



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Directors of Special Education
Directors of Regional Educational Service Centers
Directors of Approved Private Special Education Programs
District Administrators

FROM: Bryan Klimkiewicz, Special Education Division Director
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DATE: June 13, 2019

SUBJECT: Monitoring Students Participating in Alternate Assessments

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is providing the following information related to the participation of students on Connecticut alternate assessments (the Connecticut Alternate Assessment - CTAA for reading/language arts and mathematics and the Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment - CTAS for science). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allows for alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities provided the total number of students assessed does not exceed 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the state who are assessed in each subject (reading/language arts, mathematics and science).

States who administer alternate assessments to more than 1.0 percent of all assessed students in reading/language arts, mathematics and science are considered out of compliance with ESSA. States who are out of compliance risk the following federal actions that are in place to encourage participation in the most appropriately challenging assessments.

1. Notifying the state that it has assessed more than 1.0 percent of tested students with an alternate assessment and requiring the state to submit a plan to come into compliance with the 1.0 percent cap;
2. Placing a condition on the state's Title I Part A grant award;
3. Imposing high-risk status on the state's Title I Part A grant award; and
4. Withholding Title I Part A state administrative funds.

In an effort to comply with these requirements outlined in ESSA and minimize the impact of any federal actions on Title I funds received from the United States Department of Education (USED), the CSDE is incorporating the following policies to assist in the appropriate identification of students who are eligible to participate in alternate assessments.

- **Replacement of the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI):** The CSDE will be issuing the *Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form* in the summer of 2019 for use during the 2019-20 school year. The *Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form* will have decision rules instituted within the process to help districts comply with the requirement that only students with evidence of a significant cognitive disability are eligible to participate in alternate assessments.
- **Justification by Districts exceeding the 1.0% cap:** ESSA further requires that states require local education agencies that assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any subject with an alternate assessment to submit information to the state justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent threshold. This will be completed through an

electronic submission that will be distributed in the fall of 2019. More information related to this submission will follow.

- **District-level Annual Performance Reports (APR):** Beginning with the APRs distributed during the summer of 2019, alternate assessment participation rates (ELA, Math and Science) will be included as one of the reported indicators. Districts at 1.0 percent or less will be considered as “meeting target;” districts between 1.0 and 1.2 percent will be considered “substantially compliant;” and districts at or above 1.3 percent will be considered as “not meeting target.” The inclusion of the alternate assessment participation rate will not impact a district’s Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) determination. The CSDE will provide additional information regarding follow-up technical assistance related to alternate assessment participation with the issuance of the 2019 APRs.

Please contact Abe Krisst (abe.krisst@ct.gov) or Bryan Klimkiewicz (bryan.klimkiewicz@ct.gov) with any questions.