



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

April 8, 2025

The Honorable Angélica Infante-Green  
Commissioner of Education  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Infante-Green:

I am writing in response to the Rhode Island Department of Education's (RIDE's) request on December 27, 2024, for a waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which stipulates that a State may not assess more than 1.0 percent of all students in the grades assessed using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). RIDE requested this waiver because, based on State data for school year (SY) 2023-2024, the State concluded that it may exceed the 1.0 percent cap on AA-AAAS participation in reading/language arts (R/LA) and mathematics.

After reviewing RIDE's waiver request, I am granting, pursuant to my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA, for SY 2024-2025, a waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the ESEA so that the State may assess with an AA-AAAS more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in R/LA and mathematics.

As part of this waiver, RIDE assured that it:

- Will continue to meet all other requirements of section 1111 of the ESEA and implement regulations with respect to all State-determined academic standards and assessments, including reporting student achievement and school performance, disaggregated by subgroups, to parents and the public.
- Had assessed in SY 2023-2024 at least 95 percent of all students and all students with disabilities who are enrolled in grades for which the R/LA and mathematics assessments are required.
- Will require that a local educational agency (LEA) submit information justifying the need of the LEA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any such subject with an AA-AAAS.
- Will provide appropriate oversight of an LEA that is required to submit such information to the State.
- Will verify that each LEA that is required to submit such information to the State is following all State guidelines in 34 CFR § 200.6(d) – excluding (d)(6) – and will address any subgroup disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS.

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202  
<http://www.ed.gov/>

*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

- Will implement, consistent with the plan submitted in RIDE’s waiver request, system improvements and will monitor future administrations of the AA-AAAS to avoid exceeding the 1.0 percent cap.

Because the Department is granting RIDE’s waiver of the 1.0 percent cap on AA-AAAS participation in R/LA and mathematics, the Department is amending the existing condition on the State’s Title I, Part A grant award to remove those assessment components.

As a reminder, 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(3)(iv) requires a State to make publicly available the information submitted by an LEA justifying the need to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students on the AA-AAAS, provided that such information does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. I also encourage you to make available your State’s plan, timeline, and progress to date in reducing the percentage of students taking the AA-AAAS.

I appreciate your work to improve Rhode Island’s schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at [ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov](mailto:ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Haley B. Sanon  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
and Acting Assistant Secretary  
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education

cc: Phyllis Lynch, Director, Office of  
Instruction, Assessment & Curriculum



Angélica Infante-Green  
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island  
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminister Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

December 27, 2024

Office of State Support  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C., 20202

RE: Rhode Island "One Percent" ESSA Waiver Request

To Whom It May Concern:

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is formally requesting a waiver for mathematics and English Language Arts, pursuant to 34 C.F.R. §200.6(c)(4) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), from the following statutory provision:

34 C.F.R. 200.6(c)(2): For each subject for which assessments are administered under § 200.2(a)(1), the total number of students assessed in that subject using an alternate assessment with alternate academic achievement standards under paragraph (c)(1) of this section may not exceed 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in that subject.

We understand that as a result of Rhode Island's participation rate exceeding 1.0 percent in previous years, the condition placed on RIDE's Title 1, Part A grant award will continue. During the spring 2024 administration of our state assessments, RIDE also exceeded the 1.0 percent participation rate for our alternate assessments in mathematics, English Language Arts, and science. Included in our waiver request are our plans for how Rhode Island will come into compliance with the requirement to assess no more than 1.0 percent of students with an AA-AAAS and to increase our participation rate for students with disabilities on the general state assessments.

Prior to submitting this waiver request, RIDE prepared and disseminated its waiver application, the Plan and Timeline, and survey to collect public comment. A communication sharing these documents was presented for discussion during the December Test Coordinator Monthly Webinars, posted on the RIDE website, and distributed via email to various stakeholder groups. The document was posted for public comment for over four weeks and a survey tool was utilized to collect public comments on the waiver request. These approaches provided ample opportunity for public comment on this waiver request. RIDE received public comments from 18 individuals representing urban, suburban, and rural areas of Rhode Island. Overall, the feedback demonstrated support for Rhode Island's waiver application and plan for implementation. Much of the feedback shared concerns regarding the implementation of the new criteria and transitioning students from the alternate assessment. Public feedback received during this comment period is attached.

You will find that our waiver demonstrates RIDE's efforts at ensuring the following:

- A Plan and Timeline that outlines RIDE's process for providing training on our new eligibility guidance through online modules and technical assistance sessions. The online modules have been well received and based on the RI IEP census we anticipate that the participation rate for alternate assessments will be reduced from 1.3% to 1.1%.
- A description of a tiered system of support including which tier each LEA is assigned.
- A Plan and Timeline for development and implementation of an LEA monitoring system for LEAs identified as being in Tier 2 or Tier 3.
- We will continue to provide technical assistance to LEAs to support understanding of the eligibility criteria and develop processes that support the use of appropriate evidence to make eligibility decisions.
- All parents are notified that their child's achievement will be measured using alternate achievement standards, that participation in the alternate assessment may affect their ability to fulfill graduation requirements.
- RIDE conducts analysis of state and LEA data to identify areas over-identification for the alternate assessment.

I look forward to your consideration of our request for a waiver of the ESSA One Percent Cap. Please contact Phyllis Lynch, Director, Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment ([Phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov) or 401-222-4693) with any questions you may have.

Thank you,



Lisa Odom-Villella, M.Ed.  
Deputy Commissioner for Instructional Programs  
Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

# Rhode Island

---

ESSA waiver request for 2024-25 regarding the 1% threshold on assessing students using the alternate assessment



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

## Rhode Island: Initial Waiver Request

---

### **Requirement 1: Fulfill the requirements in section 8401 of the ESEA regarding public comment.**

- a. **The State provided the public and any interested local education agency (LEA) in the State with notice and reasonable opportunity to comment and provide input on the entire waiver request (including the plan and timeline).**
- b. **The State submitted the comments and input to the Department with a description of how the State had addressed the comments and input it received.**

RIDE posted its waiver request on the RIDE website November 25, 2024 – December 27, 2024. Notice requesting comment was sent through various listservs including, Fieldmemo to Superintendents, District and School Testing Coordinators, Special Education Directors, Alternate Assessment Teachers, Participants in 1% self-paced modules and family advocacy organizations.

---

### **Requirement 2: Submit the waiver request at least 90 days before the beginning of the State’s testing window.**

Rhode Island’s assessment window for the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities is from April 1 - May 30, 2025.

Ninety days prior to the start of Rhode Island’s testing window (January 1, 2025), the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will submit a waiver request to the United States Department of Education for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.

---

### **Requirement 3: Provide the data described in steps a, b, and c below.**

- a. **Number and percentage of students in each required student group (race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage status, English learner status) who took the AA-AAAS during SY 2023-24 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver).**
- b. **Overall assessment participation rates to demonstrate that the State had assessed at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of all students with disabilities during SY 2023-24 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver.**
- c. **AA-AAAS participation rates for SYs 2017-18 through 2023-14 (including estimates for SY 2024-25, if available) in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver.**

### **Requirement 3a: Number and percentage of students in each required student group (race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage status, English learner status) who took the AA-AAAS during SY 2023-24 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver).**

Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide the number and percent of students tested in each content area at the state level and in each subgroup for both general and alternate assessments administered in the 2023-24 school year. See Appendix 2 for the number and percent of students tested in Mathematics and ELA by subgroup from 2017 to 2024.

**Table 1: Number and percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, mathematics, grades 3-8, and 11 for 2023-24.**

<b>Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, mathematics, 2023-24</b>			
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 (RICAS, SAT, DLM)</b>	<b>Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 alternate assessment (DLM)</b>	<b>% of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11, alternate assessment (DLM)</b>
All Students	69,969	890	1.27%
Female	33,923	284	0.84%
Male	36,017	606	1.68%
Students with Disabilities	12,400	890	7.18%
Low Income	31,749	458	1.44%
Migrant			1.33%
English Language Learners	10,248	158	1.54%
American Indian			1.48%
Asian	2,315	42	1.81%
Black or African American	6,417	91	1.42%
Hispanic or Latino	21,370	262	1.23%
Pacific Islander			0.81%
White	35,511	427	1.20%
Two or More Races	3,693	59	1.60%

**Table 2: Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, English language arts, grades 3-8, and 11 for 2023-24.**

<b>Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, English Language Arts, 2023-24</b>			
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 (RICAS, SAT, DLM)</b>	<b>Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 alternate assessment (DLM)</b>	<b>% of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11, alternate assessment (DLM)</b>
STATE	68,939	892	1.29%
Female	33,436	284	0.85%
Male	35,474	608	1.71%
Students with Disabilities	12,426	892	7.18%
Low Income	31,113	458	1.47%
Migrant			1.64%
English Language Learners	9,112	158	1.73%
American Indian			1.54%
Asian	2,266	43	1.90%
Black or African American	6,272	91	1.27%
Hispanic or Latino	20,622	262	1.27%
Pacific Islander			0.88%
White	35,461	428	1.21%
Two or More Races	3,686	59	1.60%

**Table 3: Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, Science, grades 5, 8, and 11 for 2023-24.**

<b>Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, Science, 2023-24</b>			
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 (RICAS, SAT, DLM)</b>	<b>Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 alternate assessment (DLM)</b>	<b>% of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11, alternate assessment (DLM)</b>
STATE	30,054	391	1.30%
Female	14,615	120	0.82%
Male	15,420	271	1.76%
Students with Disabilities	4,873	391	8.02%
Low Income	13,124	197	1.50%
Migrant			0.00%
English Language Learners	4,061	70	1.72%
American Indian			2.35%
Asian	986	17	1.72%
Black or African American	986	33	1.21%
Hispanic or Latino	9,155	102	1.11%
Pacific Islander			2.08%
White	15,361	211	1.37%
Two or More Races	1,557	22	1.41%

**Requirement 3b: Overall assessment participation rates to demonstrate that the State had assessed at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of all students with disabilities during SY 2023-24 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver.**

Table 4 shows the overall participation rates for each assessment for SY 2023-24. Rhode Island is seeking waivers for ELA and math. We are not seeking a waiver for science as we did not attain 95% participation for students with disabilities. However, science assessment participation data is included based on requests from reviewers in the past.

Prior to the pandemic, the number of students tested in Rhode Island schools exceeded 75,000 and the number of students with disabilities exceeded 11,000. During the pandemic, enrollment and the number of students tested dropped significantly. However, since the 2021-22 school year, the total number of students testing across all tests has slowly increased but is still not at pre-pandemic levels. We were testing approximately 75,000 in ELA and mathematics and 32,000 in science, pre-pandemic. Last year we tested approximately 70,000 students, a nearly 5,000 student difference. In science, we tested 31,000 students last year, a difference of 1,400 students between last year and the pre-pandemic numbers. In contrast, last year the total number of students with disabilities exceeded *pre-pandemic* levels by 1,051 students. So, while our overall enrollment remains below pre-pandemic levels, the number of students with disabilities has increased and surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

Table 4 shows participation rates for the last five school years. Rhode Island met or exceeded the federal participation requirement of 95% for all students and for students with disabilities for ELA and Mathematics. However, the percentage of students with disabilities participating in the state science assessment remains at 93.0%.

LEAs and schools continue to struggle with attendance, and this has affected participation rates across all our assessments. Last year, the Commissioner began a campaign to draw attention to the importance



of attending school and gave the LEAs tools to track chronic absenteeism. This campaign has improved participation in our state assessments to some degree and we expect to see continued improvement in this area. Our Plan and Timeline contains more information on how we will address this issue as an agency.

The FY26 CRP will require that LEAs have a concrete, written plan to include all their students with disabilities in the state assessments. We know that regular attendance at school continues to be an issue for many of our schools – with extra urgency at the high school level. We believe that requiring LEAs to have a plan to include all students with disabilities in the state assessments will support the Commissioner’s statewide initiative on attendance.

Over the last few assessment cycles, we noticed that many schools delayed the start of their state assessment administrations because they believed that an extra week or two of instruction would make a difference in their students’ performance. Because of this, many schools ran out of time to complete testing.

Delaying the start of testing affects all our state assessments but the most impacted is the science assessment. It is the last test to be administered, and most schools wait until the last week of the state testing window to begin testing.

As part of our strategy to improve participation across all tests, we published a primary testing window and a make-up testing window. This required districts and schools to begin testing earlier and left time for make-up testing. This improved participation rates - especially for the science test.

**Table 4:** State participation rates for all students and for students with disabilities (2018-19, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23, and 2023-24)

Content Area	Total Number of students	Number of students assessed	% Participation: all students	Number of students with disabilities	Number of students with disabilities assessed	% Participation: students with disabilities
<b>MATH</b>						
2018-19	75,343	73,981	98.2%	11,807	11,375	96.3%
2019-20	<i>All state assessments were canceled.</i>					
2020-21	73,676	64,575	87.7%	11,965	10,045	84.0%
2021-22	72,304	70,112	97.0%	11,874	11,185	94.2%
2022-23	71,156	69,601	97.8%	12,207	11,644	95.4%
2023-24	<b>71,241</b>	<b>69,969</b>	<b>98.2%</b>	<b>12,922</b>	<b>12,400</b>	<b>96.0%</b>
<b>ELA</b>						
2018-19	76,062	74,669	98.2%	11,800	11,369	96.4%
2019-20	<i>All state assessments were canceled.</i>					
2020-21	73,459	64,907	88.4%	11,963	10,113	84.5%
2021-22	71,539	69,746	97.0%	11,874	11,185	94.9%
2022-23	70,338	68,878	97.9%	12,119	11,661	95.6%
2023-24	<b>70,071</b>	<b>68,939</b>	<b>98.4%</b>	<b>12,918</b>	<b>12,426</b>	<b>96.2%</b>
<b>SCIENCE</b>						
2018-19	32,513	31,486	96.8%	4,769	4,458	93.5%
2019-20	<i>All state assessments were canceled.</i>					

<b>2020-21</b>	32,159	26,469	82.3%	5,120	3,938	77.0%
<b>2021-22</b>	31,431	29,754	94.7%	4,896	4,416	90.2%
<b>2022-23</b>	30,603	29,511	96.4%	4,923	4,581	93.1%
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>31,073</b>	<b>30,054</b>	<b>96.7%</b>	<b>5,240</b>	<b>4,873</b>	<b>93.0%</b>

**Requirement 3c: AA-AAAS participation rates for SY 2017-18 through 2023-24 (including estimates for SY 2024-25, if available) in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver.**

The AA-AAAS participation rates for school years 2017-18 through 2023-24 are included in [Appendix 2](#). While we have seen a slight decrease since 2017-18, and the overall number of students participating in the AA-AAAS is lower, RI was still above 1.0% participation for 2023-24. However, based on the changes in the number of students identified for the AA-AAAS in the IEP Census, we anticipate that participation in the AA-AAAS will decrease further between now and the spring 2025 assessment administration (see Section 2 for further information).

**Requirement 4: Include a statement of assurance in the waiver request that the State has verified that each LEA the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed in any subject using an AA-AAAS has:**

- a. Followed the State’s guidelines for participation in the AA-AAAS; and
- b. Will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any student group taking the AA-AAAS.

**Requirement 4a:**

We require LEAs over 1.0% to agree to the assurances as part of their Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) application. LEAs have already completed the assurances for the 2024-25 school year. LEA responses are included with this waiver in a separate document and posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

The assurances include following the state’s eligibility guidelines and definition of a student with a significant cognitive disability, addressing disproportionality that could be present in relation to the alternate assessment, and providing a justification for why the LEA must exceed the one percent. We also will be including an additional assurance regarding testing 95% of students with disabilities and providing a plan to ensure that all students are assessed in the FY26 CRP.

**Revised Assurances:** *These revised assurances will be included in the 2025-26 CRP that will be completed by LEAs in the spring.*

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.0% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following all state guidelines and implementing all requirements. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA’s process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

- a. Does the LEA assure that it follows the state’s guidelines, criteria, and process for identifying students for participation in the alternate assessment as outlined in the *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment*? Yes/No
- b. Does the LEA assure that it is following the state’s definition of a *student with a significant cognitive disability*? For more information, please refer to the *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment* document posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/dlm](http://www.ride.ri.gov/dlm) or [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

- c. Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could be present in identifying students for the alternate assessment?
- d. Does the LEA assure that for each student evaluated for alternate assessment eligibility, the *Alternate Assessment Documentation Form*, along with all required documentation, is included in the student's school record as a justification for why the student does or does not meet the state's criteria for the alternate assessment?
- e. Does the LEA anticipate assessing more than 1% of students using the alternate assessment this year? If yes: Please provide a justification as to why the LEA needs to assess more than 1% of students using the alternate assessment. Write your justification in the space provided.
- f. Did the LEA assess 95.0% or more of students with disabilities on all state assessments? Yes/no If no, please provide a plan for increasing the LEA's participation rate to 95.0% or more in each content area for which the LEA is below 95.0%.

To ensure that our new state guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment are followed, we have accomplished the following:

- Since our last waiver submission, we developed and launched the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course, designed to ensure that all educators involved in AA-AAAS participation decisions receive the same training on the new eligibility criteria and the process all IEP Teams are expected to follow to ensure defensible eligibility decisions. By offering everyone the same online course, we can ensure that everyone receives the same information, in the same way, and has the same interpretation of the new criteria, guidance, and policies. In addition to the three online modules, each participant must demonstrate their understanding with an end-of-course quiz.

The first round of the course was open to all LEAs from December 18, 2023, through March 29, 2024. The second round was open from August 1, 2024, through October 31, 2024, to provide an additional opportunity for LEA participants to complete the training. RIDE tracks the completion of the courses and follows up with LEAs to ensure all appropriate staff complete the training. The course agenda is below.

#### **Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Training Course Agenda**

Module 1: Introduction to the New Alternate Assessment Eligibility Guidance

Module 2: Overview of DLM and Who Takes the Alternate Assessment

Module 3: Using Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Tool

Module 4: Using Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Tool and Using Tool B: State Assessment Performance

Module 5: Using the Eligibility Form

- We now require that *all* LEA and school staff involved in the decision-making process be trained through the RIDE online course. In past years, we required only special education directors and classroom teachers to complete RIDE training in understanding the eligibility criteria. This new requirement means that in addition to special education directors and the student's classroom teacher, school psychologists, LEA representatives on IEP Teams (usually school principals), general education teachers, Occupational Therapists, chairs of special education departments, etc., are all required to complete the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course. RIDE provides the percentage of educators who completed the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course to LEA special education directors.

- This year, we began providing Zoom meetings and in-person consultation sessions for LEAs that request more targeted training and assistance in applying the new eligibility criteria. So far, we have provided 36 individual consultation sessions for 20 public LEAs (out of 64 total LEAs) and two Private Special Education Schools. In addition, we held three question-and-answer sessions for special education directors. These Zoom meetings and in-person consultation sessions will continue throughout the 2024-25 school year.

**Requirement 4b: Provide assurance that any disproportionality in students taking the alternate assessment will be addressed.**

RIDE will continue with its plan to address disproportionality in any student subgroup using statewide longitudinal data and by requiring LEAs to provide assurance that they have identified and addressed any disproportionality. Most of our LEAs have fewer than 60 students participating, across all tested grades, in the alternate assessments. To assist with identifying where disproportionality may exist, we will be providing LEAs with additional data and analysis. For example, we noticed that rates of identification for alternate assessment increase beginning in eighth grade, leading us to provide grade-level rates of identification for alternate assessment to LEAs.

**Providing data analysis to LEAs:**

- **Rates of eligibility for alternate assessment by grade level.** We have noticed that the number of students found eligible in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades is greater than in the lower grades. We will provide lists of students to LEAs who were found eligible for the alternate assessment *for the first time* at 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades with the expectation that LEAs will review these students for eligibility. RIDE will also review these records during the monitoring process with the expectation that LEAs will be able to show that they followed the required process and applied the eligibility criteria appropriately.
- **Students who received scores on the general education assessments.** Lists of individual students who achieved a score on the general education assessments who were then found eligible for alternate assessment with the expectation that LEAs review these students for eligibility. RIDE will also review these records during the monitoring process with the expectation that LEAs will be able to show that they followed the required process and applied the eligibility criteria appropriately.
- **Rates of eligibility for alternate assessment by disability category** with the expectation that LEAs will review eligibility decisions for students with the following disability categories identified as their *primary disability*: speech/language impairment, hearing impairment, deafness, deaf blindness, visual impairment; emotional disturbance, other health impairment, orthopedic impairment, developmental delay, multiple disabilities\*. We expect that students who do qualify for the alternate assessment are most likely to have disabilities that fall into the autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities\* categories.
- **Rates of eligibility for alternate assessment of MLLs and by race/ethnicity.** While LEAs have this data in their student information systems, we have found that if we can provide easy access to the data to conduct disproportionality analysis and facilitate the conversations the LEAs can spend their time engaging in discussion about the data instead of trying to prepare the data.

*\*Depending on the individual disabilities.*

---

**Requirement 5: Provide documentation that each LEA over the 1% submits a justification for why they need to exceed the 1% cap**

RIDE requires each LEA over 1% to provide a justification for why they have exceeded the one percent cap and what their plan is to ensure they have identified the correct students. Justification is provided through their Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP). RIDE staff monitor these responses and use them to provide targeted assistance to LEAs. Anyone wishing to view an LEA’s justification for being over one percent, can contact RIDE at [alternate.assessment@ride.ri.gov](mailto:alternate.assessment@ride.ri.gov) or view the full document of justifications at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent>.

---

**Requirement 6: Provide a current plan and timeline by which the State will do the following:**

- a. **Improve the implementation of its participation guidelines, including if necessary, revising its definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” in future school years.**
- b. **Take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed in any subject with an AA-AAAS. This should include describing how the State will monitor and regularly evaluate each such LEA to ensure that the LEA provides sufficient training such that school staff who participate as member of an IEP Team of other placement team understand and implement the guidelines established by the State for participation in the AA-AAAS so that all students are appropriately assessed.**
- c. **Address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS as identified through the data provided.**

**Requirement 6a: Improve the implementation of its participation guidelines, including if necessary, revising its definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” in future school years.**

Last year, as part of our plan and timeline, we included a process to review and update our guidance documents. The *IEP Team Guidance for Eligibility for the Alternate Assessments*, and all required forms, including the Documentation of Eligibility Form, are posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/dlm](http://www.ride.ri.gov/dlm) and at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

As part of this process, we recruited four LEAs to review and provide feedback on our previous eligibility guidance – specifically what they found confusing, difficult, and where we needed to develop new or updated state policies. Each LEA had a team of up to six people (LEA administrators, LEA IEP Team representative, special education teachers at each grade span, and other professional such as school psychologist or speech or language pathologist). Teams were required to attend feedback meetings and working meetings with each team to apply the revised guidance to IEPs of students currently eligible to take the alternate assessment. We found this process immensely informative and helpful. Our LEA partners were thoughtful in their feedback and their educators thorough in their review and application of the new criteria to existing students. We believe that by working so closely with the LEAs, it strengthens our relationship, builds trust, creates buy-in from the other LEAs. Our eligibility criteria were revised to the following:

**Revised Eligibility Criteria for Alternate Assessments** (effective statewide on March 29, 2024). Also included in the *IEP Team Guidance on Determining Eligibility for Alternate Assessment*.

1. The student meets the definition of having a significant cognitive disability.
2. Formative and summative evaluations and data show that the Essential Elements will be challenging for the student.

3. The student is unable to generalize daily living and community skills consistently in home, school, and community settings without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports.

As part of the process of revising our criteria and guidance, we also adopted a new definition of a student with a significant cognitive disability. Below is Rhode Island's definition of a student with significant cognitive disabilities as published in the *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for the Alternate Assessment*.

A student is identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities because the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. (Sec 200.6(d)(1)(iii)).

We completed that project successfully and released the new criteria and guidance in September 2023 with the online, self-paced training course going live in October. On Friday, March 29, 2024, the new criteria and process went into effect statewide.

We feel that our criteria, the tools LEAs must use to evaluate evidence for each student for alternate assessment, and the required training course, has produced a decrease in the number of students found eligible for the alternate assessment even though our participation rate remained at 1.3% for SY 2023-34 (see Table 7 and Table 8). We believe the lack of reduction in the percentage of students found eligible during the testing cycle is because the new eligibility criteria and process went into effect on Friday, March 29, 2024, and the alternate assessment testing window opened the following Monday, April 1, 2024. LEAs did not have a large amount of time to complete the training course, adjust their eligibility processes, and reevaluate students for alternate assessment before the testing window opened.

As stated earlier, we also changed who is required to be trained in the eligibility criteria. Rather than focusing on classroom teachers and district special education directors, we now require classroom teachers who had students who take (or may take) the alternate assessment, school psychologists, LEA IEP Team representatives, other professionals such as occupational therapists, speech pathologists, teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs), and anyone else involved in the decision-making process, to take this training and pass the final quiz.

In August 2024, we opened the training course again to allow any educators who are new to their LEA, or who did not complete the training course, or who failed the final quiz, to complete this requirement. Since August 2024, 1,104 educators have completed the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Criteria Training Course. This is a dramatic increase from previous years when we focused almost exclusively on classroom teachers and relied on individual LEAs to train teachers on the eligibility criteria. Rhode Island has about 350 to 375 classroom teachers who teach students who participate in the alternate assessment, so this represents a dramatic increase in awareness and knowledge of the eligibility criteria and process.

**Requirement 6b: Take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed in any subject with an AA-AAAS. This should include describing how the State will monitor and regularly evaluate each such LEA to ensure that the LEA provides sufficient training such that school staff who participate as member of an IEP Team of other placement team understand and implement the guidelines established by the State for participation in the AA-AAAS so that all students are appropriately assessed.**

RIDE will take the following steps to support and provide monitoring for each LEA that exceeds the one percent cap:

- **Online, self-paced course** in understanding and applying eligibility criteria correctly and the process that we expect all LEAs to implement to ensure defensible decisions.
- **Tiered System of Support and Monitoring Plan focusing on alternate assessment and implementing the new eligibility criteria.** During the next phase of overhauling the eligibility system, we will finalize and implement a new LEA monitoring system. We want to create a monitoring plan that is fair and supportive of our educators’ efforts to improve education for our students who participate in the alternate assessment. Below is the table outlining the criteria for each tier of support, what technical assistance is available to those LEAs, and the number of LEAs in that tier.

The monitoring system we will roll out over the next year will include technical assistance components. The Rhode Island Plan and Timeline includes additional details for this work.

<b>TIER 1</b>
<p><b>Identification:</b> LEAs that are below or just above 1.0% for one year <i>or</i> LEAs between 1.0% and 2.0% and decreasing from the previous year.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA staff serving on IEP teams continue to participate in eligibility training.</li> <li>• RIDE staff are available to answer questions about implementing the eligibility criteria or a specific student’s situation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of LEAs in Tier 1:</b> 43 LEAs (out of 64)</p>
<b>TIER 2</b>
<p><b>Identification:</b> LEAs between 1.0% and 2.0% and are seeing no change or have increased from the previous year.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA staff serving on IEP teams continue to participate in eligibility training.</li> <li>• RIDE staff are available to answer questions about implementing the eligibility criteria or a specific student’s situation.</li> <li>• LEA leadership team to participate in technical assistance session with all Tier 2 LEAs to analyze data including examining disproportionality using the NCEO tool, review their eligibility process and student data, and develop/update a plan to ensure accurate eligibility decisions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of LEAs in Tier 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEAs above 1.0% for one year: 3 LEAs (out of 64)</li> <li>• LEAs between 1.0% and 2.0% and decreasing from 2023: 8 LEAs (out of 64)</li> </ul>
<b>TIER 3</b>
<p><b>Identification:</b> LEAs with more than 2.0% of students participating in the alternate assessment.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA staff serving on IEP teams continue to participate in eligibility training.</li> <li>• RIDE staff are available to answer questions about implementing the eligibility criteria or a specific student’s situation.</li> <li>• LEA leadership team to participate in technical assistance session with all Tier 2 LEAs to analyze data including examining disproportionality using the NCEO tool, review their eligibility process and student data, and develop/update a plan to ensure accurate eligibility decisions.</li> <li>• Individual sessions with LEA leadership team to evaluate the eligibility process, including ensuring proper eligibility documentation in student school records, and to monitor the progress of their eligibility decision-making process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of LEAs in Tier 3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEAs above 2.0%: 5 LEAs (out of 64)</li> </ul>

**Requirement 6c: Address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS as identified through the data provided.**

Since 2021, we have seen an 83% increase in the number of English language learners (ELL/MLL) tested using the alternate assessment. The number of Asian students tested using the alternate assessments has increased by 75%. The number of students of two or more races participating in state assessments overall has increased by 88% and the number of Hispanic/Latino students taking the alternate assessments has increased by 82%. The total enrollment in these subgroups has also seen a substantial increase since 2021.

Rhode Island uses the NCEO Disproportionality Calculator to examine possible under- and over-identification of students participating in the alternate assessment. Our analysis consists of reviewing participation rates from 2021 through 2024 to determine if disproportionality exists across grade levels, race/ethnicity, economic status, and English Learner status. The threshold for identifying disproportionality is a risk ratio of 1.5.

Our analysis (see tables 5 and 6) identifies students who are economically disadvantaged as likely overidentified with the risk ratio for ELA being 1.16 and math and science being 1.17. We also identified English learners as a group that is likely overidentified in ELA (risk ratio of 1.23 and 1.25). To address this, RIDE will be including our larger urban districts that have more students who are economically disadvantaged, in the Tier 3 monitoring process in addition to those LEAs identified as eligible for Tier 3 support.

Additionally, because Rhode Island assesses fewer than 1,000 students on the alternate assessment, additional analysis on disproportionality by subgroup and disability category will be conducted using data from our IEP Census and provided to the LEAs.

Most students who take the AA-AAAS have the diagnosis of Autism however, we found more than 100 students were identified as having a disability category that would likely not be consistent with the eligibility criteria including Learning Disabled, Other Health Impairment, Speech and Language, and Emotional Disturbance. As part of our targeted support, we have been asking LEAs to prioritize reviews of eligibility of students under these disability categories.

**Table 5: Risk Ratio and Likelihood of Disproportionality by Grade Level (2021-2024) by Content Area.**

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learner
2021-2024	0.92	0.90	0.95	1.03	1.04	1.11	1.04	1.16	1.23
2021-2024	0.92	0.90	0.95	1.03	1.05	1.12	1.05	1.17	1.15
2021-2024			0.91			1.06	1.03	1.17	1.19
<b>ELA</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Yes
<b>Math</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected
<b>Science</b>			Expected			Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected

*Expected: There is no evidence of disproportionality when the risk ratio is at or very near 1.*

*Yes: Values greater than 1 that have a less than 5% chance that the real number is 1 are in this group. The risk ratio indicates that the probability or "risk" of a focal group student being a participant in the AA-AAAS is greater than expected.*

*Less Than Expected: Values less than 1 that have a less than 5% chance of being 1 are in the "less than expected" group. It indicates that a focal group student is less likely to be a participant in the alternate assessment than expected.*



**Table 6: Risk Ratio and Likelihood of Disproportionality by Race/Ethnicity (2021-2024) by Content Area.**

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi-racial	Pacific Islander	White	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learner
2021-2024	1.48	1.31	1.20	0.93	1.22	0.55	0.96	1.18	1.25
2021-2024	1.47	1.29	1.20	0.92	1.23	0.55	0.97	1.18	1.16
2021-2024	1.31	1.20	1.12	0.89	1.29	0.42	1.00	1.17	1.19
<b>ELA</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Yes
<b>Math</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected
<b>Science</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected

*Expected: There is no evidence of disproportionality when the risk ratio is at or very near 1.*

*Yes: Values greater than 1 that have a less than 5% chance that the real number is 1 are in this group. The risk ratio indicates that the probability or “risk” of a focal group student being a participant in the AA-AAAS is greater than expected.*

*Less Than Expected: Values less than 1 that have a less than 5% chance of being 1 are in the “less than expected” group. It indicates that a focal group student is less likely to be a participant in the alternate assessment than expected.*

## Section 2: States Denied a Waiver in 2023-24

### 1. Follow steps 1-6 to request a new waiver as described in the section on “States Applying for a New Waiver in SY 2024-25”.

Rhode Island has completed steps 1-6, including submitting a plan and timeline that shows an improved monitoring process of LEAs exceeding 1.0 percent of students taking the alternate assessment.

### 2. Evidence of the reduction in the number and percentage of students taking the alternate assessment is provided below. The data in the tables below show the change in the number of students who have been found eligible for the alternate assessment in all grades and in just those students who tested last year.

Table 7 shows the number of students in grades K -12 that have been in the IEP Census as eligible for the alternate assessment. The October 2023 data shows the number of students identified as eligible for the AA-AAAS before we implemented the new eligibility criteria or launched the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Criteria Training Course. The October 2024 data demonstrate a decrease of 175 students identified as eligible for the AA-AAAS.

Table 8 shows the total number of tested students using the AA-AAAS in 2024 and the total number of those tested students who remain on the AA-AAAS as of October 2024. There is a reduction of 75 students.

#### **Table 7: Total number of students identified as eligible to take the AA-AAAS, all grades (K-12), from October 2023 to October 2024.**

October 2023	October 2024	Change
1,631 students	1,456 students	-175 students

**Table 8: Total number of students who took the AA-AAAS (grades 3-8, 11) in 2024 and the total number of those tested students who still qualify for AA-AAAS as of October 2024.**

<b>SY 2023-24 Total Tested Students</b>	<b>SY 2023-24 Tested Students Eligible for AA-AAAS as of Oct. 2024</b>	<b>Change</b>
890 students	815 students	-75 students

**3. Ensure that the State has addressed any other issues that led to the denial which are listed in the Department’s decision letter to the State.**

Rhode Island’s waiver was denied for SY 2022-23 due to not meeting the 95% participation requirement for students with disabilities in science and not demonstrating a reduction in the number of students taking the AA-AAAS. We are not requesting a waiver for science for SY 2023-24 because the participation rate has remained below the 95% threshold. The data above demonstrate that we have made progress in decreasing the number of students eligible for AA-AAAS.

## Appendix 1: Supporting Documents

All documents listed below, including this waiver, are posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

- Rhode Island Plan and Timeline
- LEA justifications document
- *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment*
- *School Support Visits: Including Alternate Assessments*
- **Attendance Matters RI web page**: This web page contains resources for schools and districts to increase attendance rates. It also contains an attendance tool and leaderboard that shows rates of chronic absenteeism for all schools in Rhode Island.
- **Press Release of Nov. 6, 2023**: Governor McKee, Commissioner Infante-Green Recognize Weekly Attendance Leaders and Improved Schools
- **Participation memo to outplacement schools**: To improve the participation of students with disabilities who attend schools outside of their home district, RIDE drafted this memo to explain our participation requirements, steps to take to ensure they have the information they need to properly administer the state assessments and contact information when they have questions.

**Appendix 2: Number and Percent of Students Assessed by Subgroup for Mathematics and ELA (2017 – 2024)**

MATHEMATICS	2017-18			2018-19			2020-21			2021-22			2022-23			2023-24		
Subgroup	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM
STATE	75,171	997	1.33%	74,669	933	1.25%	64,575	815	1.26%	70,112	904	1.29%	69,601	899	1.29%	69,969	890	1.27%
Female	36,653	308	0.84%	36,296	282	0.78%	31,404	245	0.78%	34,220	291	0.85%	33,801	276	0.82%	33,923	284	0.84%
Male	38,518	689	1.79%	38,373	651	1.70%	33,165	570	1.72%	35,856	613	1.71%	35,761	623	1.74%	36,017	606	1.68%
Students with Disabilities	11,490	997	8.68%	11,375	932	8.19%	10,045	814	8.10%	11,185	902	8.06%	11,644	897	7.70%	12,400	890	7.18%
Low Income	36,484	525	1.44%	36,247	483	1.33%	28,148	411	1.46%	30,830	481	1.56%	32,089	498	1.55%	31,749	458	1.44%
Migrant																		1.33%
English Language Learners	6,767	76	1.12%	7,756	101	1.30%	7,270	115	1.58%	8,667	117	1.35%	9,294	137	1.47%	10,248	158	4.54
American Indian	532	12	2.26%	551	11	2.00%	450	10	2.22%	514	11	2.14%	572	10	1.75%			1.48%
Asian	2,426	25	1.03%	2,465	27	1.10%	2,162	31	1.43%	2,415	38	1.57%	2,339	41	1.75%	2,315	42	1.81%
Black or African American	6,459	110	1.70%	6,479	100	1.54%	5,802	92	1.59%	6,298	97	1.54%	6,136	97	1.58%	6,417	91	1.42%
Hispanic or Latino	19,497	230	1.18%	19,648	229	1.17%	17,653	199	1.13%	20,016	228	1.14%	20,404	242	1.19%	21,370	262	1.23%
Pacific Islander			0.76%			0.88%						1.06%			0.91%			0.81%
White	42,925	574	1.34%	42,112	522	1.24%	35,336	433	1.23%	37,334	476	1.27%	36,536	454	1.24%	35,511	427	1.20%
Two or More Races	3,200	45	1.41%	3,301	43	1.30%	3,070	50	1.63%	3,441	53	1.54%	3,504	54	1.54%	3,693	59	1.60%

ELA	2017-18			2018-19			2020-21			2021-22			2022-23			2023-24		
Subgroup	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 RICAS, SAT, DLM	Number assessed in gr. 3-8, 11 DLM	% who took DLM
STATE	74,377	996	1.34%	73,759	933	1.26%	64,907	817	1.26%	69,746	905	1.30%	68,878	900	1.31%	68,939	892	1.29%
Female	36,277	307	0.85%	35,970	281	0.78%	31,616	245	0.77%	34,059	291	0.85%	33,419	277	0.83%	33,436	284	0.85%
Male	38,100	689	1.81%	38,011	652	1.72%	33,285	572	1.72%	35,651	614	1.72%	35,423	623	1.76%	35,474	608	1.71%
Students with Disabilities	11,436	996	8.71%	11,369	932	8.20%	10,113	816	8.07%	11,266	903	8.02%	11,661	898	7.70%	12,426	892	7.18%
Low Income	35,916	524	1.46%	35,770	482	1.35%	28,355	411	1.45%	30,723	482	1.57%	31,648	498	1.57%	31,113	458	1.47%
Migrant																		
English Language Learners	6,046	75	1.24%	7,042	101	1.43%	7,123	115	1.61%	8,017	118	1.47%	8,512	137	1.61%	9,112	158	1.73%
American Indian	528	12	2.27%	548	11	2.01%	456	10	2.19%	517	11	2.13%	554	10	1.81%			1.54%
Asian	2,386	25	1.05%	2,422	27	1.11%	2,154	31	1.44%	2,355	38	1.61%	2,276	41	1.80%	2,266	43	1.90%
Black or African American	6,351	110	1.73%	6,393	99	1.55%	5,844	92	1.57%	6,273	98	1.56%	6,069	97	1.60%	6,272	91	1.27%
Hispanic or Latino	18,995	229	1.21%	19,163	229	1.20%	17,712	200	1.13%	19,726	228	1.16%	19,956	242	1.21%	20,622	262	1.27%
Pacific Islander			0.78%			0.88%					1.08%			0.92%				0.88%
White	42,808	574	1.34%	42,046	523	1.24%	35,543	434	1.22%	37,323	476	1.28%	36,404	455	1.25%	35,461	428	1.21%
Two or More Races	3,181	45	1.41%	3,296	43	1.30%	3,094	50	1.62%	3,459	53	1.53%	3,510	54	1.54%	3,686	59	1.60%

# Rhode Island Plan and Timeline 2023-25

	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024
<i>Status</i>	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
<i>Timeline and Plan for Implementing the Revised Eligibility Criteria and Guidance</i>	<p><b>(Sept. 26 &amp; 27) Introduction to the Revised Eligibility Criteria and Guidance webinars.</b> Kick-off training to the roll-out of the new criteria and guidance that resulted from our collaboration with four LEAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recording at: <a href="http://www.ride.ri.gov/dlm">www.ride.ri.gov/dlm</a>.</li> <li>186 attendees from 36 LEAs and 9 outplacements.</li> </ul>	<p><b>LEA planning time:</b> LEAs use this time to implement the required eligibility process, revise local policies as necessary, and identify who should receive the training.</p>	<p><b>LEA planning time:</b> LEAs use this time to implement the required eligibility process, revise local policies as necessary, and identify who should receive the training.</p>		<p><b>Dec. 18:</b> The Alternate Assessment Eligibility Criteria Training Course opens.</p>		<p><b>March 29:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course closes.</li> <li>Statewide implementation of new criteria and guidance begins.</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Nov. 29 (2-3 pm): Technical Assistance Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>Dec. 27 (2-3 pm): Technical Assistance Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>Jan. 31 (2-3 pm): Technical Assistance Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>Feb. 29 (2-3 pm): Technical Assistance Webinar</b></p>	<p><b>March 27 (2-3 pm): Technical Assistance Webinar</b></p>
<i>Increase attendance and participation in state assessments</i>			<p><b>Attendance Matters initiative announced.</b> This initiative brings awareness and resources to districts, schools, and the public around chronic absenteeism.</p>	<p><b>Participation Memo to Outplacement Schools</b> clarifying state assessment requirements for testing RI students tutitioned to their schools.</p>		<p><b>Discussion of participation in state assessments</b> with special education directors.</p>	<p>Monitor test completion and participation in state assessments; notify LEAs and schools at risk of not completing testing on time.</p>
<i>Professional Learning Opportunities</i>	<p><b>(Sept. 14 &amp; 15) Alternate Assessment Foundations of Math Training – Cohort 2</b></p>	<p><b>(Oct. 25 &amp; 26) DLM Data Use PD:</b></p> <p><b>Day 1:</b> Review of data notebooks; creating data displays to identify conceptual areas common across students.</p> <p><b>Day 2:</b> Discussion of formative assessment strategies, creating an instructional plan, and using that information for IEP goals.</p>	<p><b>(Nov. 10, 30, &amp; Dec. 1) Alternate Assessment Foundations of Math Training – Cohort 2</b></p>		<p><b>(Jan. 11 &amp; 12) Alternate Assessment Foundations of Math Training IEP Goal Writing – Cohort 2</b></p> <p><b>(Jan. 25 &amp; 26) Alternate Assessment Foundations of Math Training – Cohort 3</b></p>		<p><b>(March 28 &amp; 29): Alternate Assessment Foundations of Math Training – Cohort 3</b></p>
	<p><b>(Sept. 28) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 1.</b></p>	<p><b>(Oct. 26) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 1.</b></p>	<p><b>(Nov. 16) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 1.</b></p>		<p><b>(Jan. 25) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 1.</b></p>	<p><b>(Feb. 29) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 2.</b></p>	<p><b>(March 21) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 2.</b></p>
<i>SETTT Grant</i>		<p><b>Oct. 20: Presentation of SETTT grant information to RIDE Special Education Director’s Meeting.</b></p>				<p><b>Beginning of Year 5. Three LEAs will continue, and three LEAs will be added.</b></p>	

## Rhode Island Plan and Timeline 2023-25

	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	
<i>Status</i>	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	VARIOUS	COMPLETE	VARIOUS		
<i>Timeline and Plan for Implementing the Revised Eligibility Criteria and Guidance</i>		Begin working on how to incorporate alternate assessment more equally into IDEA School Support Visits.	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> Develop draft plan for multi-tier monitoring and support.	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize monitoring process.</li> <li><b>NOT YET STARTED.</b> Begin requirements gathering for database to collect information about eligibility decisions.</li> </ul> <b>COMPLETE: Eligibility Guidance:</b> Complete draft of 2024-25 Eligibility Guidance document.	<b>Alternate Assessment Eligibility Criteria Training Course August 1 - October 31, 2024</b>			
				<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculate state and LEA participation rates.</li> <li>Place each LEA into a tier of support.</li> <li>Announce 5 Zoom sessions for any LEA team to reserve to discuss eligibility decisions or other policy/procedural issues.</li> <li>Issue notices to each LEA that provides their participation rate, disproportionality rates, and their tier of support.</li> </ul> <b>Eligibility Guidance:</b> Release updated Eligibility guidance document.	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>All Tiers:</b> Provide 3 Zoom sessions for any LEA team to reserve to discuss eligibility decisions or other policy/procedural issues.</li> <li><b>NOT YET STARTED.</b> Complete requirements gathering for database to collect information about eligibility decisions.</li> </ul>	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>All Tiers:</b> Provide 3 Zoom sessions for any LEA team to reserve to discuss eligibility decisions or other policy/procedural issues.</li> <li><b>Tier 2 LEAs:</b> Provide 3 office hours sessions at RIDE for LEAs to reserve as needed for eligibility discussions.</li> <li><b>Tier 3 LEAs:</b> Begin scheduling in-person meetings with Tier 3 LEA to discuss implementation of the eligibility criteria, review IEP decisions, answer questions, and review disproportionality data.</li> </ul> <b>COMPLETED. Statewide announcement on how the alternate assessment will be incorporated more equally into IDEA School Support Visits.</b>		
<i>Increase attendance and participation in state assessments</i>	Monitor test completion and participation in state assessments; notify LEAs and schools at risk of not completing testing on time.	Monitor test completion and participation in state assessments; notify LEAs and schools at risk of not completing testing on time.	Review CRPs and provide feedback to LEAs to ensure 95% or more participation of students with disabilities in state assessments. <b>NOT YET STARTED. Develop reports on participation for LEAs that focus on outplacement schools.</b>					
<i>Professional Learning Opportunities</i>			<b>(June 6 &amp; 7): Alternate Assessment Foundations of Math Training – IEP Goal Writing - Cohort 3</b>				<b>October 28 &amp; 29:</b> Teaching writing to students with significant cognitive disabilities.	
	<b>(April 25) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 2.</b>	<b>(May 30) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 2.</b>	<b>(June 27) Foundations of Math Community of Practice for Cohort 3.</b>					

## Rhode Island Plan and Timeline 2023-25

	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025
<i>Timeline and Plan for Implementing the Revised Eligibility Criteria and Guidance</i>	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <b>All Tiers:</b> Provide Zoom sessions for any LEA team to reserve to discuss eligibility decisions or other policy/procedural issues.  <b>Post waiver for public comment.</b>	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <b>All Tiers:</b> Provide Zoom sessions for any LEA team to reserve to discuss eligibility decisions or other policy/procedural issues.  <b>Webinar overview of 1% waiver</b> and outline LEA monitoring system (all tiers).	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <b>All Tiers:</b> Provide Zoom sessions for any LEA team to reserve to discuss eligibility decisions or other policy/procedural issues.  <b>Submit waiver to OESE.</b>	<b>Monitoring Plan:</b> <b>All Tiers:</b> Provide Zoom sessions for any LEA team to reserve to discuss eligibility decisions or other policy/procedural issues.  <b>Tier 2 &amp; 3 LEAs:</b> Provide in-person training on monitoring process in preparation for monitoring visits.			<b>Conduct monitoring visits with Tier 3 LEAs.</b>	<b>Conduct monitoring visits with Tier 3 LEAs.</b>
		<i>Break: Dec. 23 - 31</i>	<b>ACCESS Administration Window</b>		<i>Break: Feb. 17-21</i>	<b>State Assessment Administration Window</b> <i>(Notify LEAs/schools at risk of not meeting participation requirements).</i>		
<i>Increase attendance and participation in state assessments</i>	<b>Develop reports on participation for LEAs that focus on outplacement schools.</b>						<b>Discussion of participation in state assessments with special education directors.</b>	



# Cranston

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

No ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

Rich text editor toolbar: ABC, Undo, Redo, Cut, Copy, Paste, Bold, Italic, Underline, Bulleted List, Numbered List, Text Color, Background Color, Font Size, "Times New ...", Size.

N/A

Words: 1 Characters: 3

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

No ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

NA

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# The Hope Academy

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↶ ↷ ✂ 📄 📁 📂 **B** *I* U ☰ ☷ **A** ↶ ↷ "Times New ..." Size

N/A

Words: 1 Characters: 3

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

# West Warwick

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

Our district has a high percentage of Students with disabilities and with significant cognitive impairments. The district has been committee to training staff on using stated guidelines to ensure that we are not over identifying students. The district routinely contacts RIDE to work together when there are questions regarding the alternative assessment criteria.

Words: 53 Characters: 364

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Tiverton

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↺ ↻ ✂ 📄 📁 📧 📧 **B** *I* U ☰ ☰ **A** ↕ ↕ Arial Size

*In the 2022 - 2023 SY, ELA & Math = 1.76% Science = 1.42%*

*Our special educators and special education administrators participated in RIDEs workshop on its new eligibility criteria and guidance that went into effect March 29, 2024. IEP teams within the Tiverton Public Schools are implementing the new criteria and process for determining eligibility. The required forms are used by our IEP teams when making eligibility decisions.*

*Additionally, training is conducted on developing IEP goals aligned to the Essential Elements.*

Words: 80 Characters: 532

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Woonsocket

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↺ ↻ ✂ 📄 📁 📧 **B** *I* U ☰ ☷ A ▼ 🔗 "Times New ..." Size

All of the students that are taking the DLM are students that fit the guidelines and criteria for identifying students. Each file is reviewed and the data and paperwork is doublechecked by administration to make sure that the student qualifies for the DLM using the new guidelines set forth by RIDE.

Words: 51 Characters: 299

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Westerly

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

Westerly has historically had a larger number of students with disabilities that may qualify for Alternate Assessment. Currently 19% of our students with disabilities are comprised of the Autism, Intellectual Disabilities and Multiple Handicap eligibility categories. While not every student with these eligibility categories are eligible, many are and this increased group size results in more than 1% of our group being alternately assessed. IEP teams, Evaluations Teams and Administration are trained yearly in the criteria for identifying students with alternate assessment. This year, with the updated guidance, we decided to have very special education teacher and provider trained in the new criteria to be more accurate and knowledgeable in the eligibility determination.

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# North Providence

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

Possible reasons why North Providence is assessing more than 1% of the students on the Alternate Assessment may include:

1. Support for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: North Providence has a strong focus on supporting students with significant cognitive disabilities who require alternate assessment options to accurately measure their progress. (This could be due to the specific needs and profiles of students within the North Providence community).
2. Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs): The IEP team, which includes educators, parents, and related service providers, may determine that the alternate assessment is the most appropriate option for certain students based on their unique learning needs and abilities. This decision is made on an individual basis and takes into account the student's abilities, goals, and access to the general education curriculum.
3. Specialized Programs and Services: NPSD may have specialized programs and services that cater to students with disabilities, particularly those who require intensive academic support. These programs may align with the alternate assessment, leading to a higher participation rate.

**\*\*In collaboration with RIDE, the district is engaging in ongoing Professional Development to support this discussion specific to eligibility\*\***

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼



# Jamestown

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC Undo Redo Cut Copy Paste Bold Italic Underline Bulleted List Numbered List Text Color Background Color "Times New ... Size

The Jamestown School Department's small population results in over 1% of the student population qualifying for alternative assessment. The following steps have been taken to ensure that only students who meet the qualifications have IEPs that are based on the essential elements and are assessed using alternative assessment:

1. Annual professional development is provided to the professionals in the special education department on the qualification criteria for alternative assessment.
2. The Director of Student Services attends IEP meetings when alternative assessment is being considered for a student. This includes meeting for student who currently qualify for alternative assessment and students for whom alternative assessment is being considered.
3. During the 2022-2023 school year, a team from the Jamestown School Department participated in RIDE's committee to revise the Alternative Assessment Eligibility Guidance Document. The Jamestown School Team included: two special educators who work with students who are assessed using alternative assessment, the school psychologist, and the Director of Student Services. Engagement in the committee provided the opportunity to deepen the understanding of the qualification criteria, to build capacity for understanding and applying the criteria, and the opportunity to review current cases with support from RIDE professionals.

Words: 195 Characters: 1397

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Smithfield

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

The percentage of students eligible for the alternate assessment, DLM, remains the same.

Science 1.25% in 2022-23 down from 1.28% in 2021-22

English 1.25% in 2022-23 increase from 1.22% in 2021-22

Math 1.24% in 2022-23 increase from 1.21% in 2021-22

Teams took part in training in the new eligibility criteria. The district continues to train and review eligibility criteria with teachers and families. A student's eligibility for alternate assessment is reviewed annually. Teams review current student data, review IEP's goals, and current performance with family input as part of the eligibility determination.

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# East Providence

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↺ ↻ ✂ 📄 📁 📧 📧 **B** *I* U ☰ ☰ **A** ▼ 🔗 ▼ Tahoma ▼ Size

36 members of the special education staff participated in the RIDE training that addressed the new criteria for eligibility under alternate assessment. As a result of this training, every student file was examined to ensure ongoing eligibility or non-eligibility. In some cases, students needed to be re-evaluated, many will remain eligible, and some will not. As a result of this RIDE mandate, adjustments in programming, particularly at the secondary level were made to address the students need. The district began implementation of new criteria in March of 2024, as required.

Upon review the district data the district is approximately .4% above the 1% rule in ELA and Math, and .6% above in Science. The district special education census has increased over 20% in the last 5 years. We are enrolling students with significant needs at all grade levels.

Words: 138 Characters: 866

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Providence

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↺ ↻ ✂ 📄 📁 📧 **B** *I* U ☰ ☷ A ▼ 🔗 "Times New ..." Size

We have participated in training on the new Alternate Assessment criteria and have begun to apply it to IEP team decisions. We are also actively working with RIDE staff to increase the amount of staff that are trained in the new criteria and to ensure understanding through all levels of building and district administration.

Words: 54 Characters: 325

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Middletown

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↶ ↷ ↸ ↹ ↺ ↻ ⌂ 📁 📂 📅 📆 📇 📈 📉 📊 📋 📌 📍 📎 📏 📐 📑 📒 📓 📔 📕 📖 📗 📘 📙 📚 📛 📜 📝 📞 📟 📠 📡 📢 📣 📤 📥 📦 📧 📨 📩 📪 📫 📬 📭 📮 📯 📰 📱 📲 📳 📴 📵 📶 📷 📸 📹 📺 📻 📼 📽 📾 📿 📠 📡 📢 📣 📤 📥 📦 📧 📨 📩 📪 📫 📬 📭 📮 📯 📰 📱 📲 📳 📴 📵 📶 📷 📸 📹 📺 📻 📼 📿

22/23: MATH 1.34% ELA 1.46%

Our case managers are trained on ESSA and the one percent rule, the new eligibility criteria, and the IEP Team Assurances Form. Additionally, we gather evidence from families to provide more evidence to support whether or not the student is unable to apply academic, life, and job skills in the home and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports.

Since the implementation of the new criteria, the teachers have filled in the rubric/criteria form prior to the meetings and reviewed it with the parents. I have been in attendance some of the meetings where students no longer qualify and how we will support them in their program of study for the following year

Words: 120 Characters: 736

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Warwick

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↶ ↷ ✂ 📄 📁 📧 **B** *I* U ☰ ☷ A ▼ 🔗 "Times New ... Size

The eligibility for the Alternate Assessment now follows new criteria and guidance set by RIDE, effective March 29, 2024. Prior to implementing these changes, Special Services trained 90% of our severe to profound teachers from Pre-K to 12, as well as school psychologists. The remaining staff will be enrolled in the online, self-paced Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course, available from August 1, 2024, until September 30, 2024, to understand these important changes in determining student eligibility for the alternate assessment.

Words: 80 Characters: 546

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Chariho

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↶ ↷ ✂ 📄 📁 📧 📧 **B** *I* U ☰ ☰ **A** ↕ "Times New ..." Size

Along with our existing students within the district who were formally identified and qualified for Alternate Assessment Participation we have had multiple students move into the district who were identified in their former district. The Special Education Director and Assistant Director review all students being considered and review the Criteria with teams and administration. The Special Education Department has had multiple trainings at all levels with the most recently revised criteria and documentation required.

Words: 74 Characters: 521

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼



# Central Falls

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

The CFSD has been working over the last few years to bring as many of these students back to the district. We now have SID classrooms for students from 3-22 in all but three of our schools. In addition, we have had an influx of students moving to Central Falls from other countries with significant mental and physical needs. The director of special education continues to have conversations with the SID teachers across the district on the academic and functional needs of the individual students to assure Alternate Assessment is required. Each year the team meets to qualify the individual for Alternate Assessment with academic and functional data. The director has ensured that School Principals understand the Alternate Assessment requirements and are abiding by them.

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼



# Lincoln

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

No ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

Rich text editor toolbar: ABC, Undo, Redo, Cut, Copy, Paste, Bold, Italic, Underline, Bulleted List, Numbered List, Text Color, Background Color, Font Size, "Times New ...", Size.

N/A

Words: 1 Characters: 4

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Burriville

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

 ABC          Arial

The decision to use an alternate assessment for a student is made on an individualized basis, based on the student's unique needs and circumstances. Burrillville acknowledges that it's IEP teams have been trained in using the alternate assessment criteria and guidance and that the process is implemented with fidelity. The director of pupil personnel services reviews the process, data and artifacts utilized to determine eligibility for all students in the district, annually.

In analysis of the data, possible reason as to why the district is above the 1% threshold are as follows:

- Students identified as eligible for special education services under the categories of Multiple Disabilities and Intellectual Disability encompass the majority of those students found eligible for Alternate Assessment. These students have documentation of having IEP goals aligned to the Essential Elements. Additionally, they have demonstrated significant deficits in both cognitive and functional domains. In order to receive FAPE, the IEP team, following the RIDE criteria for eligibility, had determined annually, with the agreement of their parents, that each of these students qualifies for this assessment.

Words: 92 Characters: 585

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

# Newport

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC Undo Redo Cut Copy Paste Bold Italic Underline Bulleted List Numbered List Text Color Background Color Font Face: Verdana, san... Size

Newport is a small urban district with a diverse population. We have an ever-growing EL population with interrupted schooling or very little schooling. Newport is also home to a military base which brings in families with student's with significant disabilities. NPS teams are provided training on the eligibilty criteria for alternate assessment. Implementation of the new RIDE criteria will be done with fidelity.

Words: 63 Characters: 415

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

# Cumberland

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

While still over the 1% threshold, the district has reduced the number of students participating in alternate assessments. Please see the data below:

Math:

2021-2022: 2.28%

2022-2023: 1.81% (-0.47%)

ELA:

2021-2022: 2.29%

2022-2023: 1.82% (-0.47%)

Words: 268 Characters: 1891

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

# Johnston

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

The district has provided support to all support coordinators (LEAs) and school psychologists regarding the new alternate assessment criteria for eligibility to ensure proper teams are following eligibility criteria when and state guidance for participation in alternate assessment. The district intends to provide additional support to teams during the SY24-25 during professional development. Additional professional development will be provided through RIDE for all psychologists and SID teachers.

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# RI School for the Deaf

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

ESSA requires that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.00% or below. Part of this process requires LEAs to provide assurances to the state that the LEA is following and implementing state guidance on the identification of students for the alternate assessment using the state eligibility criteria and guidance, train teachers on using those criteria, and discuss with parents any implications of their child being included in the alternate assessment. By answering these questions, the LEA assures that each of these activities is part of your LEA's process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

(a) Is the district over the 1% for Alternate Assessment Participation?

Yes ▼

**If Yes:** Districts over 1% must provide a justification to RIDE as to possible reasons why their district is assessing more than 1% of students. Write your justification in the space provided.

ABC ↻ ↺ ↻ ✂ 📄 📄 📄 **B** *I* U ☰ ☰ **A** ↻ Verdana, san... Size

RI School for the Deaf is a unique LEA in that it is a public school district for some purposes and for other considered a special education day school. one hundred percent of all our students are on IEPs and RIGL allows for any student who is deaf or hard of hearing for whom their district cannot meet their unique needs is entitled to attend the school. As a result the percentage of students participating in Alternate Assessment is inflated but not a true representation were those numbers distributed across the sending districts.

Words: 93 Characters: 538

(b) Does the LEA assure that it follows state guidelines and criteria for identifying students for participation in alternative assessment?

Yes ▼

(c) Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could present in relation to the Alternate Assessment?

Yes ▼

(d) Does the LEA assure that it is following the state's definition of *significant cognitive disability*. For more information, please refer to the [IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Document](#)

Yes ▼

# Rhode Island State Assessment Program

**IEP Team Guidance on Determining Eligibility for  
Alternate Assessment for 2024-25**



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Overview of The Eligibility Process.....	3
When to Make Eligibility Decisions .....	4
Step 1: Learn About the Alternate Assessments.....	5
General Education Assessments.....	5
Alternate Assessments .....	5
Assessment Information for IEP Team Members.....	6
Alternate Assessment Explanation and Information for Parents and IEP Teams .....	7
Step 2: Understand the Eligibility Process.....	8
When to Use These Eligibility Guidelines .....	8
LEA Representative and Teacher Responsibilities.....	8
LEA Representative Responsibilities.....	8
Teacher Responsibilities .....	9
Gathering Evidence for the Eligibility Decision.....	9
Appropriate Sources of Evidence and Data to Use for Eligibility Decisions .....	9
Rhode Island Eligibility Criteria for the Alternate Assessment.....	10
Step 3: Use the Tools to Make Eligibility Determinations .....	10
Directions for using Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Tool .....	10
Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Tool.....	13
Directions for Using Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Tool.....	15
Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric .....	17
Tool C: Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation.....	19
Step 4: Document the Decision .....	20
If Decision is <i>Yes</i> .....	22
If Decision is <i>No</i> .....	22
Disagreement with the Decision .....	22
Review of Eligibility Determinations .....	22
Appendix A: Do Not Use These Factors or Data to Inform an Eligibility Decision.....	23
Appendix B: Cognitive Evaluations .....	25
Appendix B: Glossary .....	27



## INTRODUCTION

Participation in the Rhode Island Assessment Program is an important way of ensuring that each student has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills addressed in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSA) and have access to the general curriculum. The standards assessed in the DLM alternate assessments are the Essential Elements (EEs). The Essential Elements are aligned to the CCSS and the NGSS.

**What is an “alternate assessment”?** The majority of students with disabilities are able to participate in the general education curriculum and will take the RICAS assessments with accommodations and other supports. However, a small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities cannot participate in the general education assessments even with accommodations. These students require a different kind of test for them to show what they know and can do.

The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for the purpose of participation in the statewide student assessment program. For a student to be considered as having a significant cognitive disability for purposes of participation in the alternate assessment, evidence collected must show that the student meets ALL of the criteria for eligibility for the alternate assessment.

Alternate assessments are designed around the unique needs of students that take into account motor, hearing, vision, and other physical disabilities as well as cognitive disabilities. While these assessments assess the Essential Elements, which are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the level at which the content presented is less complex and students receive more scaffolding and supports than on the general education assessment. The number of standards assessed is also much less than what is assessed on RICAS.

**What is the purpose of this document?** This document is intended to help Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members decide whether the alternate assessment or the general education assessment, either with or without accommodations, is the most appropriate test for a student and to outline the required process and evidence that LEAs and IEP Teams must use to make an eligibility decision.

To help LEAs and IEP Teams make the most accurate decisions possible, this document contains the following:

- RIDE policy around when *to* make eligibility determinations.
- RIDE policy around when *not* to make eligibility determinations.
- Required rubrics, tools, and documentation form that every student must have in their IEP at the completion of the eligibility process.
- An outline of the process LEAs and IEP Teams must follow to ensure that the decision to include or exclude a student from the alternate assessment is defensible.

## OVERVIEW OF THE ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The IEP team decision about whether a student participates in the alternate assessment is often one of the more difficult decisions that the team makes. It requires the consideration of many factors. To help IEP teams in this decision, several tools have been developed. These are based on a synthesis of the many tools that states may be using as they strive to provide relevant information to IEP teams so that the best and most accurate decisions are made for each student.

They were identified and developed by NCEO 2019 PLG 3 and NCEO to help states meet the assurances they must provide to the U.S. Department of Education:

- IEP teams in the state are adhering to the state’s alternate assessment participation guidelines and the state’s definition of a “student with the most significant cognitive disabilities.”
- IEP teams (and their LEAs) in the state inform parents of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities of the implications of participation in the alternate assessment.

This document outlines the process that should be followed to make eligibility decisions for students. Each step is explained and covered in detail in this document. The steps to the eligibility process are:

Step 1: Learn about the alternate assessments.

Step 2: Understand the eligibility process.

Step 3: Use the tools to make an eligibility determination.

Step 4: Document the decision.

## WHEN TO MAKE ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS

### **For MLL students with significant cognitive disabilities (K-2)**

Although RICAS and DLM are first administered at grade 3, the state assessment of language development (ACCESS) is administered beginning in kindergarten.

MLL students’ participation in the Alternate ACCESS in K, first, or second grade **does not indicate** eligibility for the DLM. Once the MLL student reaches the end of second grade or beginning of third grade, the IEP Team must make a formal eligibility decision using the processes and rubrics in this guidance document.

### **Grade 2**

Since state assessments begin at grade 3, IEP teams should conduct a formal eligibility process at some point in grade 2. This would ensure that teachers and service providers have time to develop an instructional plan, IEP goals, etc., that will best position the student’s teacher and the student for success in grade 3. Try to avoid waiting to make eligibility decisions at grade 3. It is important the students have as much instructional time as possible aligned to the Essential Elements before taking the DLM assessments.

### **Grades 3-8, and 11**

While there is no deadline for making eligibility determinations, it is important to do this as early in the school year as possible. Students found eligible at any point after the school year has started should take the DLM assessments for their designated grade level, however, if an IEP team reaches a decision two weeks or less before the start of the DLM tests, preparing for the DLM alternate assessments will be difficult.

In addition to the updates to the Enrollment and Special Education Censuses, registration must also happen in the DLM Kite Educator Portal. The First Contact Survey and Personal Needs Profile must be completed by the student’s teacher *prior to the start of testing*. Please ensure that IEP team decisions are made as far in advance of this date as possible. Teachers run the risk of not being able to complete the required steps to administer the DLM assessments if decisions are made after this date.

### **Grade 9, 10, and 12**

State academic assessments are not administered in these grade levels but Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is. Most students at these grade levels will have an eligibility determination already. If a formal eligibility determination has not been made, then one must be completed for the student to take the Alternate ACCESS and to participate in the DLM in grade 11.

## STEP 1: LEARN ABOUT THE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

The basis for making decisions about which assessment is most appropriate for an individual student comes from having a solid foundation of knowledge about the state’s assessment system, including the purpose of the general assessment and the alternate assessment. This knowledge should be demonstrated by all IEP team members, which may include parents or guardians, teachers, school psychologists, English language development specialists, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, paraprofessionals, administrators, and others who may participate in the IEP team meeting. Below is an overview of the general and alternate state assessments available in Rhode Island.

### GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS

The English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science assessments are part of the federal elementary and secondary education legislation. The assessment program does the following:

- Measures specific claims related to the Rhode Island Core Standards in grades 3-8 and 11 in ELA and mathematics.
- Measures specific claims related to the Next Generation Science Standards in grades 5, 8, and 11 in science.
- Reports individual student scores along with each student’s performance level.
- Provides subscale and total scores that can be used with local assessment scores to assist in improving a school’s or district’s programs in ELA, mathematics, and science.
- Learn more about the [Rhode Island Core Standards](#) and the [Next Generation Science Standards](#).

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

**English language arts and mathematics:** grades 3-8 and 11

**Science:** grades 5, 8, and 11

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments are designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom general state assessments are not appropriate, even with accommodations. DLM assessments offer these students a way to show what they know and can do in mathematics, English language arts, and science.

DLM assessments also help parents and educators establish high academic expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Results from DLM assessments support interpretations about what students know and can do. Results will also inform teachers’ instructional decisions and meet federal requirements for reporting student achievement.

#### **Accommodations and Accessibility**

DLM assessments are designed to maximize accessibility for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Assessments are built to allow multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. At multiple points during the assessment development process, teams of educators review the testlets to ensure instructional relevance and to minimize barriers for students.

During assessment administration, students have access to various tools and test supports that teachers will select to fit each student’s needs and preferences. Some of these tools and supports are delivered through the online assessment system while others are provided outside the system, by the teacher. IEP teams will need to review these tools and test supports and make decisions about which ones are appropriate for the student.

## Standards and Content

The DLM Alternate Assessment System uses a learning map model to diagram the relationship among the knowledge, skills, and understandings necessary to meet academic content standards (the Essential Elements). The learning map model plots out individual concepts. The connections among these nodes show the multiple ways that students' knowledge, skills, and understandings develop over time.

By examining the learning map model and the relationships between its nodes, educators can better uncover reasons a student may be struggling with a particular concept and also see paths ahead for that student to continue to expand their knowledge and skills.

To connect the model's extensive content to real-world expectations for students, certain nodes within the model are associated with **Essential Elements (EEs)**. EEes are specific statements about what students should know and be able to do. They are linked to grade-level-specific expectations described in college- and career-readiness standards for students in the general population, and they provide a bridge between those standards and academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

## Assessment Administration

Rhode Island administers the DLM alternate assessments each spring, with all students in a particular grade being assessed on the same Essential Elements.

The DLM assessments are adaptive tests. That means the students receive testlets of varying difficulty depending on their previous answers.

## ASSESSMENT INFORMATION FOR IEP TEAM MEMBERS

There is a wealth of information available to assist IEP team members in making decisions about which assessment is most appropriate for a student to take. Unfortunately, local IEP teams may not know about this information unless it is provided to them. This tool includes information specifically designed for Rhode Island educators, as well as nationally available information from NCEO.

### Information for Administrators, Teachers, School Psychologists, and Related Services Specialists

#### Alternate Assessment Information

- [Video \*Who Are Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities?\*](#) (video and supporting materials)
- [Rhode Island Eligibility Guidelines](#)
- [Essential Elements](#)

#### General Assessment Information

- [RIDE Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual](#)
- [RICAS assessment overview](#)
- Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA and mathematics
- [Next Generation Science Standards](#)

#### Information for English Language Development Specialists

- [State Assessment Decision-making Processes for ELLs with Disabilities](#)
- [Participation of English Learners with Disabilities](#)
- [Alternate ACCESS for ELLs](#)
- [Accessibility and Accommodations WIDA](#)

## Information for Parents

- [Parent Information Brochure about DLM](#)
- [Resources for Families](#) (RIDE web page)
- [Alternate Assessment Explanation and Information for Parents and IEP Teams](#)

---

## ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND IEP TEAMS

### Academic Achievement Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment is designed for those students identified with a most significant cognitive disability who require instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards.

The Essential Elements are descriptions of what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level from Kindergarten through 12th grade. They are essential skills that are linked to the Rhode Island Core Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards.

### Differences Between Assessments Based on Grade-level Academic Achievement Standards and Those Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

All students with a disability and an IEP have a right to a free appropriate public education. This right includes the opportunity for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to be involved in and make appropriate progress in the same general education curriculum as other students. Sometimes, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are not able to access the standards in a meaningful way or to the same degree as other students. These standards are at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. These alternate academic achievement standards are called the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Elements (EE) in English language arts (ELA), mathematics and science.

The Rhode Island State Assessment Program (RISAP) provides parents, educators, and policymakers with one piece of information about student learning. The DLM is used to test academic achievement for students with a most significant cognitive disability. It is a completely individualized test designed so that students can show what they know and can do. The assessment is given in short parts called testlets so your child does not become too tired or stressed. The DLM ELA, math, and science assessments are given in April each year.

### The Impact of State and Local Policies for Students Who Take the DLM Alternate Assessments

Testing students using the DLM alternate assessments and working from the alternate academic achievement standards can place a student on a different trajectory. These students are measured using performance standards at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity which can result in fewer post-secondary opportunities. Teachers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities use the Essential Elements to plan what is taught and how it is taught so that their students can learn as much as possible. The EEs may also be used to help teachers develop ways to measure student progress. They answer the question “What should my child be learning?”

If a student will participate in the DLM alternate assessment, IEP teams need to consider the EEs when developing the student’s IEP. The EEs help the teacher identify the student’s needs and plan grade level instruction and assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Information regarding the student’s performance is included on the IEP under Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. More information and copies of the EEs are available online at: [www.ride.ri.gov/dlm](http://www.ride.ri.gov/dlm).

### Participation in the Alternate Assessment May Affect Completion of a Regular High School Diploma

Students whose instruction is based on the EEs will not be exposed to curriculum at the same depth, breadth, and complexity as their grade-level peers. For these reasons, participation in the alternate assessment may affect your child’s completion of the requirements for a regular high school diploma.

It is vital that students with severe cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction in order to be able to take advantage of all post high-school options available and to have as much independence as possible. Students who qualify for the alternate assessment may be eligible for a diploma by demonstrating proficiency through their coursework on modified proficiency expectations on state-adopted standards. The number and types of courses required for a diploma are the same for all students.

## STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The decision about which assessment is most appropriate for an individual student can best be supported by preparing information directly relevant to the assessment participation decision before the meeting. This information should reflect considerations that are included in the state’s guidelines for participation in the alternate assessments.

According to ESSA regulations, states’ guidelines and definition must address “factors related to cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior” (Sec 200.6(d)(1)). The regulations also clarified that a specific disability category or being an English learner does not determine whether a student has a significant cognitive disability (Sec 200.6(d)(1)(i)), nor does a student’s “previous low academic achievement, or the student’s previous need for accommodations to participate in general State or districtwide assessments” (Sec 200.6(d)(1)(ii)). The regulations state:

A student is identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities because the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. (Sec 200.6(d)(1)(iii)).

## WHEN TO USE THESE ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

**LEAs are required** to use the eligibility guidelines and tools for the following students:

- Students who qualified for alternate assessment under the previous eligibility guidelines.
- Students who are in non-tested grades and qualified for alternate assessment under the previous eligibility guidelines.
- Students who are being considered for alternate assessment.

**LEAs are not required** to apply eligibility guidelines and tools to the following students:

- Students without IEPs.
- Students who are not being considered for alternate assessment.
- Students who did not meet the alternate assessment criteria under the previous guidelines.

In the 2024-25 school year, RIDE will release additional guidance on how LEAs should handle re-eligibility decisions for students who were found eligible under the new guidelines.

## LEA REPRESENTATIVE AND TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that anyone fulfilling the role of LEA representative understand their role and responsibilities during the eligibility process. It is not the responsibility of the student’s teacher to conduct the eligibility decision making process on their own. The lists below outline the responsibilities of the LEA representative and the teacher during this process.

---

### LEA REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Meet with the teacher before the IEP Team meeting.
- Ensure that the most current evaluations and evidence is available to the teacher.

- Ensure the rubrics are complete.
- Review how the evidence and recommendations will be communicated to the family.
- Review how the IEP Team Assurances Form will be explained to families.
- Make sure that the completed rubrics, the assessment sheet and the IEP Team Assurances Form is included in the student’s special education record.
- Ensure that the family also receives copies of the completed rubrics, assessment sheet, and the signed IEP Team Assurances Form.

---

## TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Read this document.
- Collect and analyze the appropriate evidence and data about the student.
- Complete the Intellectual Functioning Rubric, the Adaptive Rubric, and the State Assessment Tools sheet.
- Meet with the LEA representative and/or special education director *before the IEP Team meeting*.

---

## GATHERING EVIDENCE FOR THE ELIGIBILITY DECISION

Using multiple pieces of evidence to inform this decision is important because it prevents decision-making that relies on one type of evidence (e.g., IQ score or disability category) and because it provides a complete picture of the student both academically and in social settings.

Below is a list of possible evidence that should be gathered **before** using Tools A, B, and C. It is important to remember that no one piece of evidence should be used to make an eligibility decision and no one person should be making the decision; it must be a decision agreed to by all members of the IEP team.

---

## APPROPRIATE SOURCES OF EVIDENCE AND DATA TO USE FOR ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS

- Curriculum, instructional, and classroom evidence:
  - Examples instructional objectives and materials
  - Work samples and data on progress from both school- and community-based instruction
  - Classroom work samples and data
  - Teacher observations
- Assessment data and evidence:
  - past state assessments to compare with classroom work (**NOTE:** poor performance on a past state assessment cannot be used to make a decision about eligibility).
  - district-wide alternate assessments
  - reading assessments
  - any other academic achievement tests
  - language assessments like ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
  - results of the initial or most recent evaluations of the student
  - observations by teachers and other service providers
  - observations by family members or guardians, such as the student’s adaptive behavior, in settings outside of school.
- IEP information, including:



- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, goals, and short-term objectives or post-school outcomes from the IEP.
- Considerations for students with specific communication needs or modes.
- Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners).
- Evaluations, including:
  - Adaptive behavior assessments
  - Functional behavior assessments
  - Informal assessments
  - Psychological assessments and evaluations, including information associated with cognitive tests.
  - Speech and communication evaluations

## RHODE ISLAND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for the purposes of their participation in the state assessment program. For a student to be found as having a significant cognitive disability, each of the three criteria must be true as determined by the student’s IEP team:

1. The student meets the definition of having a significant cognitive disability.
2. Formative and summative evaluations and data show that the Essential Elements will be challenging for the student.
3. The student is unable to generalize daily living and community skills consistently in home, school, and community settings without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports.

## STEP 3: USE THE TOOLS TO MAKE ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

This section contains three tools that IEP teams must use to guide their eligibility decisions. They must look at the evidence collected and use the rubrics and the assessment table to help them understand the data and evidence they collected.

**NOTE:** *If the necessary evaluations and assessments are not available or the student demonstrated substantial changes in their cognitive abilities since the evaluations and assessments were last completed, the IEP team may not continue with the eligibility process until the evaluations and assessments are complete.*

## DIRECTIONS FOR USING TOOL A: INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING TOOL

Measuring intelligence and intellectual functioning is a common approach to trying to quantify cognitive functioning. Cognitive functioning is a general term that is broad in scope. It generally includes a number of mental abilities, including “learning, thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, decision making, and attention” (Fisher, Chacon, & Chaffee, 2019). A single measure of intelligence should not determine cognitive functioning, nor should it determine the potential for grade-level academic performance (McGrew & Evans, 2004). Nevertheless, documentation of information on intellectual functioning is one element of determining if a student may appropriately participate in the alternate assessments. Please keep in mind the following as the rubric is completed:

- Teams need to remember that approximately 1% or less of the assessed students in the state would meet the criteria for the alternate assessments.



- Teams also need to remember that the following information **should not be used for determining eligibility for participation in the DLM Alternate Assessments**. Definitions and descriptions of this information can be found in Appendix A.
  - Disability category (or categories)
  - Physical capabilities and/or medical needs
  - Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason
  - Poor performance on the general education academic assessments
  - English Language Learner (EL) status
  - Impact of the student’s test scores on the accountability score of the school and/or LEA
  - Location of special education services in more restrictive settings
  - Amount of time receiving special education services
  - Variety of services a student receives
  - Behavior issues, including test anxiety
  - Administrator decision

**Directions: The Intellectual Functioning Tool is designed to help IEP Teams determine if a student has a significant cognitive disability.** Circle the description in each row that most closely matches the student’s measured intellectual information. Which column you circle in each row may be different because a student’s skills and knowledge can vary.

For a student to be eligible for the alternate assessments as a student with a most significant cognitive disability, intellectual and cognitive assessment results should be in column 4. Data for the other rubric categories may vary and could be in either columns 3 or 4. Follow the guidelines below for using evaluations:

- **Initial evaluations:** You cannot continue to determine if a student is eligible for the alternate assessment until you have the initial set of evaluations: a cognitive evaluation, functional evaluation, and any other evaluations needed for special education services and qualification for alternate assessment.
- **Three-year or tri-annual reevaluations:** Unless there are substantial changes to a student’s disability or cognitive functioning, teams may opt to use previous cognitive and functional evaluations. However, if the student has not had a three-year or triannual evaluation for more than six years (two cycles of reevaluations), then new evaluations must be completed before continuing with the eligibility process.

However, if the student has not had a three-year or triannual evaluation for more than six years and there are extenuating circumstances preventing evaluations from being completed, LEAs should contact RIDE to discuss options for moving forward with the eligibility process.

- **Conflicting results from multiple evaluations:** There may be instances when the validity of the evaluation results fall into question, such as:
  - *when a student cannot or will not complete a section of the evaluation.* In this case, it is important to understand why the student wasn’t able to complete the full evaluation. If the reason is because of the student’s behaviors, then finding the ideal setting and person to perform another evaluation should be the next step. If a student is unable to complete the evaluation because they are nonverbal or do not speak English, then finding a different evaluation that better suits the student or supplementing the missing portions of the evaluation with other evidence to ensure that you have a fuller picture of the student, is important.

- *when multiple evaluation results conflict.* In this case, it's important to consider the other evidence to see if it supports one result or the other. For example, if a teacher's functional evaluation of the student is high and the parents' evaluation is low, does other evidence confirm the teacher's evaluation results or the parents'? As another example, if multiple evaluations were conducted in a short amount of time but have different results, does additional evidence confirm one of the results, but not the other?

## TOOL A: INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING TOOL

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Fill in the names, dates, and results of each evaluation done. The completed rubric must be included in the student’s special education record and provided to the family along with the IEP.

Type of Evaluation	Name of Evaluation	Date	Results
<b>Individual Cognitive Ability Evaluation</b>			Full scale IQ: Visual/Spatial: Fluid Reasoning: Working Memory:
<b>Speech Evaluation</b>			Receptive Score: Expressive Score:
<b>AAC Evaluation</b>			
<b>OTHER</b>			

Average Cognitive Ability		Most Significant Cognitive Disability	
1	2	3	4
<b>Verbal Intelligence/Cognition (related to language skills)</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Verbal intelligence in average range or above (85 or above).	Verbal Intelligence 1 to 2 standard deviations below the mean (between 84 and 76).	Verbal Intelligence 2 to 2.5 standard deviations below the mean (between 75 and 64).	Verbal Intelligence 2.5 standard deviations or more below the mean (63 or lower).
<b>Nonverbal Intelligence/Cognition (related to nonverbal reasoning, visual/spatial, nonverbal memory)</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Non-verbal intelligence in average range or above (85 or above).	Non-verbal Intelligence 1 to 2 standard deviations below the mean (84-76).	Non-verbal Intelligence 2 to 2.5 standard deviations below the mean (75 – 64).	Non-verbal Intelligence 2.5 standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower).
<b>Thinking/Reasoning/Problem-Solving</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Reasoning and problem-solving skills at age-level or within average range on an assessment.	Minimal assistance (e.g., general education interventions/supports) needed to carry out reasoning and problem-solving tasks.	Requires moderate assistance, interventions, and supports to support learning and completing cognitive tasks involving thinking, reasoning, and problem solving.	Requires intensive and consistent assistance, interventions, and supports to support learning and completing cognitive tasks involving thinking, reasoning, and problem solving.
<b>Executive Function/Attention/Memory</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Cognitive planning and working memory at age-	Minimal assistance (e.g., general education	Requires moderate modifications and levels of	Requires intensive modifications and substantial

level or within average range on an assessment.	interventions/supports) needed to support cognitive planning and working memory.	scaffolding to support cognitive planning and working memory.	levels of scaffolding to support cognitive planning and working memory.
<b>Learning</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Learning RI Core Standards as part of the general education curriculum with minimal to no support provided.	Learning RI Core Standards as part of the general education curriculum with maximum support provided and making progress.	Learning RI Core Standards as part of the general education curriculum with maximum levels of support and no progress.  OR Learning Essential Elements and mastering the Target linkage level with moderate to maximum levels of support.	Learning Essential Elements and making progress through linkage levels with maximum levels of support.  OR Learning Essential Elements and not making progress through linkage levels even with maximum levels of support.

---

## DIRECTIONS FOR USING TOOL B: ADAPTIVE FUNCTIONING TOOL

Adaptive functioning, sometimes referred to as adaptive behavior, is defined as “coping with everyday environmental demands and includes daily living skills that people perform to care for themselves and to interact with others” (Mitchell, 2018). It is recommended that information for formal or informal assessments of adaptive behavior be collected from people who regularly interact with the student, including family members, educators, and other professionals.

Teams need to remember that approximately 1% or less of the assessed students in the state would meet the criteria for the alternate assessments. Please keep in mind the following as the rubric is completed:

- Teams need to remember that approximately 1% or less of the assessed students in the state would meet the criteria for the alternate assessments.
- Teams also need to remember that the following information **should not be used for determining eligibility for participation in the DLM Alternate Assessments**. Definitions and descriptions of this information can be found in Appendix A.
  - Disability category (or categories).
  - Physical capabilities and/or medical needs.
  - Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason.
  - Poor performance on the general education academic assessments.
  - English Language Learner (EL) status.
  - Impact of the student’s test scores on the accountability score of the school and/or district.
  - Location of special education services in more restrictive settings.
  - Amount of time receiving special education services.
  - Variety of services a student receives.
  - Behavior issues, including test anxiety
  - Administrator decision.

**Directions for using the Adaptive Functioning Rubric:** Teams should circle the cell in each row that most closely matches the student’s measured adaptive behavior information. Which column is marked for each row may be different. This is to be expected because students can vary in their skill levels or exhibit splinter skills that impact their adaptive functioning.

Behavior skills assessments should reflect skills and knowledge expected for a typical peer and be appropriate for the student’s physical capabilities and communication skills. For a student to be eligible as a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities in adaptive functioning, most data should appear in column 4. Data for the other rubric categories may vary and could be in either columns 3 or 4. Follow the guidelines below for using evaluations:

- **Initial evaluations:** You can’t continue to determine if a student is eligible for the alternate assessment until you have the initial set of evaluations: a cognitive evaluation, functional evaluation, and any other evaluations needed for special education services and qualification for alternate assessment.
- **Three-year reevaluations:** Unless there are substantial changes to a student’s disability or cognitive functioning, teams may opt to use previous cognitive and functional evaluations. However, if the student has not had an evaluation for more than six years (two cycles of reevaluations), then new evaluations should be completed before continuing with the eligibility process.

- **Conflicting results from multiple evaluations:** There may be instances when the validity of the evaluation results fall into question, such as:
  - *when a student cannot or will not complete a section of the evaluation.* In this case, it is important to understand why the student wasn't able to complete the full evaluation. If the reason is because of the student's behaviors, then finding the ideal setting and person to perform another evaluation should be the next step. If a student is unable to complete the evaluation because they are nonverbal or do not speak English, then finding a different evaluation that better suits the student or supplementing the missing portions of the evaluation with other evidence to ensure that you have a fuller picture of the student, is important.
  - *when multiple evaluation results conflict.* In this case, it's important to consider the other evidence to see if it supports one result or the other. For example, if a teacher's functional evaluation of the student is high and the parents' evaluation is low, does other evidence confirm the teacher's evaluation results or the parent's? As another example, if multiple evaluations were conducted in a short amount of time but have different results, does additional evidence confirm one of the results, but not the other?

## TOOL B: ADAPTIVE FUNCTIONING RUBRIC

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Fill in the names, dates, and results of each evaluation done. The completed rubric must be included in the student’s special education record and provided to the family along with the IEP.

Type of Evaluation	Name of Evaluation	Date	Results
<b>Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment*</b>			Teacher Report: Parent Report:
<b>Speech Evaluation</b>			Receptive Score: Expressive Score:
<b>AAC Evaluation</b>			
<b>OTHER</b>			

\*Behavior skills assessments should reflect the skills and knowledge expected for a typical peer and be appropriate for the student’s physical capabilities and communication skills.

Average Adaptive Ability		Most Significant Disability	
1	2	3	4
<b>Adaptive Behavior Scale</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Overall adaptive behavior score in average range or above (standard score 85 or above).	Adaptive behavior 1 to 2 standard deviations below mean (standard score between 84 and 71).	Adaptive behavior 2 to 2.5 standard deviations below mean (standard score between 70 and 64).	Adaptive behavior 2.5 standard deviations or more below mean (standard score of 63 or lower).
<b>Conceptual</b> (Do not consider communication mode but rather how proficient and independent the student is in using their communication system).			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Has appropriate age and grade level expressive and receptive communication skills.	Has expressive and receptive communication skills that requires minimal prompting or assistance.	Beginning communicator. Minimal expressive and receptive communication skills. Communication is limited to wants, needs, and preferences.	Has limited to no reliable communication system.
<b>Social and Interpersonal Skills</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
No instruction is needed on age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.	Instructional needs addressed through general education interventions for age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.	Systematic, direct instruction in age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.	Intensive, systematic, and direct instruction in age and grade appropriate interpersonal skills.
<b>Daily Living Skills - Instruction</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
No instruction needed on age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	Minimal instruction needed for student to learn age and	Requires frequent, individualized instruction, and supports across <b>multiple settings</b> to learn age and	Requires intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in <b>multiple settings</b> to learn and apply age

	grade appropriate daily living skills.	grade appropriate daily living skills.	and grade appropriate daily living skills.
<b>Daily Living Skills – Application Across Multiple Settings</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
Student is independently able to generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	Student requires minimal supports to successfully generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills.	The student’s ability to successfully generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills is inconsistent and they routinely need support.	The student is unable to successfully generalize age and grade appropriate daily living skills without intensive support.
<b>Community Living Skills</b>			
<i>Comments:</i>			
No instruction needed on age and grade appropriate community living skills.	Minimal instruction needed for student to learn age and grade appropriate community living skills.	Requires frequent, individualized instruction, and supports across multiple settings to learn age and grade appropriate community living skills.	Requires intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple settings to learn and apply age and grade appropriate community living skills.



**TOOL C: PREVIOUS TEST PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION**

Whether a student participated in the alternate assessments in the past should not be a definitive indication that a student should continue to participate in the alternate assessments. Similarly, participation in the general assessment does not necessarily mean that the student should continue to take the general assessment. With extreme caution, then, IEP team members should look at data on test participation and performance.

For every year in which the student was in a tested grade, the IEP team should document and review which test the student took and how the student performed on the test. In cases where a student, year after year, consistently achieves the Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on DLM alternate assessments, it may be necessary to consider whether the alternate assessments, and the limited content assessed in the Essential Elements, is truly appropriate for the student. In these cases, it may be necessary to transition the student to the general assessment in order for the assessment to be ambitiously challenging (Andrew F.).

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Enter the student’s proficiency level or score for each test the student took. Once complete, place a copy in the student’s special education records. **For grade 2 students** who do not have state assessment scores, use their universal screening scores instead.

Grade	Reading/Language Arts		Mathematics		Science	
	DLM/ Alternate Assessment	General/ Universal Screening	DLM/ Alternate Assessment	General/ Universal Screening	DLM/ Alternate Assessment	NGSA/ Science Assessment
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
10						
11						

**STEP 4: DOCUMENT THE DECISION**

**IEP Team Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Documentation Form**

**Directions:** This form should be completed, signed, and attached to the IEP at the time of the student’s annual IEP review along with completed copies of the Intellectual Functioning Rubric, Adaptive Functioning Rubric, and the Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation sheet. Copies of this form, the rubrics, and the test participation documentation sheet should be provided to the family with their copy of the IEP.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

State-Assigned Student ID (SASID): 1000-\_\_\_\_\_ IEP Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the disability that is impacting the student’s cognitive functioning? \_\_\_\_\_

Participation Criteria		
<b>CRITERIA 1:</b> Student meets the definition of having a significant cognitive disability.		
In <b>Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric</b> , is the student’s overall verbal and nonverbal intellectual functioning score 2.5 or more standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower)?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
In <b>Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric</b> is the majority of the evidence in column 4?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>CRITERIA 2:</b> Formative and summative evaluations and data show that the Essential Elements will be challenging for the student.		
In <b>Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Rubric</b> , <i>Learning</i> section, is the majority of evidence in column 3 and 4?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the <b>Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation Form</b> , show that the student is making progress toward the Essential Elements and/or that the Essential Elements are (or will be) challenging to the student?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>CRITERIA 3:</b> The student is unable to generalize daily living and community skills consistently in home, school, and community settings without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports.		
In <b>Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric</b> , is the student’s adaptive behavior scale score 2.5 or more standard deviations below the mean (63 or lower)?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
In <b>Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric</b> , is the majority of evidence in columns 3 and 4?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
In <b>Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric</b> , <i>Daily Living Skills</i> and <i>Community Skills</i> sections, is the majority of evidence in column 3 and 4?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

*\*If any decision is no, the IEP team must follow the instructions on page 22, If the Decision is NO.*

**IEP Team Assurance:** The IEP team has thoroughly discussed the evidence gathered to determine eligibility, completed the Intellectual Functioning Rubric, Adaptive Functioning Rubric, and the Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation sheet and affirms that they followed the processes and procedures outlined in this document.

The IEP team has informed the parent(s) of the implications of their child’s participation in the alternate assessments, namely that:

- Their child’s academic progress towards achievement of the content standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science will be measured using the Essential Elements.

- They understand the graduation options for their child.
- They have been informed of any other implications, including any effects of local policies on the student’s education, resulting from taking an alternate assessment.
- The IEP team *does / does not (circle one)* find this student eligible to participate in the alternate assessments.

Name of LEA Representative (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of LEA Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## IF DECISION IS YES

If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible, they must document their decision using the *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form*, include it with the IEP. An IEP team LEA representative must sign the completed form and a copy must be attached to the IEP, placed in the student's file, and a copy provided to the family. **This must be completed each year at the time of the IEP annual review for students in grades 3 – 11 unless the student is also an MLL student.** If the student is also an MLL student, then this form would need to be completed in grades K-12 in order to take the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. See page 4 of this manual for more details on when eligibility decisions should be made.

---

## IF DECISION IS NO

If the IEP team decides that the student is not eligible, then three things must happen:

1. The student must participate in the state assessments for their current grade level with appropriate accommodations as determined by the IEP team.
2. The student's instruction must be aligned to the Rhode Island Core Standards and NGSS via the general education curriculum. Without access to the general education curriculum, students will not be able to be able to learn the academic skills and knowledge for their grade level which will be assessed through the state assessments.
3. Record of the decision must be recorded on the *Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessments Form*, attached to the IEP and placed in the student's file.

---

## DISAGREEMENT WITH THE DECISION

If the parent or guardian of the student disagrees with the IEP team decision regarding eligibility for the alternate assessments, they have the right to request mediation or initiate a due process hearing as described within the procedural safeguards by visiting the Rhode Island Department of Education webpage "When Schools and Families Disagree" at the address below or by contacting the Rhode Island Department of Education Call Center at 401-222-8999 or email at [ridecallcenter@ride.ri.gov](mailto:ridecallcenter@ride.ri.gov).

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/SpecialEducation/WhenSchoolsandFamiliesDoNotAgree.aspx>

Additionally, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN), a nonprofit organization not affiliated with RIDE, also provides peer mentors to help parents through the IEP process. Any parent who would like access to a mentor can contact RIPIN's resource center at 401-270-0101 and [ripin.org](http://ripin.org). RIPIN does not provide advocates.

## REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

To ensure that students are appropriately identified for the alternate assessments, and to ensure that guidance to the field from RIDE is clear and leads to appropriate identifications, RIDE will review data on eligibility determinations. RIDE will use this data to identify schools and districts that may need additional support and guidance to use the eligibility criteria to make valid and appropriate determinations.

## APPENDIX A: DO NOT USE THESE FACTORS OR DATA TO INFORM AN ELIGIBILITY DECISION.

The following factors are not appropriate to include in decision-making because they do not add to the IEP Team's understanding of what the student knows and can do. While some of the factors listed below make it difficult for a student to come to school ready to engage and learn, these issues should be addressed with staff that have appropriate expertise and experience in these areas.

- **Disability category (or categories).** There is no disability category that is able to predict 100% of a student's cognitive potential. Disability categories alone are not sufficient evidence to determine eligibility for the alternate assessment.
- **Physical capabilities and/or medical needs.** Many students who take the alternate assessments have physical disabilities in addition to cognitive disabilities and some have ongoing and serious medical conditions. It is important to remember that determinations around eligibility for the alternate assessment must be based on the student's *cognitive* ability, not physical ability or any medical issues.
- **Poor attendance or extended absences, for any reason.** Some students have medical conditions that prevent them from attending school regularly enough to receive instruction. While this is recognized as a factor that inhibits a child's exposure to educational experiences, it is not evidence of a child's ability or their potential to learn and must be addressed through the appropriate school resources.
- **Poor performance on the general education academic assessments.** Most students receiving special education services can and do participate in general education assessments with accommodations and other supports. Poor performance on these assessments is not an appropriate factor to use when making an eligibility decision. To consider accommodations and supports available on other state assessments, please refer to the *RISAP Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual*: [www.ride.ri.gov/accommodations](http://www.ride.ri.gov/accommodations).
- **Multi-lingual Learner (MLL) status.** It is important to understand that a student's ability to learn and their knowledge of English are not connected. How well a student understands and speaks English has an impact on his/her ability to learn; however, it does not indicate a learning disability. Alternative methods of understanding what a student knows and can do may need to be investigated depending on the student's English proficiency level. Please contact your district MLL Director for options.
- **Impact of the student's test scores on the accountability score of the school and/or district.** How well or poorly a student may perform on any state assessment may not be used as a deciding factor in determining which assessment is appropriate for a student.
- **Location of special education services in more restrictive settings.** The setting in which a student receives his/her education is not a factor in determining cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. Districts routinely utilize staff with expertise in the challenges of a specific disability, behavior, or mental health issue, either within the school, district, or in another setting. Regardless of where a student accesses specialized care or services, meaningful academic instruction should

always be given to the student. Because of this requirement, the educational placement of a student is not to be used as factor for eligibility.

- **Amount of time receiving special education services.** Students receive special education services in a variety of ways and in varying degrees of intensity. It is more meaningful to consider the type and intensity of the structures and supports the student requires in order to participate academically and socially in their school than it is to consider the number of hours or days a student requires in order to receive appropriate special education services.
- **Variety of services a student receives.** Many students receive a variety of related services that address their physical, behavioral, or other challenges beyond their cognitive ability. The type of services a student receives does not indicate a significant cognitive disability.
- **Behavior issues, including test anxiety.** Behavior challenges can make learning difficult for some students and should be treated appropriately and professionally. Behavior challenges should not be considered when deciding if a student meets the criteria for an alternate assessment as they are not indicators of cognitive ability.
- **Administrator decision.** Under no circumstances is it appropriate for a school, district, or program administrator to unilaterally make an eligibility decision without the full cooperation and consensus of the IEP team, of which the parents or guardians are equal participants, or without following all standard procedures regarding educational decision-making for a student.

## APPENDIX B: FAQ ON COGNITIVE EVALUATIONS

Below are some of the questions around how to handle cognitive evaluations for students who either haven't had any completed or it is difficult to obtain a fully scale IQ.

- **What do we do if we can't get a cognitive score for a student?** Follow these additional guidelines if you have trouble obtaining a cognitive score for a student:
  - You must have norm-referenced evaluations.
  - You can use raw scores from subtests of the norm-referenced evaluations.
  - You can use raw scores from subtests from multiple norm-referenced evaluations to arrive at a complete picture of the student's cognitive ability.
  - The evaluations must meet the recency criteria outlined in our guidance and in the Eligibility Training Course (less than six years old).
  - You **may not** use informal observations, checklists, or parent interviews to complete the cognitive sections of the rubrics.
- **If I use the standard error provided on the evaluations, the student falls below the 63 required for Tool A: Intellectual Functioning rubric. Can I use the standard error to qualify the student for DLM?**  
No, you cannot apply the standard error. Standard error (or confidence intervals) is the range of scores that are possible if the student was evaluated multiple times. This means the student could score lower or higher than the score reported on the evaluation. In other words, the student could move farther away from the required 63.
- **How do I complete Tool A: Intellectual Functioning, for a nonverbal student?**
  - **Tool A:** For nonverbal students, do not complete the **Verbal Intelligence/Cognition** section of the rubric. Document on the rubric that the student is nonverbal. The **Nonverbal Intelligence/Cognition** section of the rubric must be completed using an evaluation appropriate for nonverbal students.
- **What cognitive tests are available for nonverbal students?** There are many options available for nonverbal students. We will have more information and guidance on using scores but here are *some* of the evaluations that were either designed with nonverbal students in mind or that have nonverbal components built in. If your district uses a different test, there is no need to change unless it is inappropriate for the student. If, after using an appropriate cognitive test, a score still cannot be obtained, contact Heather Heineke or Mary Ann Mello to discuss the data you gathered.
  - **Reynolds Adaptable Intelligence Test – Nonverbal (RAIT-NV)** - *Created for use with individuals who do not speak English, those with hearing impairments, individuals unwilling to communicate verbally, or populations with minimal language capabilities.*
  - **Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Second Edition (CTONI-2)** *This is a nonverbal test tool that allows an evaluator to measure general intelligence when that child has barriers in verbal communication. It can be used to evaluate individuals from age 6 to 89 years.*

- **Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Fourth Edition (TONI-4)** – requires no reading, writing, speaking, or listening on the examinee’s part. It is completely non-verbal. Can be used from ages 6 to 89 years of age. Can be administered in 15 to 20 minutes.
- **Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Second Edition (KABC-II)** - This tool measures general intelligence and can be used for students from 3 to 18 years of age. It takes anywhere from 25-55 minutes to administer for the core battery or 35-70 minutes for the core plus additional subtests. A nonverbal option can be used to assess a child whose verbal skills are significantly limited.
- **Leiter International Performance Scale, Third Edition (Leiter-3)** - Offers a completely nonverbal measure of intelligence that is ideal for use with those who are cognitively delayed, non-English speaking, hearing impaired, speech impaired, or on the autism spectrum. This tool can be used for ages 3-75 years to measure intelligence and cognitive abilities. It takes 20-45 minutes to administer.
- **Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test, Second Edition (UNIT2)** – This nonverbal intelligence test can be used for ages 5 years to 21 years. The abbreviated test battery takes only 10 – 15 minutes and there is a standard battery that has an administrations time of 30 minutes. All subtests are nonverbal and require a nonverbal response.
- **Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition (WPPSI-IV)** has nonverbal components.
- **Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Fifth Edition (SB-5)** - This tool is used to assess levels of intelligence across several age spans and ability levels. It takes approximately an hour to complete and looks at 5 areas. Each of the subtests are given in a verbal or non-verbal method to accommodate very young children, even two-year-olds, and non-readers.



**Accommodation:** A change in materials or procedures that provide access during instruction and assessment. Accommodations do not change what is being taught or measured. Assessment accommodations are intended to produce valid results that indicate what a student knows and can do.

**Adaptive behavior:** Behavior that is essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.

**Rhode Island Core State Standards (RICSS):** The Core Standards are a set of content standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics that define what students are expected to learn at each grade in order to leave school ready for college or careers. The Core Standards were developed by teachers, school administrators, and experts, with support from the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

**Extensive direct individualized instruction:** Concentrated instruction designed for and directed toward an individual student. This type of instruction is needed by students with significant cognitive disabilities to acquire knowledge and skills in content. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are likely to need this extensively to apply knowledge and skills in multiple contexts.

**English Language Learner (ELL):** An ELL is a student who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency. An ELL's difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be a barrier to learning in classrooms instructed in English and to performance on assessments presented in English.

**Learning progression:** A learning progression is a description of the way that student learning of skills may develop and build over time.

**Modification:** A change in materials or procedures that may provide access during instruction and assessment, but that also changes the learning expectations in instruction and what an assessment measures. Modifications during instruction may be appropriate on a temporary basis for scaffolding the student's understanding and skills. Assessment modifications result in invalid measures of a student's knowledge and skills and thus should be avoided.

**Pervasive:** Present across academic content areas and across multiple settings (including school, home, and community).

**Substantial Supports:** These include support from the teachers and others (e.g., aides) and various material supports within the student's environment. Examples of substantial supports in instruction include adapting text, using manipulatives and other concrete objects, and extensive scaffolding of content to support learning.

**Substantially adapted materials:** Substantially adapted materials include various classroom and other materials that have been altered in appearance and content from the materials that peers without disabilities use for instruction or assessment.

## **IDEA monitoring (School Support System): Including Alternate Assessment**

RIDE conducts School Support System monitoring reviews in 65 LEAs on a five-six-year cyclical basis. Based on a data review that includes prior School Support System reports and verification, State Performance Plan indicators, dispute resolution and call center information, consolidated resources plans, district and school classifications and report cards, State assessment information including the percentage of students identified as taking alternate assessment and LEA special education structure and support.

Based on this data LEAs are monitored via two levels. Level 1 consists of individual student record reviews\* which include ensuring that the appropriate documentation for alternate assessment has been completed. This includes information from parent interviews and a comprehensive data analysis meeting with the district. Level 2 consists of everything in Level 1 as well as school-based monitoring activities. School-based monitoring activities include on-site monitoring in the schools and interviews with teachers, students (as appropriate) and administrators. Interview questions include questions about the process and policies that the district used to qualify a student for the alternate assessment. Class observations are also built into this schedule.

\*A stratified random selection of records is done through the State's special education census. These records include students who are taking the alternate assessment. Students are selected to be representative of the 13 federal disability categories. RIDE examines LEAs disproportionality data to align with the random sample selection to ensure equity of gender, race, grades and schools in the records selected for review.

**R.I. DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

August 2025

**To:** Director of Outplacement School

**From:** Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

This memo contains information to help outplacement schools implement state policies for administering the Rhode Island State Assessment Program (RISAP). Any Rhode Island district sending a student to an outplacement school either within or outside of Rhode Island must provide this memo to the outplacement school. Rhode Island Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are responsible for ensuring that students participate in the required assessments for their current grade level. The policies and information contained in this memo are also included in the *RISAP Test Coordinator Handbook* (posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/tc](http://www.ride.ri.gov/tc)).

Each of the sections below contains important information for you and your staff to begin to understand which assessments are required, how to stay up to date on RISAP information, how to prepare and administer the RISAP assessments, and how to communicate with RIDE.

If you have questions after you read this memo, please contact the sending LEA or reach out to the RI Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at [assessment@ride.ri.gov](mailto:assessment@ride.ri.gov). All assessment resources for RISAP can be found at [www.ride.ri.gov/tc](http://www.ride.ri.gov/tc).

**Participation in the Rhode Island State Assessment Program.** It is expected that students attending an outplacement school, whose tuition is paid for by a Rhode Island LEA, will participate in the required tests for their current grade level, regardless of where the outplacement school is located.

There are three ways that students participate in our state assessments: by taking the general education assessment either with or without accommodations or by taking the alternate assessment either with or without accommodations.

Below is the Rhode Island State Assessment System policy which describes who is expected to participate in state assessments.

- **Required assessments by grade level:** This chart outlines the required tests for each grade level. You can download the chart at [www.ride.ri.gov/tc](http://www.ride.ri.gov/tc).
- If a student attends an **outplacement school in a state other than Rhode Island**, it is the responsibility of the Rhode Island LEA to ensure that the outplacement school has a plan for administering the required assessments for that student's current grade level.
- **English Learners:** In addition to participating in the required academic assessments for their current grade level, students who are English learners and who are currently receiving, or are eligible for, services are expected to participate in either ACCESS for ELs or Alternate ACCESS for ELs.
  - First Year English Learners are students who have not attended U.S. schools for a cumulative number of 12 months beginning on or after April 1, 2024. These students are exempt from taking English language

**Telephone** (401) 222-4600 **Fax** (401) 222-6178 **TTY** (800) 745-5555 **Voice** (800) 745-6575 **Website:** [www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov)

The R.I. Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability.

arts tests for one year but are still expected to participate in mathematics and science tests, as appropriate, for their current grade level.

- **Alternate Assessment:** Students who qualify for the alternate assessment will participate in the Dynamic Learning Maps alternate assessments for their current grade level in English language arts, mathematics, and science, as appropriate, for their current grade level. If the student is also an English learner, they will also take Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.
  - There is no alternate assessment in the 10th grade; students who qualify for the alternate assessments will not participate in PSAT 10. Students in the tenth grade who are also English learners will take Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.
- **Current Grade Level:**
  - *Current grade level* is defined as the grade level that is recorded in the Enrollment Census by the LEA. RIDE will register the student for all required tests at the grade level recorded in the Enrollment Census. Testing the student at any grade level other than what is recorded in the Enrollment Census may result in test scores being invalidated.
  - *If a student skips a grade level*, the student does not make up tests for skipped grades.
  - *If a student is retained*, the student takes the tests for their current grade level again, even if the student took the test the previous year.
- **How to ensure that students who attend your school are enrolled in the correct grade level.** All outplacement schools can have access to the Outplaced Enrollment application on the RIDE Portal. Follow these steps to get access:
  - Obtain a RIDE Portal account by going to: [portal.ride.gov](http://portal.ride.gov). Click on *Register for an Account*.
  - Once your account is activated, email [assessment@ride.ri.gov](mailto:assessment@ride.ri.gov) and let us know you need access to the Outplaced Enrollment application. We will email you know when the application has been added to your account.
  - When you receive our email, log in to the RIDE portal and click on the “Outplaced Enrollment” icon.
    - Once in the application, click on “Students”. All of the students from Rhode Island who are enrolled in your school will be listed by sending district. Their RI student ID, name, grade level, whether they take the alternate assessment, if they are an English Learner/Multi-lingual Learner, and start/exit dates are shown.
  - To complete the tasks below:
    1. Confirm that all data is accurate for the Rhode Island students in your school.
    2. Make note of any grade level discrepancies.
    3. Compile a list of students as well as the assessment(s) they will be taking in the Spring (RICAS, NGSAs, PSAT 10, SAT or DLM)
    4. Note any students who are flagged for alternate assessment.
    5. Notify the sending district of any missing students, incorrect grade levels, or alternate assessment/EL status.
    6. Confirm all information is accurate once corrected.

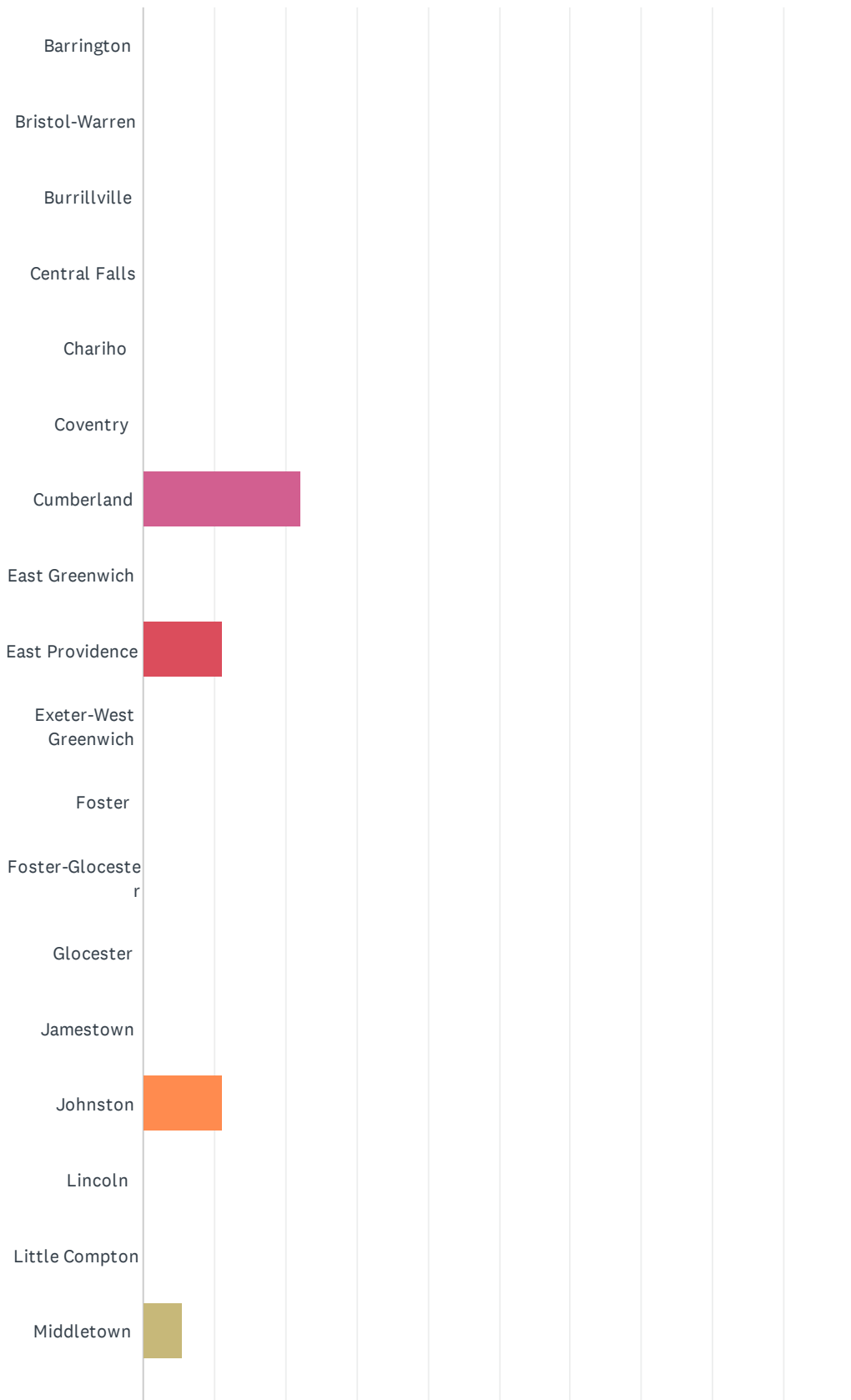
**Preparing to Administer the Rhode Island State Assessment Program (RISAP).** There are several ways to stay up-to-date on information pertaining to RISAP. We encourage anyone in your school involved with RI state assessments to take advantage of these opportunities:

- **Test Coordinator Listserv:** The assessment team sends out a memo every two weeks to anyone who is involved in preparing for or administering the state assessments. To be added to this list, please email the assessment team at [assessment@ride.ri.gov](mailto:assessment@ride.ri.gov).
- **Alternate Assessment Listserv:** If your school also administers the alternate assessment to Rhode Island students in your school, please email [alternate.assessment@ride.ri.gov](mailto:alternate.assessment@ride.ri.gov).
- **Test Coordinator Monthly Webinars:** Register for and participate in monthly test coordinator webinars at [Registration \(gotowebinar.com\)](http://Registration.gotowebinar.com).

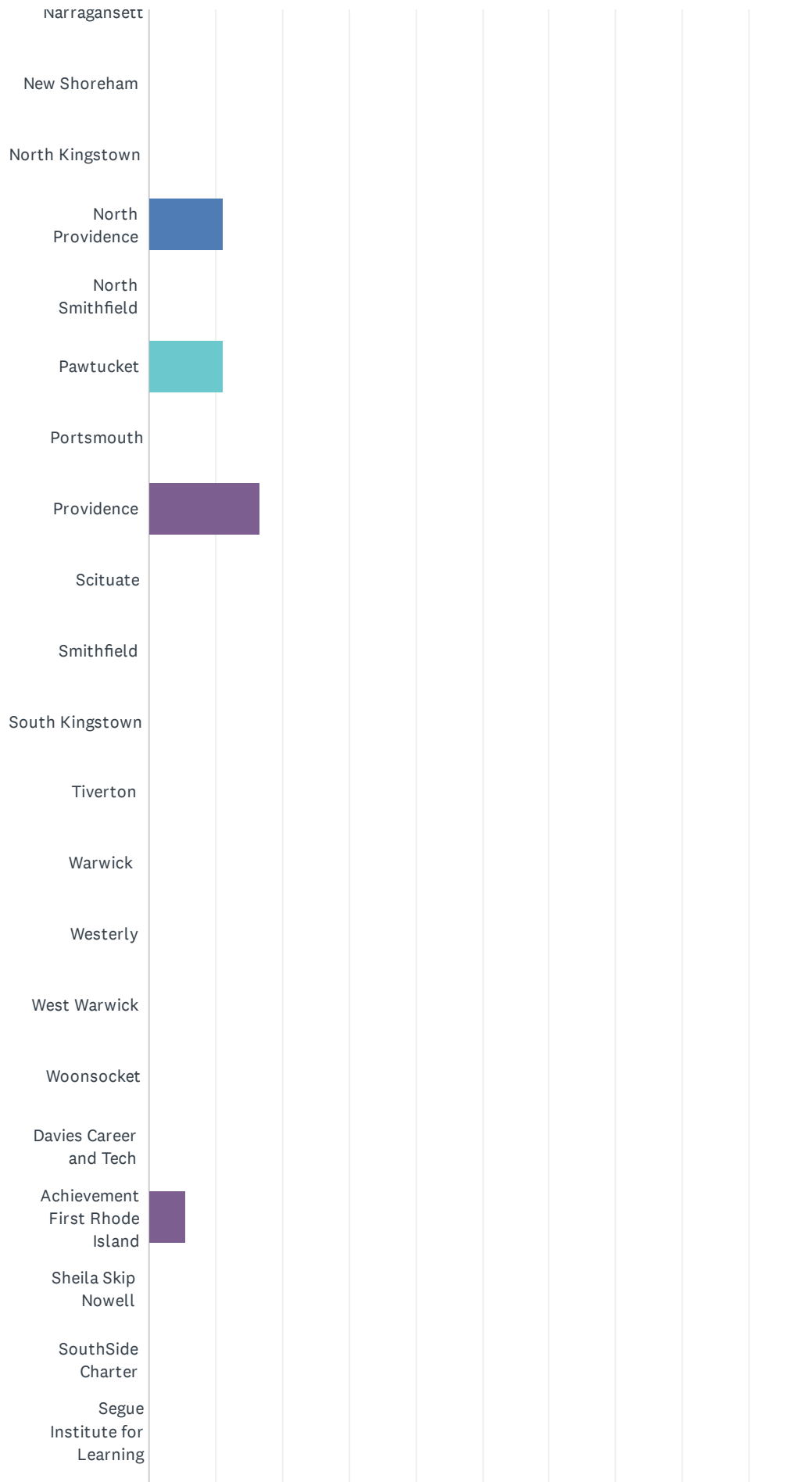
- Test Coordinator Training Opportunities: All test coordinator and test administrators are required to participate in training for the assessments they will be administering in their school. A calendar of all training opportunities, including registration links and requirements for each state assessment, is available at [www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training).
- Master School and District Directory: It is important the information about your school is accurate. We use this information to create accounts in the test platforms. To get access to the directory for your school, please contact Mario Goncalves at [mario.goncalves@ride.ri.gov](mailto:mario.goncalves@ride.ri.gov).

# Q1 Please select your district from the drop-down box.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



# Alternate Assessments: One Percent Waiver Feedback Form 2024-25



# Alternate Assessments: One Percent Waiver Feedback Form 2024-25





Alternate Assessments: One Percent Waiver Feedback Form 2024-25

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Barrington	0.00%	0
Bristol-Warren	0.00%	0
Burrillville	0.00%	0
Central Falls	0.00%	0
Chariho	0.00%	0
Coventry	0.00%	0
Cumberland	22.22%	4
East Greenwich	0.00%	0
East Providence	11.11%	2
Exeter-West Greenwich	0.00%	0
Foster	0.00%	0
Foster-Glocester	0.00%	0
Glocester	0.00%	0
Jamestown	0.00%	0
Johnston	11.11%	2
Lincoln	0.00%	0
Little Compton	0.00%	0
Middletown	5.56%	1
Narragansett	0.00%	0
New Shoreham	0.00%	0
North Kingstown	0.00%	0
North Providence	11.11%	2
North Smithfield	0.00%	0
Pawtucket	11.11%	2
Portsmouth	0.00%	0
Providence	16.67%	3
Scituate	0.00%	0
Smithfield	0.00%	0
South Kingstown	0.00%	0
Tiverton	0.00%	0
Warwick	0.00%	0
Westerly	0.00%	0

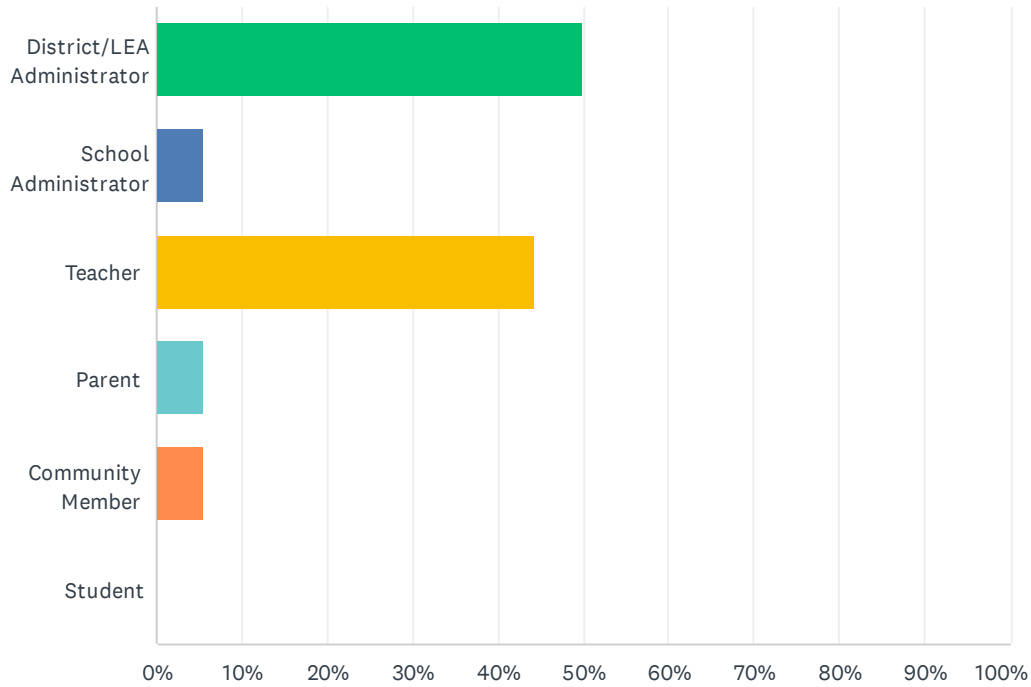
Alternate Assessments: One Percent Waiver Feedback Form 2024-25

West Warwick	0.00%	0
Woonsocket	0.00%	0
Davies Career and Tech	0.00%	0
Achievement First Rhode Island	5.56%	1
Sheila Skip Nowell	0.00%	0
SouthSide Charter	0.00%	0
Segue Institute for Learning	0.00%	0
Blackstone Valley Prep	0.00%	0
Highlander Charter	0.00%	0
Urban Collaborative	0.00%	0
Rhode Island School for the Deaf	5.56%	1
Paul Cuffee Charter School	0.00%	0
Kingston Hill Academy	0.00%	0
Blackstone Academy	0.00%	0
The Compass School	0.00%	0
Learning Community	0.00%	0
MET Career and Tech	0.00%	0
Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts	0.00%	0
The Greene School	0.00%	0
Rhode Island Nurses Institute	0.00%	0
Village Green Virtual	0.00%	0
The Hope Academy	0.00%	0
Nuestro Mundo Public Charter	0.00%	0
Providence Preparatory Charter	0.00%	0
Excel Academy Rhode Island	0.00%	0
YouthBuild Preparatory Academy	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18</b>

#	IF YOUR DISTRICT IS NOT LISTED, PLEASE ENTER IT HERE:	DATE
1	Groden Center	11/26/2024 1:59 PM

## Q2 Title or role:

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

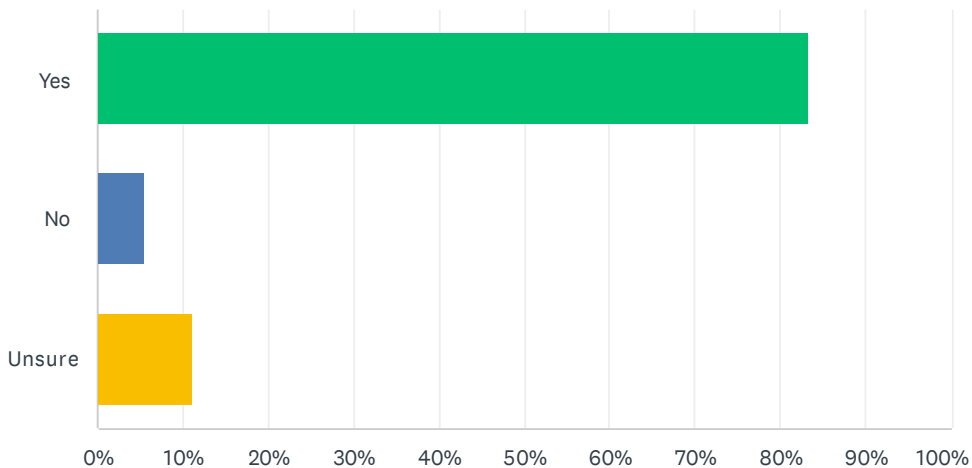


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
District/LEA Administrator	50.00% 9
School Administrator	5.56% 1
Teacher	44.44% 8
Parent	5.56% 1
Community Member	5.56% 1
Student	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 18	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Lead Teacher	12/18/2024 10:33 AM
2	School Psychologist	11/27/2024 5:39 PM

**Q3 Do you agree with the waiver and the plan and timeline (posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent)) that Rhode Island is seeking for exceeding the one percent threshold for the DLM alternate assessments?**

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	83.33%	15
No	5.56%	1
Unsure	11.11%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18</b>

## Q4 Please share any additional comments you have in the box below.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 8

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None at this time.	12/18/2024 10:20 AM
2	The existing criteria does not provide clear guidance on qualifying students for DLM when they are not able to successfully complete the WISC to obtain a verbal reasoning score. This has resulted in non-verbal students with significant disabilities being required to participate in RICAS.	12/17/2024 9:23 PM
3	The state needs to trust education professionals in the determination of eligibility for alternate assessment, particularly at the LEA level. Many LEAs, especially charter schools, do not educate students with severe and profound developmental disabilities, so they will never exceed 1% in their LEA. Traditional public school districts educate significantly higher numbers of students with severe and profound developmental disabilities, so there needs to be an understanding that these LEAs will always, by necessity exceed 1%. If the state forces LEAs to meet an arbitrary 1% threshold, students with significant needs will be misplaced in regular assessment classrooms and we will be doing a disservice to these students and families.	12/12/2024 8:52 AM
4	I agree with the waiver. However, I strongly disagree with the plan and the current format for determining who is eligible for the alternate assessment. The rubric themselves are fine. However, the process for determining eligibility uses an artificially low score number in both adaptive and cognitive scores and requires disruptive testing of students with critical learning needs. The tool that is used to interpret the rubric is flawed. Very flawed. Instead of considering the overall answers to the rubric - they say if you get one yes in 3 specific areas (instead of no) it automatically rules out the alternate assessment. This takes the decision away from the IEP team (thereby depriving parents of their rights) and determine eligibility by a form rather than a consideration of the individual student's strengths and needs. There also needs to be a discussion about 1%. 1% of 10,000 students is 100 students which seems reasonable. However, if you have a district of 200 students you could only have 2 students with alternate assessment. And yet, there may be more students living in that area who have the need. While on a state level the 1% cutoff makes sense, on smaller populations it is unnecessarily restrictive.	12/10/2024 10:52 AM
5	N/a	12/10/2024 10:45 AM
6	As a special education director, I'm encouraged to see Rhode Island's thoughtful approach in this waiver request. The state's revised eligibility criteria and new online training course address many of the practical challenges we face when making alternate assessment decisions. The addition of school psychologists, LEA representatives, and related service providers to required training participants will strengthen our IEP teams' decision-making process. I particularly appreciate that RIDE has committed to providing targeted support through their tiered monitoring system rather than just mandating compliance. Their plan to help districts analyze grade-level identification patterns and review eligibility decisions for specific disability categories (like students classified as SLD or OHI) provides practical guidance we can use to improve our processes. The new statewide definition of significant cognitive disabilities and required documentation forms will help create consistency across districts. The data showing reduced alternate assessment participation (175 fewer students identified) demonstrates these changes are having an impact without being overly restrictive. Their attention to participation rates and commitment to support districts in reaching the 95% threshold through clearer testing windows and make-up periods shows they understand our operational challenges. The additional focus on testing students in out-of-district placements is also helpful. This feels like a partnership approach rather than just a compliance exercise. Looking forward to utilizing their expanded technical assistance to better serve our students.	12/6/2024 12:59 PM
7	It is extremely hard for students who have been alternately assessed for most of their school career to now qualify for alternate assessment. It is unfair to current high school students who have always been alternately assessed to now be expected to take classes aligned to the	12/4/2024 1:24 PM

## Alternate Assessments: One Percent Waiver Feedback Form 2024-25

common core as opposed to the DLM. This will cause unnecessary stress and anxiety to the students, parents, and teachers. It is also unfair to expect the student to complete PSATs and SATs instead of the DLM assessment.

8	Concerned about students who have always qualified for Alternate Assessment being expected to take PSATs and SATs at the high school level Concerned about graduation requirements starting with current 9th graders being expected to take classes aligned with Common Core such as Alg I, Geometry, and Alg II ( even with modifications) when they have been following DLM standards Concerned that such changes will increase students' current levels of anxiety, which may increase behaviors, both short term and long term	12/4/2024 1:24 PM
9	We are doing wrong by students who meet criteria for intellectual disability but no longer qualify for alternate assessment. The criteria is too strict and this is going to have a significant impact on students who cannot access core curriculum or even effectively access RICAS due to their disability. We are assessing them on skills they don't have and this will be detrimental to their educational future.	11/27/2024 6:40 PM
10	I'm not sure where the 1% was derived from, but looking at base rates and looking at research on the incidence of certain disabilities, I'm not sure the 1% is actually an empirically derived number. This is, however, a federal issue. Not all of the students who need alternate assessment are classic intellectual disability kids. Some of them are students with ASD who have spike skills and are not low in all areas. A lot of these cases where there are spike skills, the spike skills are not in useful skills that will help one participate in assessments. Just because someone has some non-verbal skills in visual spatial or fluid reasoning skills doesn't mean that they can understand any of the instructions or answer any of the questions on the RICAS. In many cases, they have average skills (100's) in these areas but significantly delayed skills in the 40's in other areas. Even with these average skills, they struggle so significantly in day to day life because of the skills that are extremely significantly impacted.	11/27/2024 5:39 PM

## ***RIDE responses to comments provided in the survey.***

Q4 Please share any additional comments you have in the box below.

---

**COMMENT:** None at this time.

---

**COMMENT:** The existing criteria do not provide clear guidance on qualifying students for DLM when they are not able to successfully complete the WISC to obtain a verbal reasoning score. This has resulted in non-verbal students with significant disabilities being required to participate in RICAS.

**RIDE RESPONSE:** RIDE has published a list of appropriate evaluation tools for students who either cannot communicate verbally or have difficulty doing so. This guidance is provided in the back of the IEP Team guidance document and at [www.ride.ri.gov/dlm](http://www.ride.ri.gov/dlm). RIDE does not require the WISC, or any other specific evaluation tool. We expect that school psychologists will investigate different evaluation tools to find the best fit for the student's communication abilities.

---

**COMMENT:** The state needs to trust education professionals in the determination of eligibility for alternate assessment, particularly at the LEA level. Many LEAs, especially charter schools, do not educate students with severe and profound developmental disabilities, so they will never exceed 1% in their LEA. Traditional public school districts educate significantly higher numbers of students with severe and profound developmental disabilities, so there needs to be an understanding that these LEAs will always, by necessity exceed 1%. If the state forces LEAs to meet an arbitrary 1% threshold, students with significant needs will be misplaced in regular assessment classrooms and we will be doing a disservice to these students and families.

**RIDE RESPONSE:** The goal for providing more objective criteria for the alternate assessment is to ensure that students receive appropriate and challenging instruction and access to as much of the general curriculum as possible. RIDE is not "forcing" LEAs to meet the 1% threshold but rather requiring that LEAs use the criteria appropriately in order to make evidence-based decisions to ensure that all students receive the most appropriate education.

---

**COMMENT:** I agree with the waiver. However, I strongly disagree with the plan and the current format for determining who is eligible for the alternate assessment. The rubric themselves are fine. However, the process for determining eligibility uses an artificially low score number in both adaptive and cognitive scores and requires disruptive testing of students with critical learning needs. The tool that is used to interpret the rubric is flawed. Very flawed. Instead of considering the overall answers to the rubric - they say if you get one yes in 3 specific areas (instead of no) it automatically rules out the alternate assessment. This takes the decision away from the IEP team (thereby depriving parents of their rights) and determine eligibility by a form rather than a consideration of the individual student's strengths and needs. There also needs to be a discussion about 1%. 1% of 10,000 students is 100 students which seems reasonable. However, if you have a district of 200 students you could only have 2 students with alternate assessment. And yet, there may be more students living in that area who have the need. While on a state level the 1% cutoff makes sense, on smaller populations it is unnecessarily restrictive.

**RIDE RESPONSE:** The cut scores for the adaptive and cognitive evaluations are based on what other states are using for their criteria and what are in the very low range for cognitive ability. RIDE also worked with four LEAs to develop the criteria and the cut scores for the cognitive and adaptive sections of the rubric. The alternate assessment is designed for students with *significant cognitive* disabilities

---

---

and these cut points are one way to ensure that students meet the definition of a student with a significant cognitive disability.

---

**COMMENT:** N/a

---

**COMMENT:** As a special education director, I'm encouraged to see Rhode Island's thoughtful approach in this waiver request. The state's revised eligibility criteria and new online training course address many of the practical challenges we face when making alternate assessment decisions. The addition of school psychologists, LEA representatives, and related service providers to required training participants will strengthen our IEP teams' decision-making process. I particularly appreciate that RIDE has committed to providing targeted support through their tiered monitoring system rather than just mandating compliance. Their plan to help districts analyze grade-level identification patterns and review eligibility decisions for specific disability categories (like students classified as SLD or OHI) provides practical guidance we can use to improve our processes. The new statewide definition of significant cognitive disabilities and required documentation forms will help create consistency across districts. The data showing reduced alternate assessment participation (175 fewer students identified) demonstrates these changes are having an impact without being overly restrictive. Their attention to participation rates and commitment to support districts in reaching the 95% threshold through clearer testing windows and make-up periods shows they understand our operational challenges. The additional focus on testing students in out-of-district placements is also helpful. This feels like a partnership approach rather than just a compliance exercise. Looking forward to utilizing their expanded technical assistance to better serve our students.

---

**COMMENT:** It is extremely hard for students who have been alternately assessed for most of their school career to now qualify for alternate assessment. It is unfair to current high school students who have always been alternately assessed to now be expected to take classes aligned to the common core as opposed to the DLM. This will cause unnecessary stress and anxiety to the students, parents, and teachers. It is also unfair to expect the student to complete PSATs and SATs instead of the DLM assessment.

**RIDE RESPONSE:** Although students may no longer be eligible for the alternate assessment, their disabilities have not changed. They should continue to receive appropriate instruction and programming according to their IEP. A change in eligibility for alternate assessment may not equate to a change in placement and IEP teams are advised to review how the student will receive instruction in the grade level curriculum in the least restrictive environment.

---

**COMMENT:** Concerned about students who have always qualified for Alternate Assessment being expected to take PSATs and SATs at the high school level. Concerned about graduation requirements starting with current 9th graders being expected to take classes aligned with Common Core such as Alg I, Geometry, and Alg II (even with modifications) when they have been following DLM standards. Concerned that such changes will increase students' current levels of anxiety, which may increase behaviors, both short term and long term.

**RIDE RESPONSE:** Although students may no longer be eligible for the alternate assessment, their disabilities have not changed. They should continue to receive appropriate instruction and programming according to their IEP. A change in eligibility for alternate assessment may not equate to a change in placement and IEP teams are advised to review how the student will receive instruction in the grade level curriculum in the least restrictive environment.

---



---

**COMMENT:** We are doing wrong by students who meet criteria for intellectual disability but no longer qualify for alternate assessment. The criteria is too strict and this is going to have a significant impact on students who cannot access core curriculum or even effectively access RICAS due to their disability. We are assessing them on skills they don't have, and this will be detrimental to their educational future.

**RIDE RESPONSE:** Although students may no longer be eligible for the alternate assessment, their disabilities have not changed. They should continue to receive appropriate instruction and programming according to their IEP. A change in eligibility for alternate assessment may not equate to a change in placement and IEP teams are advised to review how the student will receive instruction in the grade level curriculum in the least restrictive environment.

---

**COMMENT:** I'm not sure where the 1% was derived from but looking at base rates and looking at research on the incidence of certain disabilities, I'm not sure the 1% is actually an empirically derived number. This is, however, a federal issue. Not all of the students who need alternate assessment are classic intellectual disability kids. Some of them are students with ASD who have spike skills and are not low in all areas. A lot of these cases where there are spike skills, the spike skills are not in useful skills that will help one participate in assessments. Just because someone has some non-verbal skills in visual spatial or fluid reasoning skills doesn't mean that they can understand any of the instructions or answer any of the questions on the RICAS. In many cases, they have average skills (100's) in these areas but significantly delayed skills in the 40's in other areas. Even with these average skills, they struggle so significantly in day to day life because of the skills that are extremely significantly impacted.

**RIDE RESPONSE:** Students with spike skills, and average skills, who still struggle should be receiving appropriate instruction in those areas according to their IEP. The alternate assessment was not developed for students with average skills but for students with significant cognitive disabilities who have substantial deficits in all areas.

---