



Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois State Plan for the 1 Percent Exception

Special Education Department

November 27, 2023

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Data Tables.....	3
Table 1: Overall Participation Rate in State Assessments for All Students and for Students with Disability.....	3
Table 2: Alternate Assessment Overall Participation Rate for Three Years.....	3
Changes Illinois Plans to Make for 2023-24.....	4
Timeline and Activities for 2023-24.....	6
Table 3: Timeline of Activities to be completed in SY 2023-24.....	6
Monitoring Activities for 2023-24.....	11
Table 4: Three-Tiered Monitoring for 1 Percent Compliance.....	12
Resources Available to LEAs.....	16
Appendices.....	17

Introduction

The Illinois State
Board of Education

(ISBE) is submitting this comprehensive plan pertaining to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) requirement that a state assess no more than 1 percent of students with an alternate assessment.

The following plan recognizes a need on behalf of ISBE to both increase overall participation in state assessments by students with disabilities while simultaneously reducing the percentage of students being assessed with an alternate assessment instrument. Prior approaches to meeting these goals and making significant progress toward meeting and maintaining the 1 percent cap have not proven to be successful. This updated plan acknowledges the need for increased internal collaboration; for increased participation in networking and learning with other states; and for increased and targeted support in the field, particularly in those districts that have consistently exceeded the 1 percent cap.

Our historical data suggests that we would not be eligible for a waiver in any content area for the 2023-24 school year. We hope that application of this plan will serve as a pathway to making significant gains in reducing the percentage of students being assessed with the alternate assessment. Our plan recognizes several areas where improvements in data collection and clarity in rostering will serve as better checkpoints in pre-identifying and proactively addressing areas of concern, as well as opportunities for increasing understanding in the field. We intend to provide more targeted intervention and support to those districts where students are consistently being overidentified for assessment with the alternate assessment instrument.

We respectfully ask that you consider our plan as a reset and restart in terms of our approach to addressing the identified issues. We have carefully considered our prior plans to commit to continuous improvement, we have reviewed the guidance posted from state meetings held in September of 2023, we have considered the approaches to promising practices being implemented by states, and we have become reinvolved in the National Center on Educational Outcomes working group. As we move through school year 2023-24, we are actively engaging in practices to improve upon the collection of data used in prior school years and reference such practices in this document.

Data Tables

Illinois' state-level data for the number and percentage of students who participated in all ELA, math, and science assessments for school year 2022-23 shows that Illinois did not meet the 95 percent threshold for overall participation in science for students with a disability. The data also shows that Illinois continues to be over the 1 percent threshold in ELA, math, and science. The SY 2022-23 data represents a preliminary "snapshot" of participation data from EDFacts, as updated data is due to EDFacts in January 2024. ISBE will submit an addendum to this plan explaining any updates submitted during the EDFacts finalization period.

Table 1: Overall Participation Rate in State Assessments for All Students and for Students With Disability

	All Students Grades 3-8 and High School Assessed	All Students Enrolled	Participation Rate	Number of Students with a Disability Assessed	Number of Students with Disability Enrolled	Participation Rate
ELA	934594	950700	98.31	141252	146541	96.39
Math	932963	950532	98.15	140698	146478	96.05
Science	397532	412788	96.3	55538	59286	93.68

Data is compiled from EDFacts submission data for Illinois.

Table 2: Alternate Assessment Overall Participation Rate for Three Years

Subject	SY 2021	SY 2022	SY 2023
ELA	1.02%	1.12%	1.15%
Math	1.03%	1.11%	1.14%
Science	1.04%	1.02%	1.06%

Data is compiled from EDFacts submission data for Illinois.

In developing this State Plan, Illinois reviewed the material that was presented at the 2023 State Assessment Conference in September 2023 that addressed best practices for reducing and maintaining alternate assessment participation rates. Illinois has begun to update and modify current guidance documents to assist districts in understanding the eligibility requirements for the alternate assessment; to update the justification and assurance form to ensure that the collected data from districts is providing the information to address the exceeding of 1 percent threshold and disproportionality; and to continue to provide technical assistance via conferences, webinars, and other forms of communication to districts. Illinois continues to be a part of the National Center on Educational Outcomes Community of Practice to collaborate with other states as thought partners to gather information on ways to improve upon our 1 percent performance.

Changes for 2023-24

ISBE has made changes to the science assessment for the 2023-24 school year to improve overall participation for students with disabilities, most notably a change in platform vendor and rostering process. A review of historical data reveals districts with zero percent science assessment participation that nonetheless had rates of participation above 95% in ELA and math, suggesting that the standalone platform of the science assessment is contributing to lower participation rates. Additionally, the previous science platform did not utilize our Student Information System (SIS) to accurately capture all students required to test. The newly awarded science assessment vendor is both the same platform used for ELA and math assessments in grades 3 through 8 and will utilize our current SIS to accurately identify all students (including students with disabilities) to be assessed for science. ISBE is taking action to notify districts who did not meet the 95 percent participation rate to inform them that participation is required in the science assessment.

ISBE also has made changes in the data received for pre-identification for the alternate assessment. ISBE staff receives the pre-identification file for the alternate assessment twice monthly from November through December and then weekly from January through February. The data file is being analyzed for the disability categories of Specific Learning Disability, Emotional Disability, and Speech Language Impairment. ISBE staff identifies those students and then the appropriate district administrators. The communication provided to the district administrators is ISBE's guidance document on the eligibility of students and guidance on the alternate participation guidelines. The analysis also will include a review of the pre-identification file to our special education database to determine if a student has an active Individualized Education Program (IEP). An ISBE review of data from the prior year identified about 30 students who had participated in the alternate assessment who did not have the IEP indicator identified as yes in SIS. This cross-check will ensure that the students identified for the alternate assessment also have a valid IEP.

Changes have been made to the monitoring of districts that have exceeded the 1 percent threshold. Districts, using three-year data, will be identified for support in the three-tiered monitoring system. Districts within Tier 3 will receive the most support as they have exceeded the 1 percent threshold over three or more years. These districts will receive coaching and regular check-in meetings to discuss which of their Action Plan activities have been implemented or what activities need support from ISBE as they are implemented. Monitoring of Illinois districts that have exceeded the 1 percent threshold has not been conducted as it should have been since 2021. Justification forms will be reviewed by January 2024, and districts will be notified of the level of support that will be provided. Improvement activities will be implemented for one year. Data from the 2024 spring assessments will be used to determine if districts are making progress to improve their compliance with the 1 percent rate.

ISBE also has made changes to its justification form to address assurances that were not considered in previous justification forms. The form now includes all three requirements: assurances, justifications for exceeding, and addressing disproportionality. The form also is online versus a paper version that districts

had to scan and submit to ISBE. This online form also can be tracked to ensure that all districts that were identified for exceeding the 1 percent threshold have submitted their documentation, as required.

ISBE is providing information to administrators and special education directors to address eligibility of students for the alternate assessment through conferences, webinars, and guidance documents. The characteristics of a student who would take the alternate assessment are not clearly understood by administrators, teachers, or other professionals. The Assessment and Special Education Departments will be collaborating on improvement efforts in this area.

Timeline and Activities for 2023-24

ISBE will be implementing the timeline below to address the necessary steps to decrease the participation in the alternate assessment for the state and districts that exceeded the 1 percent threshold.

Table 3: Timeline of Activities to be completed in SY 2023-24

Timeline	Action
November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISBE notified districts that had been identified as exceeding the 1 percent threshold to complete the justification and assurances form for SY 2023-24. • ISBE will complete a State Plan that will address how to decrease overall 1 percent participation rate and the participation rate for students with disabilities in science. • ISBE will analyze students rostered for the spring 2024 alternate assessment for primary disability those who have an IEP. • ISBE presented at a nonpublic special education conference on November 17, 2023, in regard to the alternate assessment and eligibility for the alternate assessment.
December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISBE will review the SY 2023-24 justification and assurance forms submitted by districts and send decision letters based on the approval or disapproval of the justification. • ISBE will identify the tiered support for the districts that exceeded the 1 percent threshold using three-year data. This identification will be included in the decision letter. • Tier 2 and Tier 3 districts will submit a Corrective Action Plan. • ISBE will analyze students rostered for the spring 2024 alternate assessment for primary disability those who have an IEP
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District monitoring will begin in January 2024 based on the Illinois 1 Percent Threshold Monitoring and Support System Outline. • Tier 3 districts being monitored will be scheduled for the initial meeting for coaching and establish regular check-in dates as part of the process. Representatives from such districts will be required view the following webinars: Participation Guidelines, ID of Students for the Alternate Assessment, and Instruction Alignment for Students. ISBE special education staff will review IEPs and conduct meetings with districts • Tier 2 districts being monitored will be scheduled for an initial meeting and will establish dates for follow-up. Representatives from such districts will be required to view three webinars: Participation Guidelines, ID of Students for the Alternate Assessment, and Instruction Alignment for Students. Guidance documents (DLM-AA Exception Guidance, DLM-AA Participation Guidelines, DLM-AA Participation Rate & Justification Guidance) will be

	<p>provided to help determine which students will participate in the alternate assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SY 2023-24 justifications will be posted to ISBE's Alternate Assessment Participation webpage. • Communication will be sent to districts informing them that they will be required to complete justification and assurance form for spring 2024 testing. • ISBE will provide guidance in the Assessment Updates weekly webinar on how to identify students for the alternate assessment, referencing the alternate assessment participation guidelines document. • ISBE will analyze students rostered for the spring 2024 alternate assessment for primary disability those who have an IEP
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISBE will present to special education directors, district administrators, and other school staff on alternate assessment participation guidelines, how to analyze score data to determine eligibility for alternate assessment, how to manage their 1 percent threshold, and preparing for the alternate assessment. • Tier 3 check-in meeting with districts to get an update on progress on the implemented activities from the submitted Action Plan and establish the next check-in date. • Communication will be sent to Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns the district may have regarding the 1 percent threshold. • ISBE will provide guidance in the Assessment Updates weekly webinar on how to identify students for the alternate assessment, referencing the alternate assessment participation guidelines guidance document. • ISBE will analyze students rostered for the spring 2024 alternate assessment for primary disability those who have an IEP
March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of the state accountability alternate assessment will begin. • Tier 3 check-in via email communication will occur after administration of state accountability assessments begins. Communication will include an update on the implemented activities and the next date for check-in. • Communication will be sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns districts may have regarding the 1 percent threshold.
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state accountability alternate assessment is being administered and completed for the general state assessments. • Tier 3 check-in via email communication will occur. Communication will include an update on the implemented activities and the next date for check-in.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication will be sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns districts may have regarding the 1 percent threshold.
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 3 check-in via email communication will occur. Communication will include an update on the implemented activities and the next date for check-in. • Communication will be sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns the district may have regarding the 1 percent threshold. • Alternate state accountability assessment is completed.
June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISBE will present to special education directors, district administrators, and other school staff on alternate assessment participation guidelines, how to analyze score data to determine eligibility for alternate assessment, and how to manage their 1 percent threshold. • Tier 3 check-in via email communication will occur. Communication will include an update on the implemented activities and the next date for check-in. • Communication will be sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns districts may have regarding the 1 percent threshold.
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 3 check-in via email communication will occur. Communication will include an update on the implemented activities and the next date for check-in. • Communication will be sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns districts may have regarding the 1 percent threshold. • ISBE will use preliminary score data to identify districts that exceed the 1 percent threshold. • Communication will be sent to those identified districts to take steps to correct the data in SIS. • Districts will be provided guidance about what to expect if the data does not change when preliminary EDFacts data is pulled in late October-early November.
August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISBE will gather preliminary score data when assessment corrections close on August 23, 2024. • Updated communication will be sent to those identified districts that showed a change in their data. • Districts identified will complete the justification and assurance form for SY 2024-25.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 3 check-in via email communication will occur. Communication will include an update on the implemented activities and the next date for check-in. • Communication will be sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns districts may have regarding the 1 percent threshold. • ISBE will update business rules for the requested EDFacts data for the 1 percent threshold. • ISBE will provide guidance in the twice-monthly Assessment Updates webinar on how to identify students for the alternate assessment, referencing the alternate assessment participation guidelines guidance document.
September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 3 check-in via email communication will occur. Communication will include an update on the implemented activities and the next date for check-in. • Communication will be sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts to get an update on any questions or concerns districts may have regarding the 1 percent threshold. • Documents pertaining to 1 percent guidance will be reviewed and updated. The updated documents will be posted on the Alternate Assessment Participation webpage. • ISBE will review justification and assurance forms for the districts that exceeded the 1 percent threshold. • Decision letters will be sent to those districts that have disapproved justifications and are identified as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 district for SY 2024-25. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representatives from Tier 2 districts receiving assistance will be required to view three webinars: Participation Guidelines, ID of Students for the Alternate Assessment, and Instruction Alignment for Students. ○ Representatives from Tier 3 districts receiving assistance will be required to view the previously mentioned webinars. An ISBE special education consultant will review IEPs and conduct meetings with districts. • Guidance documents will be provided to identified districts to help with determining which students will participate in an alternate assessment (DLM-AA Exception Guidance, DLM-AA Participation Guidelines, DLM-AA Participation Rate and Justification Guidance). • ISBE will submit a request for the preliminary EDFacts data to be used for the state waiver or State Plan. • ISBE will complete a first draft of the state waiver or State Plan based on preliminary assessment data.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISBE will provide guidance in the twice-monthly Assessment Updates webinar on how to identify students for the alternate assessment, referencing the alternate assessment participation guidelines guidance document.
October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts in Tier 2 and Tier 3 assistance for SY 2024-25 will submit a Corrective Action Plan to address exceeding 1 percent cap. The monitoring team will work with the districts to execute the plans. • ISBE will meet with the districts to establish the meeting dates for the monitoring year. • ISBE will present to special education directors, district administrators, and other school staff on alternate assessment participation guidelines, how to analyze score data to determine eligibility for alternate assessment, and how to manage their 1 percent threshold. • ISBE will provide guidance in the twice monthly Assessment Updates webinar on how to identify students for the alternate assessment, referencing the alternate assessment participation guidelines guidance document.
November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISBE will provide guidance in the twice monthly Assessment Updates webinar on identifying students for the alternate assessment, referencing the alternate assessment participation guidelines guidance document. • ISBE will analyze students rostered for the spring 2024 alternate assessment for primary disability those who have an IEP ISBE will present at special education conferences in regard to the alternate assessment and eligibility for the alternate assessment.

Monitoring Activities 2023-24

ISBE developed a three-tier system for monitoring the 1 percent threshold for Local Education Agencies (LEAs). ISBE classifies districts into the tier system for monitoring based on the assessment data for general assessment and alternate assessment participation. ISBE will be using three-year assessment participation data for the 2023-24 school year. Those years identified for the data analysis are 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23.

ISBE's tiered monitoring system is intended to provide the support needed for LEAs to reduce their 1 percent participation rate through a Corrective Action Plan, accurately identify students who are eligible for the alternate assessment using the guidance documents available and receive technical assistance from ISBE staff. The tiered monitoring and support system developed by the ISBE is provided below.

Table 4: Three-Tiered Monitoring for 1 Percent Compliance

Tiered	LEA Determination Designation	Support Provided
1	Exceeds the 1 percent threshold and disproportionality for the first year.	Universal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justification and assurance form completed each school year. Regular email communication sent to check on progress. Technical assistance, as needed.
2	Exceeds the 1 percent threshold and disproportionality for two consecutive years	Targeted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance needed. Justification and assurance form completed. Corrective Action Plan completed and submitted to ISBE. Participate in the required webinars. Regular email communication sent to check on progress. Presentations at Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education Conference and ISBE Directors Conference and other professional organizations.
3	Exceeds the 1 percent and disproportionality for more than three consecutive years	Intensive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching required. Justification and assurance form completed. Participate in the required webinars. Corrective Action Plan completed and submitted to ISBE. Required scheduled meetings.

The three-tiered monitoring system described in subsequent paragraphs provides the activities the LEA will be required to complete within the year after being identified. Any justification and assurance form that was disapproved will require the LEA to be placed into one of the tiers based on the percentage it exceeded the 1 percent threshold.

Tier 1 Universal Support:

- The LEAs will be provided with resources that are available on [the Alternate Assessment Participation webpage](#) and the [Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment webpage for any required approvals](#).
- LEAs will be sent regular emails from ISBE to gather feedback if further assistance is needed in decreasing their 1 percent participation rate and/or technical assistance on their documentation for their disapproved justification and assurance form.
- LEAs will be required to submit a justification and assurance form for the following school year.

Tier 2 Targeted Support:

- LEAs with an approved or disapprove justification and assurance form will still be required to complete the activities assigned in this tier because they had exceeded the 1 percent threshold for two years.
- LEAs will be provided with resources that are available on the Alternate Assessment Participation webpage and the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment webpage
- LEAs will be required to complete a Corrective Action Plan and submit it to ISBE.
- Representatives of the LEAs will be required to view the required webinars: Participation Guidelines, ID of Students for the Alternate Assessment, and Instruction Alignment for Students
- Regular emails sent to check on progress of the identified activities within the Corrective Action Plan
- LEAs will be required to submit a justification and assurance form for the following school year.

Tier 3 Intensive Support:

- LEAs will be required to complete the activities assigned in this tier, regardless of whether or not their justification and assurance form is approved or disapproved because they exceeded the 1 percent threshold for two years.
- LEAs will be provided with the resources available on the Alternate Assessment Participation webpage and the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment webpage.
- LEAs will be required to complete a Corrective Action Plan and submit it to ISBE.
- Required meetings will be scheduled to monitor those districts that have exceeded the 1 percent threshold for three or more years. These meetings will be used to provide technical assistance utilizing the Corrective Action Plan the LEA submitted. Guidance to address district policies, disproportionality of student subgroups, and the activities listed in the steps for improvement will be addressed during the meetings, which will be facilitated by ISBE staff.
- LEAs will be required to submit a justification and assurance form for the following school year and any subsequent year to show improvement.

Additional monitoring activities will also be implemented to assist in decreasing overall participation in the alternate assessment and increase the overall participation rate for students with disabilities. ISBE will take the additional steps during SY 2024-25 to help guide districts on which students should be taking the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA).

- Beginning in December of 2023, ISBE will analyze students rostered for the spring 2024 alternate assessment and future years assessment. The analysis will review students rostered with Specific Learning Disability, Emotional Disability, Speech Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Deafness/Hearing Impairment, or Visual Impairment to ensure a significant cognitive disability has also been documented.
- ISBE will be notifying districts that have not met the 95 percent participation rate in the state assessments for ELA, math, and science for all students and for students with disabilities for the SY 2024-25 and future years. This notification is to address those identified districts that did not

participate as a whole district. ISBE's data analysis identified students with disabilities were not meeting the 95 percent participation rate in science.

- LEAs will be required to submit the [Exceeding the 1% Alternate Assessment Participation Threshold Justification Requirement Form: Anticipatory](#) if they expect to exceed the 1 percent threshold in the current school year. ISBE will review the justification form to determine if it is an acceptable justification. If not, the district will need to reevaluate the student population taking the DLM-AA or provide an acceptable justification.

The Illinois State Plan to comply with the 1 percent threshold has focused on improving the overall alternate assessment participation rate, improving the overall participation rate in science for students with disabilities, and implementing a monitoring plan that will include both focus areas. LEAs will have the opportunity to participate in any of the webinars available on our Alternate Assessment Participation webpage or our Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment webpage. LEAs also will be offered the opportunity to attend a session on alternate assessment at any of the conferences that ISBE will be presenting on alternate assessment participation, eligibility, and the 1 percent exception. ISBE staff will continue to support LEAs through Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education Conferences, a nonpublic special education conference, the ISBE Directors Conference, and the Assessment Department webinars to provide information and technical assistance. The ISBE Assessment and Special Education Departments will collaborate to ensure that districts are provided the necessary supports for the 1 percent exception. ISBE's three-tiered monitoring system will provide the technical assistance to support those LEAs identified for exceeding the 1 percent threshold in making progress to decrease their 1 percent overall participation and address the disproportionality identified in the justification and assurances form. Furthermore, ISBE will monitor assessment data to ensure that the overall participation in ELA, math, and science meets the 95 percent participation rate for all students and for students with disabilities.

ISBE wants to thank the ED for its continue support and for the opportunity to improve its efforts to meet the 1 percent requirements. ISBE appreciates ED's consideration of this State Plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact Barb Moore, director of the ISBE Special Education Operational Support Department, at bmoore@isbe.net or 217-782-5589 for answers to any questions.

Resources Available to LEAs

Alternate Assessment Participation Webpage

1. [Alternate Assessment Participation Justification Requirements Form -Retroactive](#)
2. [Alternate Assessment Participation Justification Requirements Form -Anticipatory](#)
3. [SY 2023 Justification and Assurances Form](#)
4. [Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment \(DLM-AA\) Exception Guidance](#)
5. [Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment \(DLM-AA\) Participation Guidelines](#)
6. [Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment \(DLM-AA\) Participation Guidelines Webinar](#)
7. [Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment \(DLM-AA\) Participation Rate and Justification Guidance](#)
8. [ID of Students for the Alternate Assessment Webinar](#)
9. [Illinois 1 Percent Threshold Monitoring and Support System Outline](#)
10. [Instruction Alignment -For Students with a Disability Webinar](#)
11. [NCEO Alternate Assessments Resources](#)
12. [Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment \(DLM-AA\) Participation Guidance Tool](#)
13. [ISBE Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment \(DLM-AA\) Webpage](#)

Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment

1. [District Staff Video Resources](#)
2. [Educator Resource Videos](#)
3. [Essential Elements Condensed Books](#)
4. [Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets](#)

Appendices

- Appendix A: District Notification Letter
- Appendix B: Corrective Action Template
- Appendix C: DLM-AA Decision Making Flow Chart
- Appendix D: DLM-AA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool
- Appendix E: Learner Characteristics Inventory
- Appendix F: Assessment for Nonpublic Students with Cognitive Disabilities
- Appendix G: Email Communication to LEAs for Primary Disability Analysis