1 PERCENT THRESHOLD FOR PARTICIPATION IN
THE STATE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT
MONITORING AND SUPPORT SYSTEM OUTLINE

Dr. Tony Sanders, State Superintendent

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1 Percent Cap for Participation in the State Alternate Assessment Monitoring and Support System

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Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes regulations that promote the participation of every child in state and districtwide assessments, a requirement in existence since the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004.

The regulations allow students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to be assessed against Essential Elements alternate achievement standards, which are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to the grade-level expectations aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards.

The regulations specify that a State Education Agency’s participation rate of students taking the alternate assessment must be below 1 percent of the total number of students participating in state accountability assessments. This is commonly referred to as the “1 percent threshold.”

ESSA and the IDEA amendments of 2004 stipulate that all students, including those with disabilities, must participate in the state accountability assessments, including the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) that is used in Illinois.

State Assurance that Local Education Agencies Follow State DLM-AA Participation Guidelines

In 2018, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) were made aware of changes to the 1 percent exception rule. Conferences were held throughout Illinois to present this information. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has posted the DLM-AA participation guidelines has made clear that students who are being considered for the alternate assessment must meet these participation guidelines. That information should be included in the students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

ISBE’s monitoring system is intended to reduce the participation rate and support LEAs in accurately identifying students who are eligible for the DLM-AA. To that end, ISBE began implementing a monitoring and support system that is designed to:

- Maintain a high level of compliance with Elementary and Secondary Education Act federal regulations for special education.
- Support LEAs in the process of self-assessment, root cause analysis, evaluation, and improvement.
- Connect improvement activities with planning and supports.

The following pages describe the three main components of the monitoring and support -- LEA selection and determinations, LEA requirements and tiered supports, and district action plans.
SECTION I: LEA Determinations

ISBE utilizes assessment participation data to determine the degree to which a school district, or LEA, is correctly implementing the requirements of the 1 percent threshold. The formula below is used to determine if an LEA’s population of students that participates in the alternate assessment exceeds the 1 percent threshold.

\[
\left( \frac{\text{The number of students in the LEA taking the DLM-AA}}{\text{The total number of students in the LEA participating in state accountability assessments}} \right) \times 100
\]

Note: This calculation is done for total participation across the LEA and for each subject area: English language arts, mathematics, and science at each tested grade level.

ISBE selects LEAs for tiered monitoring and support by identifying potential risk through the LEA determinations process. This leads to an overall determination for LEAs in one of the following categories:

- LEA Within the 1 percent threshold.
- LEA Exceeding the 1 percent threshold.

LEAs Within the 1 Percent Cap

LEAs that have 1 percent or fewer of the enrolled student population taking the alternate assessment will not be subject to review by ISBE. Participation guidance should be adhered to in making individualized decisions on behalf of the student.

LEAs Exceeding the 1 Percent Cap

If an LEA exceeds the 1 percent threshold, it must complete and submit a justification form to ISBE. ISBE will review the participation rate data and the LEA’s Justification Form to determine what level of supports the LEA may need.
Section II: LEA Requirements and Tiered Supports

The ISBE Special Education Department uses a tiered supports model to provide an appropriate level of assistance for LEAs. LEAs that are assigned a level of support must carry out specific activities that are intended to both ensure compliance and help districts improve results. The procedures outline in the Illinois Special Education Accountability and Support System facilitate ISBE’s efforts in the following activities:

- Fulfilling its responsibility to provide appropriate general supervision to Illinois LEAs.
- Differentiating levels of support for Illinois LEAs based on degree/intensity of needs.
- Allocating resources to address specific need(s) of Illinois LEAs.

The tiered support model consists of three levels, with required activities and supports in place at each level to ensure accountability for both compliance and results measures as well as resources to strengthen and improve student outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEA Determination Designation</th>
<th>Tiered Level of Support</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding the 1 Percent Threshold for the First Year</td>
<td>Universal (Support Available) Tier 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding the 1 Percent Threshold for Two or More Consecutive Years Without Acceptable Justifications</td>
<td>Targeted (Guidance Needed) Tier 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding the 1 Percent Threshold for Three or More Consecutive Years Without Acceptable Justifications</td>
<td>Intensive (Coaching Required) Tier 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tiered ISBE Supports to LEAs

**Universal**

LEAs designated as “Exceeding the 1 Percent Threshold for the First Year” fall under the Universal level of support (Tier 1). The LEA completes the Justification Form, which is reviewed by ISBE. Tier 1 supports are available to all LEAs. DLM-AA participation guidance and resources are available to all LEAs via the ISBE Alternate Assessment Participation webpage.

**Targeted**

LEAs designated as “Exceeding the 1 Percent Threshold for Two of More Consecutive Years Without Acceptable Justifications” fall under the Targeted level of support (Tier 2). The LEA completes the Justification Form, which is reviewed by ISBE. LEA staff is required to present the Dynamic Learning Maps for Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) Participation Guidelines webinar to district representatives and confirm that efforts are being made to address the DLM-AA participation rate. Tier 2 supports will last for one year.
**Intensive**

LEAs designated as “Exceeding the 1 Percent Threshold for Three or More Consecutive Years Without Acceptable Justifications” fall under the Intensive level of support (Tier 3). The LEA completes the Justification Form, which is reviewed by ISBE. In addition, an ISBE special education consultant reviews IEPs. Unsatisfactory reviews may result in the development of a plan for the LEA to make improved efforts (See Appendix A). Tier 3 supports will last one or more years based on yearly participation rate data and until such time as the LEA falls below the 1 Percent Threshold or presents acceptable justifications. Evaluations and ISBE support logs for district activities will be maintained by an ISBE consultant.

**Section III: LEA Action Plan**

**Additional Intensive Tier 3 Activities for Some LEAs**

LEAs that have unsatisfactory justification and/or IEP reviews require further action by the district. After reviewing the IEPs, the ISBE special education consultant will initiate an on-site or virtual visit to provide support to the district in the development of an action plan. The action plan may include one or more of the following activities:

- Reviewing and/or revising district policies, procedures, and/or practices.
- Providing professional development and support to relevant staff.
- Utilizing national, state, or local technical assistance resources.

The district can begin implementation of the action plan after the ISBE special education consultant approves it. The ISBE consultant will provide implementation support to the district throughout the one-year determinations cycle.

The ISBE special education consultant will verify action plan implementation through the LEA’s mid-year and end-of-year evaluations. If the district remains in the Tier 3 level of support for subsequent LEA determinations, district staff will continue to work with the ISBE special education consultant until the district’s participation rate in the alternate assessment falls within the 1 percent threshold.

**Description of the Action Plan Procedures**

The LEA will collaborate with a special education consultant to complete the first two sections of the action plan. Upon review of sections one and two, the LEA and consultant will collaborate on section three of the action plan.

**Section 1: Defining the Issue**

The district will clearly define the problem or deficiency, determine the root cause, describe how to carry out the activities, explain where to find information, and provide a broad overview
of the methodology that will lead to improvement (improvement strategies, activities, revision of policies, procedures, practices, etc.).

Section 2: Defining the Steps for Improvement

The district will list specific steps, including detailed improvement activities, anticipated completion date of the activities, title/role of persons responsible for implementing the activities, and documentation of the plan it will implement to correct the problems.

Section 3: Evaluating the Process

Upon completion of the action plan, the ISBE consultant will notify the LEA of the dates the evaluations are due. The LEA must submit evidence that the activities have been implemented and will result in a changed practice leading to being within the 1 percent threshold. The ISBE consultant will review the documentation and determine whether it is sufficient. If not, the district must submit additional documentation based on the ISBE consultant’s feedback. At the end of the year, the LEA and the ISBE consultant will review the final evaluation to discuss progress on the action plan.
Appendix A

ISBE 1 Percent Threshold Participation LEA Action Plan

The ISBE Special Education Department uses this monitoring tool to ensure that the total number of students assessed in English language arts, mathematics, and science does not exceed 1 percent of the total number of students who took the state’s assessments. Districts that are exceeding the 1 percent threshold are required to complete brief narrative reports about deliverables/products that outline the progress and completion of each activity included in the LEA Action Plan.

**ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW**

The LEA Action Plan has three sections. First, the district will document what is known about the areas that need improvement. In the second section, the district maps out -- step by step -- how the district is going to correct the problems or make other improvements. In the third section, the district will document the results of the LEA Action Plan.

This form will need to be completed and submitted to ISBE. Table cells will automatically expand to accommodate any amount of text.

**SECTION I: DEFINING THE ISSUE**

Use this section to clearly define the problem or deficiency, determine the root cause, describe how to carry out the activities, explain where to find information, and provide a broad overview of the methodology that will lead to improvement.

| The district has been identified as having___________ students who take the alternate assessment for the_______ school year. This exceeded the 1 percent threshold on the number of students who can take the alternate assessment in your district. In addition, the district has been identified as having disproportionality in one or more subgroups. * |
| What disability categories are identified among students who take the alternate assessment based on the justification form? Are there students in disability categories that do not typically include students with significant cognitive disabilities? |
| What demographic groups have been identified based on the justification form? Is there a subgroup (racial/ethnic, limited English proficient, gender, socio-economic, migratory) that is more likely than other subgroup to participate in the alternate assessment? |

*as applicable
**SECTION II: DEFINING THE STEPS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

List the specific steps you will take to correct the problem(s) and when they should be completed.

- The activities should be specific tasks to complete. Each activity should progress logically toward the attainment of the desired goal.
- Designate a due date for completion of each activity that is realistic and attainable.
- Multiple people might work on a single step, but there should be one person responsible for ensuring the step is done on time.
- List the materials that will document that the tasks were implemented and completed.
- Comments can be made as the action plan is developed to mark progress or can be made as the work is completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Due Date for Activity Completion</th>
<th>Name/Title/Role of Person(s) Responsible for Implementation</th>
<th>Materials Used as Evidence of Activity Implementation</th>
<th>Status, Comments, and Date Reviewed for Verification</th>
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**SECTION III: EVALUATING THE PROCESS**

Evaluate the process after all activities have been implemented. Deliverables could include training, guidance documents, and any other information used to ensure the identification of students for the alternate assessment has been evaluated. Deliverables must be submitted no later than two weeks after the submission of the evaluation.
<table>
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<th>#</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Person Responsible for Implementation</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Person Responsible for Evaluation</th>
<th>Information on Implementation</th>
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