



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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TO LEA Superintendents
Charter School Directors

FROM Maria Pitre-Martin, Chief Academic and Digital Learning Officer 
Academic and Digital Learning

Tammy Howard, Director 
Division of Accountability Services

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION UNDER ESSA

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the state to ensure the total number of students assessed in each subject using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities does not exceed one percent of the total number of all students in the state assessed in each subject. Previously, the one percent cap was on the percentage of scores from the alternate assessment that could be counted as proficient by the state. This change puts the one percent cap on participation in the alternate assessment. Although the state cannot impose on any local educational agency (LEA) a cap on the percentage of students administered an alternate assessment, it is required that an LEA administering the alternate assessment to more than one percent of its students provide information to the state justifying the need to exceed the cap. More information about this justification process will be forthcoming when ESSA is implemented in the 2017–18 school year.

In anticipation of ESSA implementation, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is providing all districts and charter schools with the percentage of students who participated in an alternate assessment in each subject area for the 2015–16 school year. This information is intended to prompt local discussions about the appropriate identification of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who should be assessed using the alternate assessment. The information for each district and charter school can be retrieved from the secure shell by the test coordinator in a file labeled: 2016/ALTPART/###.xls. The test coordinator, in consultation with the superintendent and exceptional children's (EC) director, should disseminate the information as appropriate.

Accountability Services appreciates your continued commitment to the children of North Carolina by ensuring that students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided a challenging and appropriate education. More information about the implementation of the one percent participation cap as outlined in ESSA will be provided as it is finalized. If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Danks at 919-807-3781 or amanda.danks@dpi.nc.gov.

MPM/TLH/aed

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