



# 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, Ph.D. *MPM*  
Deputy State Superintendent

Tammy L. Howard, Ph.D. *TLH*  
Director, Accountability Services

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION UNDER ESSA

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a state may provide alternate assessments in mathematics, reading/English language arts, and/or science that are aligned with the alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. 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 does not exceed one percent of the total number of all participating students in the state assessed in each subject. Although the state cannot impose on any local educational agency (LEA) or charter school a cap on the percentage of students administered an alternate assessment, LEAs and charter schools administering the alternate assessment to more than one percent of its students are required to provide information to the state justifying the need to exceed the cap. More information about this justification process will be forthcoming in a series of webinars in January 2018.

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 2016–17 school year. This information is intended to inform 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: 2017/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](mailto:amanda.danks@dpi.nc.gov).

MPM/TLH/aed

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