



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Acting Commissioner

January 24, 2017

TO: Chief School Administrators
Directors of Special Education
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

FROM: John Worthington, Director
Office of Special Education Programs

SUBJECT: Application for Exception to 1 Percent Cap on Alternate Proficiency Assessments

March 1, 2017 is the deadline for school districts to apply for an exception to the federal requirement that no more than 1 percent of its students with significant cognitive disabilities take the alternative statewide assessment.

In December 2015, the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA) was reauthorized through the adoption of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), which replaces the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). As with NCLB, ESSA regulations allow the use of alternate assessments, based on alternate achievement standards, for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. In New Jersey, this alternate assessment is the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM).

ESSA requires that no more than 1 percent of the total number of students in the state be administered the DLM. Districts are not prohibited from assessing more than 1 percent of their students with the DLM, but they are required to submit information justifying the need to assess more than 1 percent of their students with the DLM.

School officials who anticipate participation in the DLM in their district will exceed 1 percent for the 2016-17 school year must complete the justification form below, and submit it to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for review.

Guidelines for calculating the DLM participation rate can be found on the form and must be completed by the district prior to submission.

It is important to include students placed in separate public programs in other districts in these calculations. Justification forms should be submitted via email to Kimberly Murray of the NJDOE at kimberly.murray@doe.state.nj.us by March 1, 2017.

The number of students participating in the alternate assessment is increasing each year. Therefore, it is imperative that only those students who truly meet the DLM participation criteria participate in the assessment and that child study teams make individualized decisions for each student with regard to participation in statewide assessments. The [DLM-New Jersey website](#) provides the criteria for the 2016-17 school year.

In order to ensure that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are using the required criteria for determining if a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will participate in the DLM, your signature is required on the DLM justification form. Additionally, when assessment results are finalized, a review of the application of the criteria will be conducted in a selection of LEAs that have high DLM participation rates.

Questions regarding the DLM justification may be directed to Ms. Murray at (609) 292-7605. Your participation in this process will help ensure that New Jersey's accountability system contains the most accurate representation of the results of students with the most significant disabilities.

JW/KM/rm

Attachment

c: Members, State Board of Education
Kimberley Harrington, Commissioner
Senior Staff
Karen Campbell
Diane Shoener
Kimberly Murray
Executive County Superintendents
Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
Executive County Business Officials
County Supervisors of Child Study
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group

**New Jersey Department of Education
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Justification**

Complete and submit this application only if you anticipate that participation in the DLM in your district for the 2016-17 school year will exceed 1 percent.

Name of District: _____

County Code and District Code: _____

Person Completing Form: _____ Phone: _____

Calculate the DLM participation rate for each subject area as follows:	Language Arts Literacy	Math
1. Enter the total number of students taking the DLM at all tested grade levels. Include the resident students with disabilities educated within the district and those in out-of-district placements.		
2. Enter the total number of general and special education students taking a state assessment during the spring of 2016. This includes students taking the DLM and PARCC.		
3. Divide the number in line 1 by the number in line 2 and enter the number on this line.		
4. Multiply the number in line 3 by 100 and enter the number on this line to determine the district's DLM Districtwide Anticipated Participation Rate.	%	%

If the percent in both cells in line 4 is 1 percent or less, no action is necessary. If the percent in line 4 is greater than 1 percent for either content area, complete the section below and submit the justification to NJDOE.

Justification:

_____ There is a school, community or health program in the district that draws large numbers of students with significant intellectual disabilities.

_____ The total test population is less than 300 and the total number of students participating in the DLM is 3 or less.

_____ There is a high incidence of students with disabilities in the district.

_____ Other _____

By submitting this application, the district verifies that all students participating in the DLM meet the New Jersey Department of Education's participation criteria (available online at: <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/newjersey>)

Signature of Chief School Administrator or Charter School Lead Person

Applications should be submitted by March 1, 2017, to Kimberly.murray@doe.state.nj.us