Illinois’ participation rate for students with disabilities was 98 percent in English/language arts and 98 percent in math.

Local district data was reviewed and analyzed. During the 2017-18 school year, 391 of 852 districts assessed more than 1 percent of its assessed identified students with DLM . Updates were made in July 2015, which included specific questions to determine appropriate participation in the alternate assessment.

<b>Student Demographic Group</b>	<b># Students Participating in Regular Assessment</b>	<b># Students Participating in Alternate Assessment</b>	<b>Total # Students Assessed</b>	<b>Percentage Participating in Alternate Assessment</b>
<b>All Students</b>	1,029,363	11,966	1,041,329	1.2
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	2,912	36	2,948	1.2
<b>Asian</b>	52,073	547	52,620	1.0
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	1,066	14	1,080	1.3
<b>Black or African American</b>	172,231	2,767	174,998	1.6
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	275,007	3,089	278,096	1.1
<b>White</b>	490,603	5,137	495,740	1.0
<b>Two or more races</b>	35,471	376	35,847	1.5
<b>Children with Disabilities</b>	135,575	11,962	147,537	8.1
<b>Limited English Proficient (LEP)</b>	109,641	2,494	112,135	2.2
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	527,510	7,519	535,029	1.4
<b>Migratory Students</b>	176	1	177	0.6
<b>Male</b>	524,689	7,897	532,586	1.5
<b>Female</b>	504,674	4,069	508,743	0.8

ISBE will develop and implement procedures to ensure appropriate oversight of each local school district that exceeds the 1 percent cap. ISBE will develop a plan and timeline for:

- Guidance on the alternate assessment participation guidelines (developed by ISBE to determine if a student will take part in DLM) to make assessment participation decisions;
- Pre-recorded webinars on selecting, implementing, and evaluating accessibility features and accommodations for instruction and assessments;
- Guidance on how to differentiate instruction and providing better access to academic content;
- Reviewing student-level individualized education program plans to ensure that the decisions determined by the IEP team align to the state alternate assessment;
- Reviewing the state’s definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities;
- Pre-recorded webinars to inform and engage parents in the conversations and decisions around participating in DLM; and
- Addressing any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking DLM.

An annual review of disaggregated district data on participation rates in each subject of the alternate assessment will be conducted by ISBE. Districts that exceed the 1 percent participation rate will be required to provide ISBE with detailed justification for exceeding the 1 percent cap.

Districts with unusual patterns or higher participation rates will require additional examination by ISBE to determine the reasons for higher percentages of students participating in DLM.

ISBE will provide support to districts to ensure they are utilizing the criteria for determining participation in the alternate assessment (DLM) to make appropriate decisions for students who are participating in DLM. Data will be used to develop targeted, content-specific support. For districts that continue to exceed the 1 percent threshold, a more intensive approach will be taken. ISBE will provide ongoing training, coaching, and support to ensure appropriate assessment of all students.

Districts will be required to address disproportionality among student demographic groups’ participation in DLM beginning in the fall of 2020.

To determine if disproportionality of students participating in DLM exists, ISBE will analyze the participation of students taking the alternate assessment in each of the following student demographic groups:

1. Race and Ethnicity
  - a. White
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. Hispanic
  - d. Native American or Alaska Native
  - e. Asian
  - f. Pacific Islander
  - g. Multiracial
2. Socio-Economic Status (As determined by students' eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals)
3. English Learners

ISBE's disproportionality analysis will examine data for each of the content areas above for as many of the student demographic groups for which data are available.

ISBE believes the execution of the below plan will lead to a reduction in the percentage of Illinois students participating in DLM to the 1 percent limit required by ESSA:

- Identifying districts with more than 1 percent of its students participating in DLM;
- Providing training and technical assistance to districts to ensure appropriate decisions for participation in DLM are made by IEP teams;
- Identifying districts with student demographic groups that disproportionately participate in DLM; and
- Providing support to districts with more than 1 percent of their students participating in DLM.

Please contact ISBE's Division of Special Education Services at (217) 782-5589 or email at [AltException@isbe.net](mailto:AltException@isbe.net) to discuss the content of this waiver request or to get any questions addressed. We look forward to working with U.S. Department of Education staff to achieve a positive response to the request.

Sincerely,



Heather Calomese

Executive Director of Special Education Administration