



# Alternate Assessment Self-Reflection Guide For Local Educational Agencies

2023



New Jersey Department of Education

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# Purpose

The *Alternate Assessment Self-Reflection Guide for Local Educational Agencies* is an optional resource for LEAs that may need additional support based on their alternate assessment participation data.

The Department is required to ensure LEAs are only testing eligible students with the alternate assessment. This self-reflection guide is designed to support districts in their data review process to address the appropriate eligibility of student participation in the alternate assessment.

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## Using the Self-Reflection Guide

LEAs that need support to address the 1% participation cap can use this self-reflection guide as a tool.

**Steps:**

1. Review each section (A-E).
2. Use the Guiding Questions to determine what is being done well and what needs improvement.
3. Develop an action plan to address areas of improvement.
  - a. Access the Resources provided to assist with the next steps.

*\*ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D) and 34 CFR 200.6(c) and (d) contain requirements for the participation of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the AA-AAAS. ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) limits the total number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed Statewide with an AA-AAAS to 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in that subject. As described in 34 CFR 200.6(c)(3), a State may not prohibit an LEA from assessing more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students with an AA-AAAS. However, a State must require an LEA that assesses more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any subject with an AA-AAAS to submit information to the State justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent threshold.*

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# Section A

## Data Gathering and Reporting

The following data are required to be reported to the Department: NJSLA Data, Alternate Assessment Data, and district justifications with assurances for exceeding the 1% participation cap for the alternate assessment.

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### Guiding Questions



What steps does your LEA take to ensure that all required data are accurately reported to the New Jersey Department of Education?



How will you know if there is a data error?



If there is a data error, who is responsible for changes and updates? What steps are taken to avoid reporting errors in the future?

### Resources

- [NJSmart SID Management Handbook](#)
- [NJSmart Special Education Submission Data Handbook](#)

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# Section B

## Policies, Practices and Procedures

All decisions about alternate assessment eligibility are made annually beginning in grade 3 by the IEP team during the IEP meeting, based on the use of New Jersey's Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria with family input, using detailed data as evidence.

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### Guiding Questions



In what grade level(s) do IEP teams begin making decisions about alternate assessment eligibility and participation? At what grade level is eligibility being revisited annually? How do IEP teams ensure that alternate assessment eligibility decisions are not made too soon, for example, in grades K-1?



How does the LEA ensure districtwide implementation of New Jersey's Participation Criteria form?



What data (e.g., assessment tools/collections of evidence) is referenced during alternate assessment eligibility decision-making?

### Resources

- [New Jersey's Participation Criteria Form](#)
- [Alternate Assessment Roadmap to Determine Eligibility](#)
- [FAQs: New Jersey Alternate Assessment Participation](#)
- See <https://literacyaccessforall.org/> for general information
- [DLM Video: "Who Are the Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disability"](#)

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# Section C

## Training for LEA Staff

All LEA staff administering the alternate assessment must be trained using state training resources and documents. This includes administrators who are responsible for providing oversight for the administration of the alternate assessment. It is recommended that administrators who provide oversight for the alternate assessment be trained and use the New Jersey Department of Education's training resources and documents.

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### Guiding Questions



Who provides the training for alternate assessment determination? (e.g., state training, district training, other).



How are staff trained to administer the alternate assessment before the test window opens?



How are all other IEP and new team members trained/informed about alternate assessment participation decisions and data management?



Who monitors training?

### Resources

- NJ Assessment Coordinator Training Modules
- NJ DLM Data Manager Training Module
- NJ DLM Managing Student Moves and Special Circumstance Codes for Voiding Testlets
- NJ Preparation for the Spring Assessment Part One and Part Two
- NJ DLM Teacher Training Module
- NJ DLM Test Administration Observation Form



Click here

\*Resources updated annually on NJ DLM website

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# Section D

## Family Engagement

Families are engaged and included in the following:

- Families are informed about alternate assessment eligibility guidelines using New Jersey's Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria form.
- Families are participating members of the IEP team when alternate assessment decisions are being made.
- Families know about the long-term implications of taking the alternate assessment - specifically, the use of alternate achievement standards.

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### Guiding Questions



How are families informed about alternate assessment eligibility criteria and decision making?



How are families engaged and included in alternate assessment decision making around state and district testing/assessment?



How are families, along with the IEP team, following the guidelines established by the NJDOE to determine eligibility for the alternate assessment?



How are families informed about the long-term implications of taking the alternate assessment? (Topics to consider: Graduation, alternate achievement standards, post-secondary, etc.).

### Resources

- [Family Overview \(One-Pager\)](#)
- [New Jersey's DLM Website](#)
- [NCEO: Start with the End in Mind](#)

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# Section E

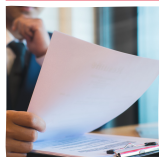
## LEA and Building Data Exploration

LEAs ensure that:

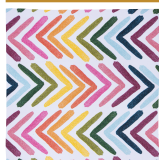
- IEP teams use detailed data as evidence in each section of New Jersey's Participation Criteria form.
- LEAs review data for trends and patterns that would indicate over-identification or disproportionality in one or more subgroups.

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### Guiding Questions



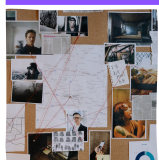
How is LEA alternate assessment participation data reviewed? By whom? How often?



Are there specific patterns that have emerged because of this alternate assessment participation data review?



Are there students represented in district data in disability categories that do not typically include students with significant cognitive disabilities (e.g., specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, hearing impairment, emotional regulation impairment) taking the alternate assessment? If so, why?



How does your LEA ensure that IEP teams use detailed data as evidence in each section of New Jersey's Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria form for every student in out-of-district placements? (e.g., County Special Services, court placement, foster care, etc.).

### Resources

- [InspirED webinar](#)
- [New Jersey Justification Form](#)
- [1% Cap for New Jersey Alternate Assessment \(video\)](#)



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# Section F

## Planning Forward

Use the space below to begin planning to address the next steps in section A-E.

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### Guiding Questions



What priorities have emerged because of this review?  
○ What will happen in follow-up as a result?



What will the LEA do differently because of this review?

*Next*  
**STEPS!**



### Resources

- New Jersey DOE - [Office of Assessment](#)
- New Jersey DOE - [Office of Special Education](#)

# Contact

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