

PROJECT BRIEF

Preliminary Summary of 2020–2021 Participation in DLM Assessments July 16, 2021

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BACKGROUND

- » The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions in schooling and testing across the United States.
- » In 2021, DLM alternate assessments were administered to students in 19 states. States had varying policies regarding administration of DLM assessments. Some states operated similarly to previous years, and others extended testing windows. In two states, no spring assessments were administered.
- » Results presented here are a preliminary summary based on data collected through July 6, 2021. Some states extended the spring testing window through September 2021, so some additional students may still complete assessments.

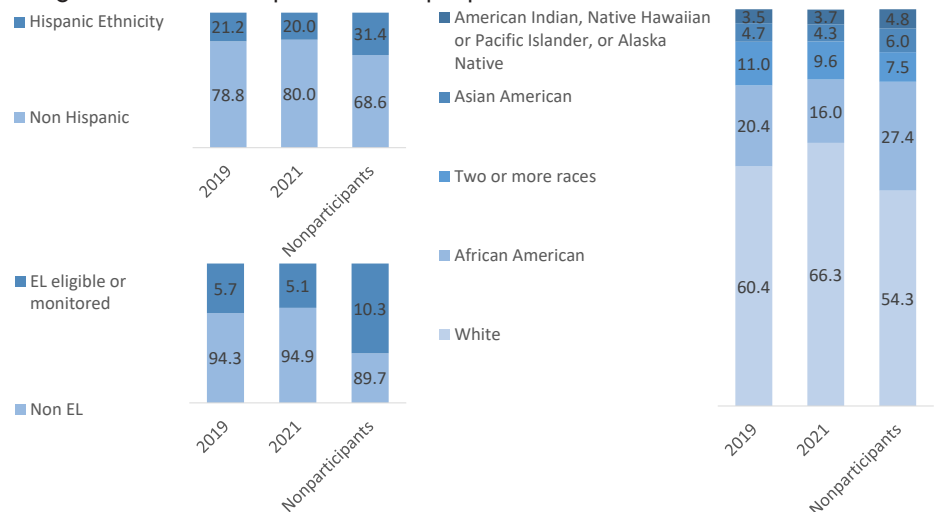
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Fewer students participated in the DLM assessment compared to 2019, with state participation rates ranging from 54% to 94%.
- » 20,000 students enrolled in the DLM assessment did not take any assessments. It is unclear whether they intended to participate.
- » English learners and students in historically marginalized populations participated at lower rates in 2021 than in 2019.

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STUDENT PARTICIPATION COMPARED TO 2019

- » To date, a total of 70,578 students participated in the DLM assessment in 2020–2021. Over 110,000 might have been expected in a typical year.
- » The COVID-19 pandemic had varying impact on the number of students participating in DLM assessments across states. In some states, as few as 55% of 2019 students took at least one assessment. In others, as many as 94% of 2019 students participated. Of 4,462 districts, 69% had a decrease in students from 2019 to 2021. The 10 largest districts accounted for 23% of the decrease, and the largest 20% of districts accounted for 80% of the decrease, suggesting urban districts may have been particularly impacted. Across districts with decreases, typically about half of the 2019 students participated in 2021.
- » From 2019 to 2021, there were percentage point decreases within the distributions of African American students (-4.4%) who took assessments in 2021, and smaller decreases for students of Hispanic ethnicity (-1.2%) and English learners (-.6%). Around 20,000 students enrolled in 2021 but did not participate. The nonparticipant group had higher proportions of students who were African American, Asian American, of Hispanic ethnicity, or English learners compared to the proportions that tested in 2019 and 2021.



IMPLICATIONS

- » It is important to understand who took assessments before interpreting assessment results.
- » Given the wide variability in state participation in 2021 compared to 2019, individual states and districts should evaluate their data to determine which students did not participate, including examining rates of participation for students who are African American, Asian American, of Hispanic Ethnicity, or English learners.
- » States and districts working to reduce the percentage of students taking alternate assessments should consider how those initiatives combine with pandemic impacts to explain who participated.