

November 9, 2017

«Administrator_Name»
«Title_1»
«Agency_Name»
«Mail_Address_Line_1»
«Mail_Address_Line_2»
«Mail_Address_Line_3»

Dear «Salutation» «Last_Name»:

Last spring, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) sent letters to all Wisconsin public school districts regarding changes under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) regarding the number of students participating in the alternate assessment, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). This letter is to notify you that your district has exceeded 1.0% participation in one or more given subjects on the alternate assessment in the 2016-17 academic year. This means that more than 1.0% of the total number of students (with and without Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)) participating in statewide assessments in your Local Education Agency (LEA) took the alternate assessment in 2016-17.

Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may participate in the alternate assessment (DLM), and no student should take the alternate assessment unless they are also participating in the alternate academic achievement standards (Wisconsin Essential Elements). 34 CFR 200.6(a)(2)(ii)(B). In Wisconsin, a student with the most significant cognitive disability is defined as:

- typically characterized as functioning at least two and a half to three standard deviations below the mean in both adaptive behavior **and** cognitive functioning; **and**
- performs substantially below grade level expectations on the academic content standards for the grade in which they are enrolled, even with the use of adaptations and accommodations; **and**
- a student who requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains, across all content areas and settings.

District Participation Rate

The tables below shows your district's participation rates in the alternate assessment for the 2016-17 academic year. We have also identified the primary disability categories for the students taking the alternate assessment in these calculations. When calculating a district's participation rate, DPI considered only the grade levels that are factored into federal accountability (grades 3-8 and 11) for each subject area. Calculations are applied to the district level, not to school level. In addition, the data includes any students sent outside of your district for services, but for whom you are still accountable. Race and Ethnicity data has also been provided to assist with district assurances regarding disproportionality.

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Subject Area	2016-17 Number of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment	2016-17 Number of Students in Tested Grades	2016-17 Percent Participating in the Alternate Assessment
ELA			
Math			
Science			

2016-17 ELA			
Primary ¹ Disability	Number of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment	Number of Students in Tested Grades	Percent Participating in the Alternate Assessment
A			
EBD			
H			
ID			
OI			
OHI			
SDD			
SLD			
SL			
TBI			
VI			

¹ A-Autism, EBD-Emotional Behavioral Disability, HI-Hearing Impairment, ID-Intellectual Disability, OI-Orthopedic Impairment, OHI-Other Health Impairment, SDD-Significant Developmental Delay, SLD-Specific Learning Disability, SL-Speech and Language, TBI-Traumatic Brain Injury, VI-Visual Impairment

2016-17 MATH			
Primary Disability	Number of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment	Number of Students in Tested Grades	Percent Participating in the Alternate Assessment
A			
EBD			
HI			
ID			
OI			
OHI			
SDD			
SLD			
SL			
TBI			
VI			

2016-17 SCIENCE			
Primary Disability	Number of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment	Number of Students in Tested Grades	Percent Participating in the Alternate Assessment
A			
EBD			
HI			
ID			
OI			
OHI			
SDD			
LD			
SL			
TBI			
VI			

2016-17 Disproportionality Considerations ²			
Race/Ethnicity	Number of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment	Number of Students in Tested Grades	Percent Participating in Alternate Assessment
Hispanic			
American Indian or Alaska Native			
Asian			
Black or African American			
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander			
Disproportionality Considerations			
Race/Ethnicity	Number of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment	Number of Students participating in the General Assessment	Percent Participating in Alternate Assessment
Two or More Races			
White			
Economically Disadvantaged			
English Language Learners			

² This data is based on student participation in the subject area of mathematics, with demographics gathered from the May 30, 2017 snapshot. It should be used for district considerations regarding disproportionality.

District Verification Process

Despite the cap being at the state level, ESSA further requires that a school district exceeding 1.0% in any subject must submit a verification to DPI, and DPI must provide appropriate oversight to the district. State/districts must still meet the 95% participation rate for students enrolled in tested grades. 34 CFR 200.6(c)(3)(ii). If a district exceeds 1.0% participation in any subject, they must submit the Verification Form and provide professional development to their district on the definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The Verification Form can be found on the [DPI webpage](#). **This form must be submitted to DPI by November 20, 2017.** You can email this form to Heike Saynisch at heike.saynisch@dpi.wi.gov or fax to (608) 267-3746 with the attention to Heike Saynisch. Districts should review additional guidance regarding this form found in *Guide to Determining Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities* also available on the [DPI webpage](#) and the [Sample IEP Form I-7A Participation Guidelines for the Alternate Assessment](#).

WISEdata

In an effort to more accurately identify students expected to take the alternate assessment, DPI has added validation codes around the Alternate Assessment indicator found in WISEdata under the student characteristics section. More information about this can be found on the [WISEdata Elements webpage \(https://dpi.wi.gov/wise/data-elements\)](https://dpi.wi.gov/wise/data-elements) under [State Assessment Type-Alternate \(https://dpi.wi.gov/wise/data-elements/assessment-type\)](https://dpi.wi.gov/wise/data-elements/assessment-type).

We would like to thank you for all your efforts in ensuring that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are participating in Dynamic Learning Maps, and that all students are graduating with the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary to be college and career ready. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Barbara Van Haren, Special Education Team, at (608) 266-1781 or Viji Somasundaram, Office of Student Assessment, at (608) 267-1072.

Sincerely,

Mike Thompson, PhD
Deputy State Superintendent

c: District Assessment Coordinator
Special Education Director