



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Eric G. Mackey
State Superintendent of Education
Alabama State Department of Education
50 North Ripley Street
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36104

Dear Superintendent Mackey:

I am writing in response to the Alabama State Department of Education's (ALSDE's) request on December 3, 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). ALSDE requested this waiver because, based on State data for the 2023-2024 school year, ALSDE concluded that it may exceed the 1.0 percent cap on AA-AAAS in reading/language arts (R/LA), mathematics, and science in the 2024-2025 school year.

After carefully considering ALSDE's request, I am declining to exercise my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA for a one-year waiver (the 2024-2025 school year) of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) in mathematics and science. I am declining the request for R/LA, mathematics, and science because ALSDE has not met the requirement in ESEA section 8401(b)(1)(C) to describe how the waiver will advance student academic achievement in R/LA, mathematics and science; nor has it demonstrated progress in implementing a plan to reduce rates of AA-AAAS participation in those subjects.

Because the State did not meet the requirements for a waiver of the 1.0 percent cap on AA-AAAS participation in R/LA, mathematics, and science, the Department is maintaining the existing condition on ALSDE's Title I, Part A grant award until the State assesses less than 1.0 percent of students on the AA-AAAS. If the State fails to make progress reducing the AA-AAAS participation rate in future years, the Department may take additional action.

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 continue to publish your State's plan, timeline, and progress in reducing the percentage of students taking the 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.

If ALSDE can demonstrate that the rate of participation on the AA-AAAS has in fact declined, and how granting this waiver would contribute to improved student achievement, ALSDE may revise its request, consistent with section 8401(b)(4)(B)(ii) of the ESEA, to meet the requirements under 8401(b)(1)(C) and (F) and 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(ii). The revised request must be submitted no later than 60 days from the date of this letter.

I appreciate the work you are doing to improve Alabama'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.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ruth E. Ryder
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs
and Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Maggie Hicks, ALSDE Director of Student Assessment

2024-2025



Alabama State Department of Education

ONE PERCENT WAIVER REQUEST

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS,
MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE

Table of Contents

ALABAMA ONE-PERCENT WAIVER REQUEST 2024-2025	3
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE	3
FOR ALABAMA TO BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A 1.0 PERCENT CAP WAIVER IT MUST FULFILL THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS:	4
COMPONENT 1- PUBLIC COMMENT	4
COMPONENT 2- SUBMISSION OF WAIVER TIMELINE	4
COMPONENT 3- 2023-2024 DATA	5
COMPONENT 3A- PARTICIPATION RATES BY SUBGROUP	5
COMPONENT 3B- OVERALL RATES OF ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION	7
COMPONENT 3C- HISTORICAL AA-AAAS RATES BY SUBJECT AND YEAR.....	8
COMPONENT 4- STATE ASSURANCES.....	9
COMPONENT 4A- LEA COMPLIANCE OF THE GUIDELINES	9
COMPONENT 4B- LEAS WILL ADDRESS ANY DISPROPORTIONALITY.....	10
COMPONENT 5- JUSTIFICATION OF THE NEED TO EXCEED THE 1.0 PERCENT CAP BY LEAS	12
COMPONENT 6 ALABAMA’S PLAN AND TIMELINE	13
ALABAMA’S PLAN	13
COMPONENT 6A- IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE’S GUIDELINES.....	13
ALABAMA’S DEFINITION OF STUDENTS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY	14
COMPONENT 6B- ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT.....	14
TIERED LEVELS OF SUPPORT BASED ON PERCENTAGE OVER THE 1.0 PERCENT CAP	18
THE FIVE LARGEST LEAS	19
COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING OF LEAS	19
STUDENT PARTICIPATION JUSTIFICATION MONITORING	20
COMPONENT 6C- DISPROPORTIONALITY FOR SPECIFIC SUBGROUPS	20
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS	21
ENGLISH LEARNERS.....	21
STUDENTS FROM MAJOR AND ETHNIC GROUPS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	22
ALABAMA’S TIMELINE	23
APPENDIX 1	25
ARTIFACTS OF OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT FOR LEAS	25
APPENDIX 2	31
EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS FOR ALABAMA THROUGH THE DECLINE IN THE RATE OF INCREASE IN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION	31
APPENDIX 3	34
2024-2025 ONE PERCENT DISTRICT JUSTIFICATION QUESTIONS.....	34
APPENDIX 4	37
PRIMARY EXCEPTIONALITIES OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT.....	37
APPENDIX 5	38
DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE COURSE OF STUDY COMPANION DOCUMENT TRAINING IMPACT DATA.....	38
APPENDIX 6	40
DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT DEEPER DIVE OF ASSURANCES QUESTIONS	40
APPENDIX 7	44



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT TIER CHECKLISTS	44
APPENDIX 8	47
ALTERNATE TESTED STUDENTS-PERCENTAGE FOR MULTIPLE YEARS FOR ALL LEAs	47
APPENDIX 9	52
2024-2025 PROJECTED ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION	52
APPENDIX 10.....	55
ALABAMA PARTICIPATION RATES PER SUBJECT	55
APPENDIX 11.....	56
QUESTIONS FOR PROBING CROSS-STATE COLLABORATION ON THE DEFINITION OF A STUDENT WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY	56





Alabama One-Percent Waiver Request 2024-2025

English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science

With the passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015, which amended the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965 (ESEA), a State may not assess more than 1.0 percent of students with an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) in the grades assessed (ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)). The ESSA requires state education agencies (SEAs) to submit waiver requests to the United States Department of Education (USDOE) if more than 1.0 percent of students will participate in the alternate assessment.

Based on the analysis of enrollment data for Alabama students eligible to take the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards for the SY 2024-2025, Alabama anticipates that it will exceed the 1.0 percent cap outlined under [34 CFR §200.6\(c\)\(2\)](#) for the subjects of English language arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science for which assessments are administered under [34 CFR §200.2\(a\)\(1\)](#).

Under [34 CFR §200.6\(c\)\(4\)](#), the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is requesting a waiver for the cap outlined in [34 CFR §200.6\(c\)\(2\)](#) for the subjects of ELA, Mathematics, and Science for SY 2024-2025 on the alternate assessment.

Alabama's request for a waiver for SY 2023-2024 was declined. The ALSDE has referenced the previous waiver request, feedback received from the USDOE, and current data to submit this waiver request for SY 2024-2025. This waiver request shows evidence that:

- Alabama continues to meet the requirements outlined in [34 CFR §200.6](#) in providing guidance and support to local education agencies (LEAs) to infer competence in students, while leveraging individualized supports, appropriate accommodations, and inclusive practices while understanding the appropriate decision making for all students.
- Alabama provided details related to the SY 2023-2024 1.0 percent waiver request by providing artifact documents, training tools, and participation data ([APPENDIX 1](#)).
- Alabama has demonstrated additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight concerning [34 CFR § 200.6\(c\)\(4\)\(iii\)\(B\)](#), specifically addressing the subgroups of students as referenced in [ESEA Section 1111\(c\)\(2\)\(A\) economically disadvantaged students; \(B\) students from major racial and ethnic groups; \(D\) English learners](#) through the [Disproportionality](#) section of this request and throughout the supports provided.
- Alabama's rate of growth in alternate participation across the state is slowly declining year to year ([APPENDIX 2](#)).



For Alabama to be eligible to receive a 1.0 percent cap waiver it must fulfill the following components:

Component 1- Public Comment

Each new request and each extension request for a waiver of the 1.0 percent cap on AA-AAAS participation must be made per ESEA section 8401(b)(3), which explains that a State must provide the public and any interested LEA in the State with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment and provide input on the entire waiver/waiver extension request, in the manner in which the State customarily provides similar notice and opportunity to comment to the public.

The ALSDE will notify the public and any interested local educational agency (LEA) of the public comment review period through a media release memo. The Alabama 1.0 Percent Waiver Request 2024-2025 for ELA, Mathematics, and Science will be posted in complete draft format to the Public Comments Page on the Alabama Achieves State Website. The direct link to this location is <https://www.alabamaachieves.org/public-comment-page/>. The public comment period dates for posting the 1.0 Percent Waiver request are December 16, 2024, through January 10, 2025. The department will evaluate all public comments, and then provide the final waiver request to the USDOE.

Any questions and/or concerns about the waiver request will be emailed to studentassessment@alsde.edu. The ALSDE 1.0 Percent Team will consider all questions and concerns provided towards the final One Percent Waiver Request sent to the USDOE. A copy of the questions and concerns and how they were applied to the final version can be obtained upon request by emailing studentassessment@alsde.edu.

Component 2- Submission of Waiver Timeline

States are required in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(i) to submit their AA-AAAS waiver request (or extension request) at least 90 days before the start of the relevant subject testing windows.

Alabama's assessment window for the *ACAP Alternate* opens on March 3, 2025. To meet this component, 90 days before the start of the window is December 2, 2024. The ALSDE will submit a draft request waiver to the USDOE by December 2, 2024.



Component 3- 2023-2024 Data

States are required in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(ii) to submit data showing the number and percentage of students in each subgroup of students who took AA-AAAS in each required subject.

Component 3a- Participation Rates by Subgroup

In reference to 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(ii), which requires that States demonstrate that they have assessed at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of all students with disabilities in each required subject.

Alabama is requesting a waiver in the subjects of ELA, Mathematics, and Science. The number and percentage of students in each student group (race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage status, English learner status) who took the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards during SY 2023-2024 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver is displayed in **Table 1: AA-AAAS Participation Rates by Subgroup for SY 2023-2024**, below.

Group	Total Number in Grades 3-8 and HS	Number Taking AA-AAAS in Grades 3-8 and HS	Percent Taking AA-AAAS in Grades 3-8 and HS
R/LA			
All Students	375237	5209	1.39
Hispanic	43650	488	1.12
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3207	23	0.72
Asian	5937	91	1.53
Black	117604	2138	1.82
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	438	12	2.74
White	191057	2297	1.20
Two of More Races	13260	159	1.20
Male	19208	3481	1.81
Female	18313	1728	0.94
English Learner	24335	222	0.91
Economically Disadvantaged	242072	4116	1.70
Mathematics			
All Students	376845	5200	1.38
Hispanic	44223	487	1.10
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3217	23	0.71
Asian	5984	91	1.52
Black	118030	2134	1.81
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	440	12	2.73
White	191571	2293	1.20
Two of More Races	13290	159	1.20



Male	193316	3472	1.80
Female	183514	1728	0.94
English Learner	24931	222	0.89
Economically Disadvantaged	243099	4109	1.69
Science			
All Students	159925	2214	1.38
Hispanic	18364	199	1.08
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1379	*	0.58
Asian	2538	36	1.42
Black	49834	917	1.84
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	188	*	1.06
White	82219	989	1.20
Two of More Races	5354	63	1.18
Male	81783	1492	1.82
Female	78127	722	0.92
English Learner	9758	89	0.91
Economically Disadvantaged	100282	1748	1.74

*Less than 10.



Component 3b- Overall Rates of Assessment Participation

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 2023-2024 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver (see 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(ii)(B)).

Alabama follows the federal participation requirements for assessments and requires all students enrolled in public schools to be assessed with the general assessment, the general assessment with accommodations, or with an alternate assessment. Chapter 290-4-2-.01 (5) of the *State Board of Education Administrative Code*, Student Assessment, states, "All students must be provided the opportunity to participate in the state testing program."

In *Table 2: Overall Rates of Assessment Participation for SY 2023-2024*, Alabama demonstrates that it has assessed at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of all students with disabilities in each required subject.

<i>Table 2: Overall Rates of Assessment Participation for SY 2023-2024</i>		
Group/R/LA	All Students in Grades 3-8 and High School R/LA	Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8 and High School R/LA
Students Assessed	375237	55562
Students Enrolled	380401	56891
Assessment Participation Rate	98.64%	97.66%
Group/Math	All Students in Grades 3-8 and High School Math	Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8 and High School Math
Students Assessed	376845	55961
Students Enrolled	380701	56890
Assessment Participation Rate	98.99%	98.37%
Group/Science	All Students in Grades 3-8 and High School Science	Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8 and High School Science
Students Assessed	159925	22070
Students Enrolled	162366	22603
Assessment Participation Rate	98.50%	97.64%



Component 3c- Historical AA-AAAS Rates by Subject and Year

AA-AAAS participation rates for SYs 2017-2018 through 2023-2024 (including estimates for SY 2024-2025, if available) in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver.

As shown in **Table 3: AA-AAAS Rates by Subject, by Year**, Alabama has exceeded the 1.0 percent cap on participation in the state alternate assessment for the five most recent years of state testing. This percentage was not calculated for SY 2019-2020, as state testing was halted in the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since resuming state testing in SY 2020-2021, the number of students participating in the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards has increased. It is important to note that the needs of students coming back to school after the pandemic have risen as well. The differential needs of students resulting from the distress of having their lives stopped required careful, individualized support from educators to transition back into normalcy after the pandemic. Across Alabama and the nation, teacher retention is a consistent issue. The lack of educators in the field also impairs student performance and research-based strategies being used with students with diverse needs.

School Year	R/LA	Mathematics	Science
2017-2018	1.25%	1.25%	1.27%
2018-2019	1.26%	1.26%	1.26%
2020-2021	1.23%	1.23%	1.24%
2021-2022	1.26%	1.26%	1.26%
2022-2023	1.35%	1.34%	1.34%
2023-2024	1.39%	1.38%	1.38%
2024-2025 (estimate)	1.40%	1.40%	1.38%

In an effort to increase rigor and improve outcomes for all students, a contributing factor to the increase of students who participate on the alternate achievement standards/assessment may be due to the implementation of the new 2019 Mathematics Course of Study and 2021 English Language Arts Course of Study. Due to the newly adopted standards, LEAs may be considering the standards to be too rigorous for some students.

Through extensive companion documents, exposure to strategies, coaching, and training the ALSDE has been able to help educators differentiate instruction for all levels of students while also defining progress for each student individually with the newly adopted ELA and Mathematics standards. Now that the standards have been implemented for several years, teachers are better supported to differentiate for all students, therefore IEP Teams are making decisions from a different vantage point for each student.

As the ALSDE is improving guidelines and support to administrators and the teaching field in meeting the needs of all students, the ALSDE is seeing a small but downward trend in the rate of increase in the participation rate of students taking the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards. While the number is estimated to be increasing again for the SY 2024-2025, the ALSDE invites the USDOE to consider the rate



of growth comparatively ([APPENDIX 2](#)) over the last few years. In looking at the rate of increase in the participation of students on the alternate assessment, the rate of increase was 0.09% for ELA from SY 2021-2022 compared to SY 2022-2023. This shows that there was a significant jump in participation. Looking over the following years, the ALSDE’s belief is that efforts in providing state guidance and support are slowing the rate of increase of students participating on the alternate assessment.

Component 4- State Assurances

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:

Component 4a- LEA Compliance of the Guidelines

Followed the State’s guidelines for participation in the AA-AAAS.

Alabama assures compliance with the ALSDE guidance is at the forefront of the activities and plan for this waiver request. The plan and timeline are to be a graduated compliance check that will provide the needed information for the ALSDE to make individualized LEA decisions as required to non-compliance with the guidelines. The ALSDE’s assurance of compliance is informed by the following four distinct parts.

Foundation toward Compliance

The foundation and trajectory of compliance begins with the annual universal support webinar. The webinar is an overview of the ALSDE guidelines and policies. The foundational information includes the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability as well as information on utilizing the [Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the ACAP Alternate Assessment and Alternate Achievement Standards](#) document to guide discussions and decisions. This universal opportunity also allows LEAs to see a glimpse into the activities and work required of those LEAs that are over and deter them from not following all guidelines and procedures in the future.

Justifications toward Compliance

Through the annual completion of the District Justification, the ALSDE verifies compliance when the LEA answers questions related to guidance that will be provided. The justifications are completed annually by districts over the 1.0 percent cap. The ALSDE 1.0 Percent Team creates specific questions directed toward compliance factors that arose as the ALSDE monitored data or provided training over the previous school year. For SY 2024-2025 justification form, the specific questions coordinated with state guidance and support are marked with the words ***Guidance and Compliance*** of [APPENDIX 3](#).



Self-Assessment toward Compliance

This year, the ALSDE implemented a Self-Assessment process. This process involves an internal 1.0 Percent LEA Team that conducts a deep dive into ALSDE provided [guided questions](#) about LEA's policies, procedures, and practices. This process is required of the LEAs identified in Tier 3 of the tiered approach.

Monitoring toward Compliance

The Special Education Services (SES) [monitoring system](#) desk-audit and [student participation monitoring](#) approaches help the ALSDE see specific documents that provide assurances of LEAs guidelines and practices are being followed, utilized, or misunderstood by LEAs to provide the opportunity to retrain and support the LEA and students.

Component 4b- LEAs Will Address Any Disproportionality

LEAs will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any student group taking the AA-AAAS.

The [2024-2025 District Justification Form](#) requires LEAs to answer guiding questions concerning identifying students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and some specific to the identification of specific subgroups of students. Each LEA will examine the data to understand better the population of students enrolled within their schools with an emphasis on the students who will be participating on the *ACAP Alternate*. Each LEA will evaluate this data by answering the following questions:

- Are there pronounced differences between the data in the current year compared to previous years?
- Are there distinct differences for one or more subgroups?
- Are there contextual factors to consider, such as a spike in enrollment of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as a result of an expansion of services?
- Is the data indicative of the district population as a whole?

The ALSDE provided disproportionality data to each LEA. In utilizing the [National Center on Educational Outcomes \(NCEO\) tool](#), the ALSDE considers LEAs as over- or under-identified as having a most significant cognitive disability in specific subgroups when the LEAs have a significant disproportionality issue if the n size for the subgroup is greater than or equal to 10 and the risk ratio is greater than or equal to 1.50. For those LEAs that have an identified subgroup will complete an action plan to address the disproportionality.

The LEAs were provided their data, and clarification and questions were answered in the universal training [Understanding the 1.0 Percent Cap Requirement for Alternate Assessments](#). This webinar was an overview of the LEA and state-level responsibilities along with the definitions and requirements for the SY 2024-2025 LEAs over the 1.0 percent. This training provided guidance and opportunities for LEAs to clarify any questions in their data. As an added assurance to the topic of disproportionality, the identified LEAs were to participate in the [Examining Disproportionality of Student Group \(subgroup\) Participation on the ACAP Alternate](#) webinar to gain a better understanding of their data around disproportionality.



The ALSDE will work with the identified LEAs that show a risk ratio for students participating in the alternate assessment. According to the data, the ALSDE has one subgroup (Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) over the 1.50 risk ratio, which also is classified to be a small *n* size. With this analysis, the ALSDE will assist the identified LEAs and/or schools with additional guidance. **Table 4: State-Level Targeted Analysis of Alternate Assessment Participation Data** and **Table 5: State-Level ACAP Alternate Subgroup Data** includes ACAP Alternate Participation Data, including Primary Exceptionality and Subgroup Data.

Table 4: State-Level Targeted Analysis of Alternate Assessment Participation Data

Primary Exceptionalities	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025 (estimated)
Autism	1,624	1,835	1,678	1,843	1,955
Deaf-Blindness	*	*	*	*	*
Developmentally Delayed	158	181	34	*	103
Emotional Disability	10	10	*	*	12
Hearing Impaired	47	33	21	17	20
Intellectual Disability	2,617	2,588	2,191	2,180	2,046
Multiple Disabilities	626	647	527	553	579
Other Health Impairment	439	472	425	424	477
Orthopedic Impairment	82	83	63	53	54
Specific Learning Disability	45	42	23	29	28
Speech and Language Disability	29	31	21	16	14
Traumatic Brain Injury	35	45	35	34	33
Visual Impairment	29	31	15	14	16

*Less than 10.

Table 5: State-Level ACAP Alternate Subgroup Data

Subgroup	Participation Data		Risk Ratio
	2023-2024	2024-2025* (Estimated)	2024-2025* (Estimated)
American Indian	25	28	0.62
Asian	94	94	1.10
Black	2,236	2,255	1.30
Hispanic	504	563	0.83
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	12	13	2.40
Two or more	163	198	0.91
White	2,373	2,414	0.87
Economically Disadvantaged	4,279	4,350	1.33
English Learners (LEP 1 or 2)	232	263	0.71



Component 5- Justification of the Need to Exceed the 1.0 Percent Cap by LEAs

Require that each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed in any subject with an AA-AAAS submit information to the State justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent cap. States must show where these justifications are made publicly available, and that this information is easily accessible (see 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(3)(iv)). For example, the State could include a URL link to these justifications (or a URL link to a summary of these justifications) in the waiver request.

All LEAs identified to be over the 1.0 percent cap were required to attend the [Understanding the 1.0 Cap Percent on Alternate Assessments Webinar](#). The LEAs that were not over were highly encouraged to attend this session as well. The LEAs were provided an overview of what the 1.0 percent cap is with an explanation of what the state is responsible for in achieving the goal of being below the 1.0 Percent Cap as outlined by the USDOE.

Each LEA over the 1.0 percent cap was required to complete the 2024-2025 One Percent District Justification Form. The questions on the form are in [APPENDIX 3](#) of this document.

To determine eligibility for alternate achievement standards, LEAs rely on a rigorous, multidisciplinary process involving comprehensive evaluations and parental involvement.

Efforts to improve special education practices include teacher training on differentiation, inclusive strategies, and data-driven decision-making, as well as fostering collaboration between general and special education staff.

The ALSDE is continuing to analyze the data of the justification statements and will utilize this information to inform future guidance and training. The ALSDE posted the 2024-2025 One Percent District Justification results publicly at this [link](#).



Component 6 Alabama’s Plan and Timeline

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

Alabama’s Plan

Alabama’s current plan is to provide support to LEAs based on their continuously increasing percentage over the 1.0 percent cap while also tending to specific areas defined throughout this section (Component 6a-6c). Each of the subsections of this plan outlines the ALSDE’s focus and intentions in providing guidance and oversight to LEAs in Alabama.

To provide adequate and timely oversight and guidance, the ALSDE must stay ahead of educational trends, struggles, and research/evidence-based issues in education. The ALSDE 1.0 Percent Cap Team participates in conferences, webinars, and educational experiences to design support and guidance that is pertinent to the field of education for all learners. Specifically, the ALSDE 1.0 Percent Cap Team members participate in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) conferences and meetings where team members collaborate with other states in the Assessment, Standards, and Education for Students with Disabilities (ASES), Balanced Assessment System (BAS), Technical Issues in Large-Scale Assessment (TILSA). These meetings focus on how to enhance our assessment, accountability, instructional supports, and Courses of Study to provide access to students with disabilities. Team members also hold membership in the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) to stay ahead of the legal aspects addressed at the leadership conferences. Team members participate in the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) biweekly collaboratives, where support is offered to states for accountability, assessment, and instructional guidance in providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Component 6a- Improve the Implementation of the State’s Guidelines

Improve the implementation of the State’s guidelines for participation in the AA-AAAS, including by reviewing and, if necessary, revising its definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (see 34 CFR §200.6(c)(4)(iv)(A)) so that less than 1.0 percent take an AA-AAAS.

Alabama has provided extensive guidance and support over SY 2023-2024 (as evidenced in the Artifacts section of this waiver) and will continue to train LEAs in the understanding for whom alternate assessments are reserved in the tested population of students. Alabama has specific topics that highlight the efforts in the plan outlined in this waiver request. The ALSDE has requested input from a broad range of educators about the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability for Alabama and will continue this process through SY 2024-2025. The ALSDE is also requesting LEAs to look deeper into the students who are being considered for the alternate assessment aligned with the alternate academic achievement standards based on the primary grades and specific subgroups (disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, English learners, and students with disabilities) as referenced in [ESEA Section 111\(c\)\(2\)\(A\)](#).



Alabama’s Definition of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disability

Alabama has increased awareness and understanding of our current definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability. *In Alabama, the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability is a student with an intelligence quotient (IQ) of three standard deviations below the mean, which is an IQ score of 55 or below, that significantly impacts intellectual functioning and that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive functioning (defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life).* As a rule, a student having a significant cognitive disability is not solely determined by an IQ test score, but rather by a holistic understanding of a student. Over the last year, the ALSDE met with educators and stakeholders to discuss the ALSDE’s definition to determine if the definition is appropriate for students who are considered for being identified as a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The ALSDE is providing more in-depth training and discussions with LEAs, as evidenced in the [tiered portion](#) of this plan, to ensure that the definition is understood and utilized as a first approach to considering a student for the alternate achievement standards/assessment. The ALSDE has and will continue to collect information from these opportunities to decide if the definition should change in the future. From this information utilizing the preselected [probing questions](#), The ALSDE will decide how to revise the definition for clarity in identifying students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Component 6b- Additional Support and Oversight

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 so that school staff who participate as members of the IEP Team or other placement teams understand and implement the guidelines established by the State for participation in an AA-AAAS so that all students are appropriately assessed (see 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(iv)(B)).

Based on meaningful discussions and opportunities to train and guide the LEAs, the ALSDE has identified themes that need additional support for the established guidelines while monitoring compliance to ensure the ALSDE’s efforts are impacting student achievement and better outcomes.

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 2 AND SPECIFIC SUBGROUPS

Alabama is actively advocating for educators to presume confidence in all students, especially disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, English learners, and students with disabilities in the grade band of kindergarten to Grade 2. Evidence across the state shows that students are being considered for the alternate achievement standards/alternate assessments in early grades. The ALSDE is utilizing training, webinars, conversations, and other support strategies to provide LEAs with resources to support students within the general education course of study, while also providing opportunities for educators who teach students who may have extensive support needs but are not a student with the most significant cognitive disability. The ALSDE’s guidance is providing administrators and educators the necessary support and resources



to make individualized student data-informed decisions based on the specific needs of students by considering historical patterns of cognitive deficits along with adaptive functioning deficits.

The ALSDE supports general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators to bridge gaps and reach all students where they are within the general education course of study by creating companion documents, proficiency scales, and training opportunities. By the ALSDE creating these resources to complement the general education course of study, educators will be more equipped to differentiate instruction and recognize progress in students that would typically be considered for the alternate achievement standards/assessment. The teaching field has transformed since the pandemic and as a result, the ALSDE has created many resources to help educators evaluate, consideration on how they present and teach skills, and redefine what success is for each student individually in Alabama.

From discussions with administrators throughout the SY 2023-2024, it was revealed that many students are exhibiting behaviors that are disruptive in the classrooms. As a result of the behaviors and the disruptions to education/learning, certified teachers are leaving the classroom. With this, administrators and LEAs are forced to hire more substitutes, out-of-field teachers, or uncertified teachers. Opportunities have warranted the ALSDE to engage in discussions with LEAs that they must consider individualized support and services for students while remaining on the general education course of study. The ALSDE has emphasized the importance of the least restrictive environment for a student being a continuum through identifying individualized supports and services for the student. The ALSDE has created several resources to help assist with the behavior concerns of students. With these efforts, IEP Teams will begin making appropriate decisions for all students. LEAs over the 1.0 percent cap are to create their own LEA internal level 1.0 percent team and, as a team, dig deeper into their data. The [2024-2025 District Self-Assessment Webinar](#) was provided to LEAs where the ALSDE explained each of the questions on the form. After the webinar, the LEAs were provided with a [PDF of the questions](#) to share and collaborate with their LEA 1.0 percent team.

As a continual effort to support educators, the ALSDE has provided the resources below in a continual effort to support educators. The resources will provide strategies to promote progress and ability in a variety of students and identify individualized educational or behavioral support for all students. The goal is to equip educators with tools in making decisions for students throughout Alabama, especially those in specific subgroups or Kindergarten through Grade 2.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The ALSDE is supporting LEAs by hosting a multi-day course through the Alabama a Principal Leadership Development System (APLDS) specifically on positive behavior supports. The course ([APDLS-MTSS: Positive Behavior Supports \(PBS\) Year 1](#)) focuses on Tier 1 strategies to address positive behavior supports. Participants will engage in data reflection, collaborative strategies, identification and integration of behavioral and foundational wellness strategies.

The ALSDE is supporting schools and districts across Alabama in making informed decisions regarding programs and services for students eligible for special education and related services. Through the professional study ([A School Leader's Role in the Decision-Making Process for Students with Disabilities](#)), participants will engage in a series of thoughtfully designed activities aimed at building essential knowledge and practical skills to enhance decision-making. Participants will apply and



implement their learning through realistic scenarios, case studies, and simulations, and will deepen their understanding through collaboration, group work, meaningful discussions, and self-reflection.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

As part of our support and guidance to help our LEAs, the ALSDE requires students in Grade 2 to take the ACAP Summative Assessment as a baseline for measuring growth. It is highly encouraged by the ALSDE that LEAs specifically utilize this baseline assessment opportunity as a measurement tool for students who are struggling. This baseline information helps the IEP Team consider, adjust, implement, and evaluate accessibility supports and accommodations before considering the alternate assessment for any student. The information that can be gained by utilizing the kindergarten and first-grade years to identify the needs of the student against the general education course of study to outline accommodations and services for students adequately is crucial to student achievement and success in Alabama. Annually the LEAs receive training and support from the ALSDE in relation to the assessment which includes the baseline year of Grade 2.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDES

The Differentiated Instructional Guide (DIG) is an instructional companion to the course of study. The DIG assists educators in tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs of all students by finding strengths and weaknesses, beginning with prior knowledge and moving forward to learning the objectives to master the standard. Differentiated instruction, as a framework, allows educators to implement various strategies to maximize student growth and individual success. The DIG is to help general education teachers see the progression of learning within each standard in the respective subjects and have a starting point to build proficiency through each standard while taking into consideration a student's rate of learning in light of their current circumstances. These companion documents are housed on the [Alabama Achieves Website](#) under each subject and on the [Differentiated Instructional Guide LiveBinder](#) for ease of use by educators. Teachers and administrators have been provided the purpose and usage of these guides ([APPENDIX 5](#)).

PROFICIENCY SCALE SUPPORT

Proficiency Scales: Each Critical Standard has a proficiency scale. A proficiency scale is a collection of learning targets organized into a continuum of learning that can be used for planning, troubleshooting, grading, and more. Several sections with the ALSDE create proficiency scales across subjects, the main source for [all proficiency scales can be located using this link](#). Proficiency scales are an ongoing effort of training and support through SY 2024-25, specifically in the regional training [Overview of Using Proficiency Scales to Support Instruction and Assessment](#) and [Using Proficiency Scales to Support Instruction and Assessment](#).

SES SHORTS

Professional development is provided that is collaborative, data-driven, and implements evidence-based practices that SES provides through a series of webinars entitled SES SHORTS. The purpose of SES Shorts is to provide educators and administrators with professional development focused on improving student outcomes and achievement. The interactive online course listing is located at the [2024-2025 SES SHORTS Professional Learning Series](#). Through SY 2024-2025 SES SHORTS, will deliver specific strategies and guidance documents to impact teaching based on high-leverage strategies for all students. Through the series teachers can refine their skills to be



able to differentiate instruction for all students, even students who typically would have been considered for the alternate achievement standards/assessment.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

For some educators and administrators, knowledge on promoting access for students with extensive support needs using assistive technology is extremely limited. Some students have their cognition intact but are unable to convey their learning and knowledge due to not having the means to communicate it. Through partnerships with the [Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services \(ADRS\)](#), programs like the [Alabama Assistive Technology Resource](#) provide access to assistive technology for Alabamians of all ages and all disabilities.

The ALSDE understands that assistive technology availability and cost are factors that LEAs are facing in providing access to students with extensive support needs. Through the [Short-Term Device Loan Program](#), Alabama residents are provided the opportunity to try assistive technology and if found effective, State funds could be utilized to support the continued use. Individuals, family members, and professionals may access the service for their family members, students, or clients. There is no cost to borrow equipment from Accessing Potential Through Assistive Technology (APTAT). The ALSDE also has state grant opportunities for LEAs to receive funds to purchase assistive technology items needed for students. In an effort for more students to access the general education curriculum, the lending library and state grant opportunities provide LEAs with the assistive technology needed to assist students with making progress and having improved outcomes in the future. LEAs are provided with this information through memos, director correspondence, and training support provided to LEAs.

SENSORY CONSIDERATIONS RESOURCE

Understanding how individuals react and internalize sensory input provides insight into how learning activities and environments can be tailored to individualized needs, while still meeting the needs of the student. This resource helps educators understand the eight sensory systems and how behaviors may be demonstrated by students if these sensory systems are over-responsive or under-responsive for the student. This resource is not an exhaustive list of possibilities but does offer many examples and strategies for individualizing support for students. This [Sensory Considerations: An Alabama Educational Planning Resource](#) was revealed through the SES Shorts webinar series in November 2024 and will become a point of reference for future guidance and trainings to help educational leaders and teachers reach students with specific sensory needs.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT RESOURCE

This resource is designed to help educators identify individualized support for students with special needs. Accommodations/Supplementary Aids and Services allow students to complete the same tests and assignments as their nondisabled peers but with timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response, and/or presentation adjustments. The intention is to minimize or eliminate the effects of the student's disability, while still expecting the same level of mastery over the content as their peers. These accommodations can encompass a wide range of areas, including sensory processing, behavioral supports, comprehension, reading and written expression, executive functioning, social interaction, and emotional and self-regulation. The [Accommodations/Supplementary Aids and Services Resource](#) was revealed through the SES Shorts webinar series in November 2024 and will become a point of reference for future guidance and trainings to help educational leaders and teachers. Teachers will be better equipped



to consider individualized needs resulting in less students considered for the alternate achievement standards/assessment.

PARENT AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT

The ALSDE understands and acknowledges that families in Alabama need support for students to flourish educationally. Many of the educational barriers for students may start at the level of having their basic needs met, and to meet all the needs of parents/caregivers, the ALSDE wants to leverage partnerships and initiatives across the state to help families get even more support to help them have what they need to help their students. The ALSDE actively partners with outside agencies to work with parents on strategies as how to assist their students and will be promoting these resources to the LEAs as we present and provide support to the LEAs. By providing these resources parents can increase their trust and collaboration with the schools to better support their children, our students.

Tiered Levels of Support Based on Percentage over the 1.0 Percent Cap

While the 1.0 percent cap is based on a State-level goal, the ALSDE will provide additional guidance to the LEAs to shape the mindset to recognize ability in all students, provide better individualized support for students, utilize tools and strategies to help students access the general education course of study and to realize that the alternate assessment is not a placement, rather a different way of assessing progress for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Based on data and information provided to the ALSDE, a tiered approach was developed to better align ALSDE support to identified LEAs.

By adopting a tiered approach, districts can be segmented into more manageable units, enabling the ALSDE to deliver tailored services effectively. This allows for a focused distribution of resources, particularly towards Tiers 2 and 3.

Below is *Table 6: SY 2023-2024-Tiered Level of Support Criteria* which depicts each Tier criteria and the number of LEAs in each.

Guidance and Oversight Tiers	1.0 Percent Cap Percentage Band	Number of LEAs Supported
Tier 1	1.10-1.50	50 LEAs
Tier 2	1.51-1.99	38 LEAs
Tier 3	2.00-Up	27 LEAs

The checklists ([APPENDIX 7](#)) are outlines that will be utilized for LEAs to ensure completion of the required activities compiled by the ALSDE for each tier. This approach will direct accountability on all levels while placing primary responsibility on LEAs for Tier 1. Tier 2 will require additional targeted support, resources, and the ALSDE monitoring to ensure effectiveness. For districts identified as Tier 3, the ALSDE will provide more intensive interventions.



The Five Largest LEAs

To identify areas in which large LEAs could impact the state goal, the ALSDE will have individual conversations with the five largest districts in Alabama. The criterion for the largest LEAs is determined by the total population of students and if the LEA is over the 1.0 percent cap. The ALSDE will have a comprehensive conversation with the five largest LEAs to discuss policies, practices, and procedures along with identified trends. This focus intends to highlight small changes within these LEAs that could potentially provide better outcomes for more students across Alabama.

Table 7: SY 2023-2024 Top Five Largest LEAs

LEA	Total Number of Students Tested	Percentage of the 1.0 Percent Cap on Actual Tested Data		
		SY 2023-2024	SY 2022-2023	SY 2021-2022
LEA 30	25184	1.72	1.64	1.63
LEA 29	18248	1.64	1.62	1.46
LEA 28	13046	1.46	1.65	1.34
LEA 27	11880	1.73	1.74	1.49
LEA 26	10905	1.66	1.72	1.65

Comprehensive Monitoring of LEAs

The ALSDE has a monitoring calendar of all LEAs being monitored within a five-year cycle for compliance. For the 1.0 percent cap goal, the cyclical monitoring team randomly selects students from each LEA (elementary, middle, and high school students) and conduct desk audits. These audits will evaluate the records for:

- Eligibility criteria
- Evidence of the Decision-Making Tool being used by the IEP Team to drive discussions for students being considered for the alternate achievement standards
- IEP review for evidence that the student meets the Alabama definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability

The monitoring cycle for SY 2023-2024 consisted of 29 LEAs. The records concerning students selected to be on the alternate achievement standards/assessments were evaluated. The findings of noncompliance were addressed with each respective LEA as part of the LEA exit conferences where the LEA is responsible for corrective actions. The ALSDE supports LEAs around the identified findings through corrective strategies.



Student Participation Justification Monitoring

The ALSDE regularly evaluates the scores, times, and answers of students who have taken the *ACAP Alternate* and requests that LEAs complete a Student Justification Form for students identified with one or more of the criteria:

- The student took the *ACAP Alternate* with an unexpected disability category ([APPENDIX 4](#)) for a student with the most significant cognitive disability.
- The student's IQ is over the state-identified score of 55, utilized as part of the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability.
- The student is among the highest performing group on the *ACAP Alternate* assessment.
- The student is within the largest disproportionate subpopulation specifically identified.

The ALSDE asks that a thorough review be completed for each student(s) while utilizing the provided targeted questions to ensure that the student(s) identified are, in fact, **students with the most significant cognitive disability**. LEAs utilize the questions to ensure that identified students are students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the state's definition for participation in the alternate assessment.

Component 6c- Disproportionality for Specific Subgroups

Address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS as identified through the data provided (see 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(iv)(C)).

The ALSDE will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards as identified through the data provided in accordance with [\(34 CFR 200.6\(c\)\(4\)\(iv\)\(C\)\)](#) with the number and percentage of students in each subgroup of students defined [\(34 CFR 200.6\(c\)\(4\)\(ii\)\(A\)\)](#) in (A) economically disadvantaged students, (B) students from major racial and ethnic groups, and (D) English learners ([ESEA 111\(c\)\(2\)\(A\), \(B\), and \(D\)\)](#)). With the teacher shortage and lack of appropriate field experiences for educators, the ALSDE will provide more targeted/deliberate guidance and support for general education and special education teachers. The ALSDE will provide support that will help identify progress in all students, especially students in subgroups where the data is not favorable. A series entitled SES Shorts, by SES, will provide scheduled webinars focusing on individual support for students with special needs, high-leverage practices, and other educational trends to help educators identify abilities and monitor progress in all students, especially students with disabilities. The ALSDE communicates to the field that different economics, heritages, and abilities are not barriers, but rather areas of opportunity to reach students where they are and redefine progress while helping them succeed. The supports outlined in this waiver will enhance proficiency and student growth for all students, especially those students in the specific subgroups (A) economically disadvantaged students; (B) students from major racial and ethnic groups; (C) children with disabilities; and (D) English learners. As a continual effort of attention to specific subgroups, the ALSDE focuses and is committed to providing the needed support for LEAs.



The ALSDE will work with the identified LEAs that show a risk ratio for students participating in the alternate assessment. According to the data, the ALSDE has one subgroup (Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) over the 1.50 risk ratio, which also is classified to be a small n size. With this analysis, the ALSDE will assist the identified LEAs and/or schools with additional guidance.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

Students in Alabama who qualify for a free or reduced lunch are considered economically disadvantaged.

The [Alabama Multi-Tier System of Supports \(AL-MTSS\)](#) assists students with a variety of needs. It is a comprehensive and prevention-based framework that encompasses the academic, behavioral, and foundational wellness needs, including physical and mental health, to support the whole child and is aligned with the Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan. The AL-MTSS uses a proactive, team-driven approach that engages all stakeholders (state, regional, district, school community, family, and students) to ensure equitable access to opportunities that will improve student outcomes. The purpose of AL-MTSS is to implement and sustain a continuum of evidence-based practices, instruction, support, and intervention that align with the wide range of needs of all students and eliminate barriers to helping children find success in school and their lives thereafter. Data is utilized at all levels to ensure equitable, safe, positive, and personalized support that assists all students along their educational journey.

English Learners

The ALSDE 1.0 Percent Team has added members from the ALSDE English Language (EL) Learner section to ensure students who are English learners are not prematurely being considered for the alternate achievement standards/assessment. Furthermore, the ALSDE 1.0 Percent Team has begun collaboration with the EL section to be sure that the alternate is only being considered for students with the most significant cognitive disability demonstrating a barrier in the capacity and/or ability to think with the co-occurring deficits in adaptive behavior. Within discussions, the collaboration has looked at SY 2023-2024 data and has noted that 226 students tested on the alternate assessment for Grades 3-8. It was discovered that 56 students took the baseline assessment for Grade 2, which is a large number compared to this one grade. In future meetings with the EL section, the collaboration will look at the trend data of these students, identify the number of students on the alternate currently in EL for this school year, and solidify the appropriate processes by which service providers are defining and identifying students in the existing protocol communicated to the field. This collaboration will utilize the NCEO resource [Toolkit for English Learners with Disabilities: Using Data to Understand the Characteristics of English Learners with Disabilities in Your State Tool 1](#) and [Tool 2](#) to guide work toward individualizing needs of students in Alabama while also providing clarity to the field about who the student with the most significant cognitive disability is.



Students From Major and Ethnic Groups and Students with Disabilities

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) section 618(d)* and *34 C.F.R. § 300.646* require states to collect and examine data to determine if significant disproportionality based on race and ethnicity is occurring in the State and the local educational agencies (LEAs) of the State concerning:

- The identification of children as children with disabilities, including the identification of children as children with disabilities in accordance with a particular impairment.
- The placement of children in particular educational environments.
- The incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions.

The ALSDE Data Team SES routinely monitors, identifies, and supports LEAs in addressing the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in **special education and related services** that is the result of inappropriate identification. They also assist LEAs with any identified disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in **specific disability categories** that is the result of inappropriate identification. More information on the specifics of significant disproportionality can be reviewed in the SES [Significant Disproportionality](#) Support Guide.

The ALSDE supports general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators to bridge gaps and reach all students where they are within the general education course of study by creating companion documents, proficiency scales, and training opportunities. With the ALSDE creating these resources to complement the general education course of study, educators will learn how to differentiate instruction and recognize progress in students that would typically be considered for the alternate achievement standards/assessment, due to a lack of understanding of how to adapt activities to meet the needs of students while keeping them on the general education course of study. The supports outlined in [Section 6a](#) of this waiver will enhance proficiency and student growth for all students especially those with disabilities.



Alabama’s Timeline

Activity	Date
District Test Coordinator Conference	August 2024
Back To School Special Education Services Conference	August 2024
Memo to Superintendents about the One Percent Cap on the Percentage of Students Who May Be Assessed with an Alternate Assessment and Achievement Measurement of at Least 95 Percent of Students	September 2024
Email to identified Districts/LEAs with their data and mandatory training and obligations	September 2024
Understanding the 1.0 Percent Cap Requirement for the Alternate Assessments- Universal Webinar	September 2024
Justification Form Office Hours	October 2024
District Justification Forms Due	October 2024
Disproportionality Webinar Available	October 2024
Understanding the Decision-Making Process Before Considering the Alternate Assessment/Alternate Standards On-Demand Webinar Available (Tier 2 and Tier 3)	October 2024
Tier 2 Training Session	October 2024
Participation of 95% Webinar	October 2024
Tier 1 Training Session	October 2024
Tier 3 Training Session	November 2024
Self-Assessment Webinar and Form Available (Tier 2 and Tier 3)	November 2024
Self-Assessment Form (Tier 2 and Tier 3) Due from LEAs	November 2024
LEAs Conduct Internal Records Review and Develop Internal Records Review Data Walk Presentation (Tier 2 and Tier 3)	November-December 2024
Publicly Post Justification Information	December 2024
Submit Draft Waiver Request to the USDOE	December 2024
Draft Waiver Request Posted for Public Review/Comment	December 2024
ALSDE/LEA Team On-site (Tier 3) Scheduled	December 2024
Submit Final Draft Waiver Request to the USDOE	January 2025
Five Largest District Office Calls	January 2025
ASAP Manual (Case Manager and IEP LEA Reps (Tier 2, Tier 3)	January 2025
District Coordinator Meeting (Tier 2 and Tier 3)	January 2025
Special Education IEP Training Series via SES Shorts	March 2025
Alabama Educational Technology Conference Sessions Offered	June 2025
MEGA Conference Sessions Offered	July 2025



APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1

Artifacts of Oversight and Support for LEAs

Below are the charts of oversight and support provided to LEAs throughout Alabama, specifically concerning guidance and oversight towards decreasing Alabama’s percentage over the 1.0 Percent Cap. The activities and guidance outlined in the charts within this APPENDIX begin with the SY 2023-2024 waiver request and each chart after is the preceding year. The various activities (slides/recordings) and supports are hyperlinked, and participation data is also available and noted.

Table 9: SY 2023-2024 Oversight and Support for LEAs Completed or In Progress	
Please note: This section contains bolded text in each of the entries below related to the activities and areas the ALSDE 1.0 Percent Cap Team listed in the Waiver submitted to the USDOE for the 2023-2024 school year for accountability tracking.	
Fall 2023	<u>The Accessibility Supports and Accommodations Policy for State Assessments (ASAP Manual)</u> was provided to District Test Coordinators, Building Test Coordinators, Special Education Coordinators, and any teacher with a student taking the state assessment needing support or accommodations.
Fall 2023	The Special Education Services section created a webinar series for families, the <u>ELA and Math Family Engagement Webinar Series</u> , where parents learn about strategies and opportunities to help their students in the subjects of ELA and Mathematics in building parent knowledge for students in the home environment.
Fall 2023- Summer 2024	The ALSDE 1.0 Percent Cap Team continued to meet (<u>Documentation Log</u>) and discuss ways to improve guidance and practices within districts/LEAs concerning the 1.0 Percent Cap in Alabama.
Fall 2023	A Memo to Superintendents about the 1.0 Cap Percent Data release was sent to all districts/LEAs. This <u>memo was sent on October 30, 2023.</u>
Fall 2023	Through collaboration of the Assessment and Special Education Services Section Monitoring LEAs over the 1.0 Percent Cap was completed and the findings were impactful in meetings with the ALSDE 1.0 Percent Cap Team and conversations with districts/LEAs.
Fall 2023	Guidance was provided to districts through a webinar session made available on November 3, 2023, providing the specifications of how disproportionality is determined and what it means concerning the testing population. The <u>Examining Disproportionality of Student Group (subgroup) Participation on the ACAP Alternate</u> session provided the formula used to calculate the disproportionality along with the implications and information to understand what disproportionate means for the district/LEA. (128 Participants).
Fall 2023	Understanding the 1.0 Cap Webinar was provided to districts/LEAs on November 8, 2023. The <u>webinar</u> was an opportunity to help districts/LEAs understand the 1.0 Percent Cap and how it relates to their district. (271 Participants)



Fall 2023	Data was Reported to districts/LEAs with an invitation to the <i>Understanding the 1.0 Cap</i> Webinar by email on November 15, 2023. The districts/LEAs were given a paper copy of the Justification Form Template as they prepare for their submissions due November 28, 2023. The districts/LEAs were asked to submit their justification information using the Justification Form for Exceeding the 1.0 Percent Cap For Participation on the ACAP Alternate Microsoft Form.
Fall 2023	District/LEA Assurances were collected through the District Justification Forms that were received on or before November 28, 2023 . The district/LEA assurances and District Justifications for Being Over the 1.0 Percent Cap results were made publicly available.
Fall 2023	The ALSDE completed the draft waiver in time to provide a Public Notice of the Request for a 1.0 Cap Percent Waiver . The draft waiver was posted for public comment as per the memo that was sent. The public comments were also available.
Winter 2023	The ALSDE 1.0 Percent Team completed the waiver request and submitted it to the United States Department of Education on December 5, 2023.
Winter 2023	Understanding the participation of students in the Alternate Achievement standards and assessment is a point that the ALSDE tries to drive as much as we can across the state. The opportunities below focused on this concept extensively. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the Decision-Making Process Before Considering the Alternate Assessment/Alternate Standards On-Demand (259 Participants) • Least Dangerous Assumption (249 Participants)
Winter 2023 through Summer 2024	As the ALSDE 1.0 Percent Cap Team, the ALSDE wanted to explore what educators and administrators felt about the Alabama definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability . The ALSDE convened opportunities when educators and administrators were available and asked several questions of them. Below are the links to the feedback we received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When convening teacher workgroups and discussing conference topics, probing questions were asked of the audience to help provide insight into the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability. The 1.0 Percent Team is furthering this work into this year’s plan. • Definition Feedback (MEGA Conference Session 1004)
Winter 2023 through Summer 2024	Guidance was provided to districts/LEAs about using caution when considering students in grades Kindergarten to Second for the Alternate Achievement Standards/Assessment. The opportunity to discuss this topic with districts/LEAs is to emphasize the importance of finding ability in all students with every possible strategy and tool available. These opportunities were/are also for helping districts/LEAs look at possible things they can change in their policies and practices for better outcomes for all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the Decision-Making Process Before Considering the Alternate Assessment/Alternate Standards • How Do I Look, Data Tells the Story- Self-Assessment Workshop • The Number One (1) is Small, but it Can be a Game Changer



Spring 2024	<p>On March 20, 2024, Alabama received a letter from the USDOE denying the 2023-2024 waiver request to assess more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment for Math, R/LA, and Science. The USDOE requested an updated plan to reduce the participation rate of students taking the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards participation in future years to follow the 1.0 percent requirement. The ALSDE was charged with addressing three components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Within 60 days of receiving this letter, submit an updated plan for reducing the rate of AA-AAAS participation in future years in order to come into compliance with the 1.0 percent requirement. Please submit Alabama’s plan to ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.</i> 2. <i>Submit evidence that the plan and timeline are made publicly available on the State’s website when the plan is provided to the Department.</i> 3. <i>Demonstrate progress in reducing the percentage of students tested on alternate assessments in the 2023-2024 school year as validated by the ALSDE ED Facts assessment participation data submission.</i>
Spring 2024	<p>Individual Student Justifications were required by districts/LEAs for identified “red flag” students. This activity was more direct than initially planned in that districts/LEAs were emailed for their justifications versus the proposed webinar first planned. The LEAs were asked a series of questions about the students identified.</p>
Spring 2024	<p>Through the collaboration and effort of the Assessment and SES section, the following parent resources were created and available to empower parents in decision-making situations of their students with disabilities, including those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Engagement: Collaborating with Families of Students with Disabilities • Regional Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why it Should Matter: Lessons Gleaned from Recent Case Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flyer ▪ Handouts • Empowering Families Toolkit Information Flyer • ACAP Alternate ISR Quick Guide for Families • ACAP Alternate Parent Guide – English Spanish • ACAP Summative Parent Video of the Individualized Score Reports (ISR) posted on YouTube • ACAP Summative Assessment for Families January 2024 posted on YouTube • ACAP Alternate Parent Video of the Individualized Score Reports (ISR) posted on YouTube
Summer 2024	<p>Alabama Resubmitted the Waiver to the United States Department of Education on May 17, 2024.</p>
Summer 2024	<p>Guidance was provided to districts/LEAs specifically for school leaders through the School Leader Series: Supporting the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Assessment webinar session. The session utilized the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) documents to bring focus to helping school leaders support the</p>



	<p>inclusion of students with disabilities in assessment (NCEO School Leaders Brief 1). The session aimed at also helping school leaders understand the consequences for students within assessment decisions (NCEO School Leaders Brief 2). This session also highlighted how IEP Teams need to work together for the student in assigning accessibility, accommodations, and assessment participation decisions (NCEO School Leaders Brief 3). (204 Participants)</p>
<p>Summer 2024</p>	<p>CCSSO/NCSA Workshop – Alternate Instructional Strategies Toolkit The ALSDE presented to colleagues from other states the Alternate Instructional Toolkits developed in conjunction with the ALSDE Student Assessment section, the ALSDE Special Education section, and Alabama educators. The toolkits offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional guidance to teachers and promote learning for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for the Alabama Alternate Assessment. • Provide a starting point for teaching the Alabama Alternate Achievement Standards that align with the Alabama Course of Study Standards. • Provide content-based differentiation strategies, tools, and methodologies for instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities. • Provide teachers with a method to delineate and build on the skills and knowledge needed for students with significant cognitive disabilities to master the alternate standards. • Provide content-based examples to aid in instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
<p>Summer 2024</p>	<p>At the MEGA Conference, the Assessment and SES sections collaborated to help districts/LEAs utilize their data as a journey to understanding why and how they can help their districts consider other options and practices for defining student progress and participation in assessments. Included in these opportunities was a session focusing on the districts looking at their data as a Self-Assessment Workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 1002: The ACAP Alternate Participation Decision-Making Tool: A Collaborative Journey Towards Effective Assessment for Alabama’s Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (55 Participants) • Session 1003: Understanding the Decision-Making Process Before Considering the Alternate Assessment/Alternate Standards (55 Participants) • Session 1004: How Do I Look, Data Tells the Story- Self-Assessment Workshop (15 participants) • Session 1027: The Number One (1) is Small, but it Can be a Game Changer (15 participants)



Table 10: SY 2022-2023 Oversight and Support for LEAs Completed	
Fall 2022	The Accessibility Supports and Accommodations Policy for State Assessments Manual (ASAP Manual) On-Demand Training was provided to District Test Coordinators, Building Test Coordinators, Special Education Coordinators, and any teacher with a student taking the state assessment needing accommodations.
Winter 2022	The 1.0 Percent Cap Webinar was created by the collaboration of Student Assessment and Special Education to help districts/LEAs understand the 1.0 Cap definition and requirements for the State of Alabama. The webinar outlined the components, student identification, and the importance of informing parents, along with the support offered by the ALSDE.
Spring 2023	The SES Section provided training across the state on identifying students on the alternate assessment and providing a deep dive into the assistive technology guidelines and process with districts/LEAs.
Spring 2023	The SES Section completed the final draft of the Differentiated Instructional Guide (DIG) for the ELA standards. This guide provides prior knowledge and objectives for each standard to help students take ownership of their learning and allow educators to scaffold purposeful instruction for students with disabilities. This support is designed to help educators find a starting point for every student's learning.
Summer 2023	At the MEGA Conference 2023, the assessment section provided a session on the tools and strategies to utilize when instructing students on the alternate achievement standards. It also provided critical information about identifying students on the alternate and the importance of informing parents about the modified content standards.
Summer 2023	The SES Section created a presentation called A Parent-Focused Video Series: Ideas on Supporting Students on the Alabama Alternate Achievement Standards that was disseminated to LEAs through the special education director's News You Can Use weekly email. The presentation provides parents with resources on how they can help their students achieve in various areas.

Table 11: SY 2021-2022 Oversight and Support for LEAs Completed	
Summer 2021	The 2019 Mathematics Course of Study committee reconvened to create 2019 Alternate Achievement Standards for Mathematics for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The committee was charged with the final standards for the Alternate Assessment and designing the structure and components of the Differentiated Instructional Guide for Mathematics.
Summer 2021	The ELA committee created the 2021 Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts , which presents a sound framework designed to prepare students for the ELA demands in both college studies and careers. This document contains a set of challenging content standards for students at each grade level. The ALSDE assessments are based on these standards. Alabama Achieves: A Strategic Plan for a New Decade defines the accountability measures enacted to ensure student growth. These standards are based on a foundation provided by the Revised 2016 Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Alabama Achieves a Strategic Plan for a New Decade, the Alabama Literacy Act Implementation Guide, the Alabama Dyslexia Resource Guide, and



	ELA standards in other states. Content standards are designed to meet ELA classroom expectations and enhance student performance in other content areas.
Summer 2021	The 2021 ELA Course of Study committee created the 2021 Alternate Achievement Standards for English Language Arts for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for English language arts. The committee also constructed the Differentiated Instructional Guide (DIG) framework and components for ELA.
Winter 2021	The ALSDE 1.0 Percent Cap Team redesigned the guiding document to identify students with the most significant cognitive disability (utilizing Ohio’s Decision-Making Tool as a reference). The ACAP Alternate Participation Decision-Making Tool was created and implemented.
Winter 2021	The SES Section released the final version of the Differentiated Instructional Guide for Mathematics. This guide provides prior knowledge and objectives for each standard to help students take ownership of their learning and allow educators to scaffold purposeful instruction for students with disabilities. This support is designed to help educators find a starting point for learning for every student and provide a bridge to help students succeed.
Winter 2021	The SES Section implemented Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities . This series of High-Leverage Practices (HLP) opportunities is hosted on the Schoology Learning Management System (LMS) and is a continual program that improves the effectiveness of educators in a direct approach to improving outcomes for students with disabilities. High-leverage practices are the most critical practices every K-12 special education teacher should master, and they help educators, families, and students.
Summer 2022	At the MEGA 2022 Conference, the sections collaborated to train educators on identifying students with the Decision-Making Tool. This presentation was included within the presentations of Connections Between the ELA ACAP Alternate and Instruction and Supporting Connections Between the Math ACAP Alternate and Instruction sessions.



APPENDIX 2

Evidence of Progress for Alabama through the Decline in the Rate of Increase in Alternate Assessment Participation

Alabama’s participation rate for students projected to be assessed on the alternate assessment continues to exceed the 1.0 percent cap. Alabama’s assessment data for the 2023-2024 school year shows that rates of alternate participation increased in ELA, Mathematics, and Science compared to the previous school years. Additionally, the projection for the SY 2024-2025 school year testing cycle is an increase as well. However, when examining the data, the rate of increase of students taking the alternate assessment for each of the school years is consistently decreasing because of additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA, as evidenced below in *Table 12: Alabama’s Rate of Increase in Alternate Participation, By Year, By Subject*.

Table 12: Alabama’s Rate of Increase in Alternate Participation, By Year, By Subject

School Year	R/ELA	Math	Science	Change in Percentage of Students Testing on the Alternate Assessment			
				Spring to Spring	ELA	Math	Science
2017-2018	1.25%	1.25%	1.27%				
2018-2019	1.26%	1.26%	1.26%	18-19	0.01%	0.01%	-0.01%
2020-2021	1.23%	1.23%	1.24%	19-21*	-0.03%	-0.03%	-0.02%
2021-2022	1.26%	1.26%	1.26%	21-22	0.03%	0.03%	0.02%
2022-2023	1.35%	1.34%	1.34%	22-23	0.09%	0.08%	0.08%
2023-2024	1.39%	1.38%	1.38%	23-24	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%
2024-2025 (est.)	1.40%	1.40%	1.38%	24-25	0.01%	0.02%	0.00%

**NOTE: Operational testing did not take place in 2020. Percentage change was calculated over two years.*

Referencing *Table 12: Alabama’s Rate of Increase in Alternate Participation, By Year, By Subject* specific years compared can show how the **rate of increase** has been shrinking. Some comparisons to specifically consider are:

- Comparing the SY 2021-2022 percentages of alternate assessment participation across subjects to the 2022-2023 percentages, the rate of growth in alternate participation was at its highest. The **rate of increase** in ELA was **0.09%**, Mathematics **0.08%**, and Science **0.08%**.
- Comparing the SY 2022-2023 percentages of alternate assessment participation across subjects to the 2023-2024 percentages the rate of growth in alternate participation was less. The **rate of increase** in ELA was **0.04%**, Mathematics **0.04%**, and Science **0.04%**.



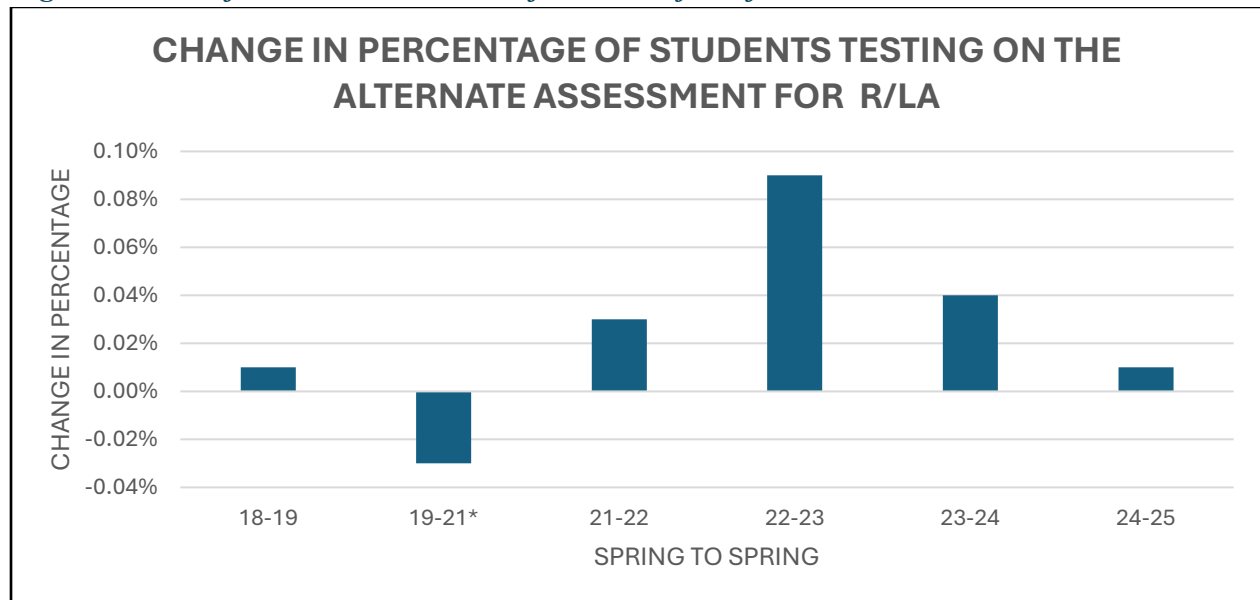
Looking ahead, comparing the 2023-2024 percentages of alternate assessment participation across subjects to the 2024-2025 percentages shows that the rate of increase in alternate participation should be even less (projected data). The rate of increase in ELA is predicted to be only **0.01%**, Mathematics **0.02%**, and Science **0.00%**.

In identifying progress toward the State goal of being under 1.0 percent, the ALSDE is making progress toward the goal, as demonstrated in the rate of increase towards alternate participation slowing down. The progress is slow, and the overall percentage is higher, but progress is being made through the support and guidance the ALSDE provides LEAs, who are on the path to improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Another way of looking at this rate of increase towards alternate assessment participation declining in Alabama is demonstrated in the bar graphs below. Each graph below depicts a separate subject. Each subject has the calculated rate of increase change in percentage on the vertical axis on the left and the spring-to-spring years of alternate participation across the bottom. While this shift is currently small, it shows that Alabama has climbed a hill of participation rates and now that rate is slowing. The rate of increase from SY 2023-2024 to SY 2024-2025 shows that the efforts in Alabama of oversight and guidance are effective and will tip the trend line in favor (participation rates lowering) in the upcoming school years.

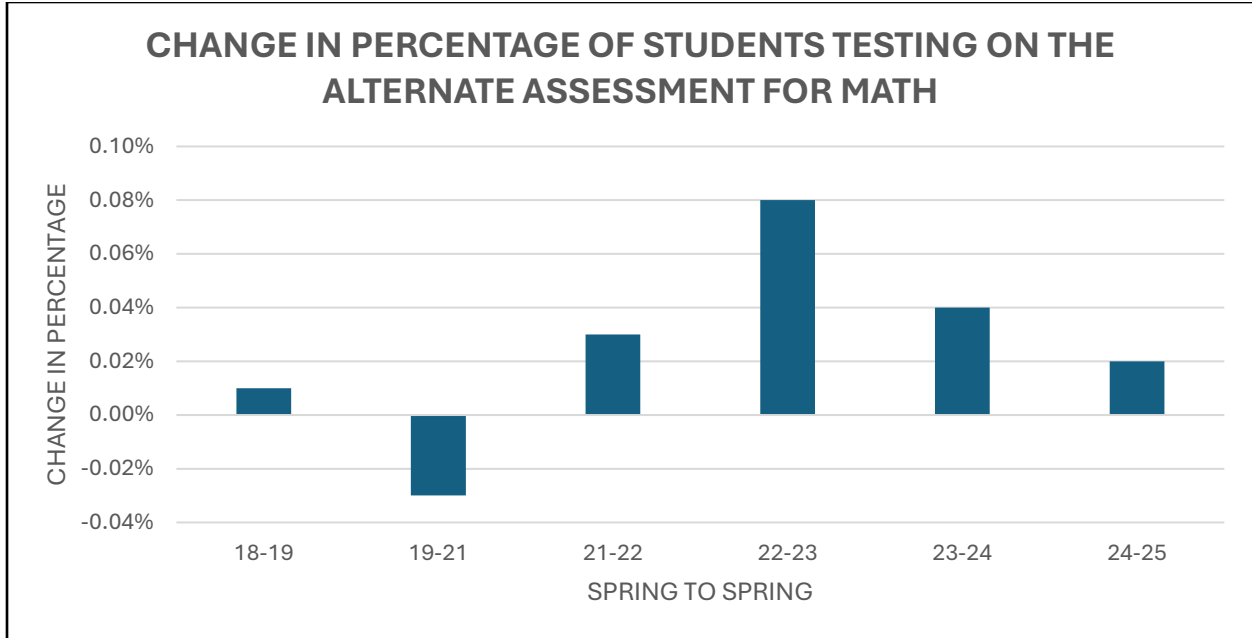
In *Figure 1: Rate of Increase Visual View for the Subject of R/LA*, it is easy to see how the rate of increase in alternate participation was at a peak for the rate of increase was significant in the spring of 2022 to the spring of 2023.

Figure 1: Rate of Increase Visual View for the Subject of R/LA



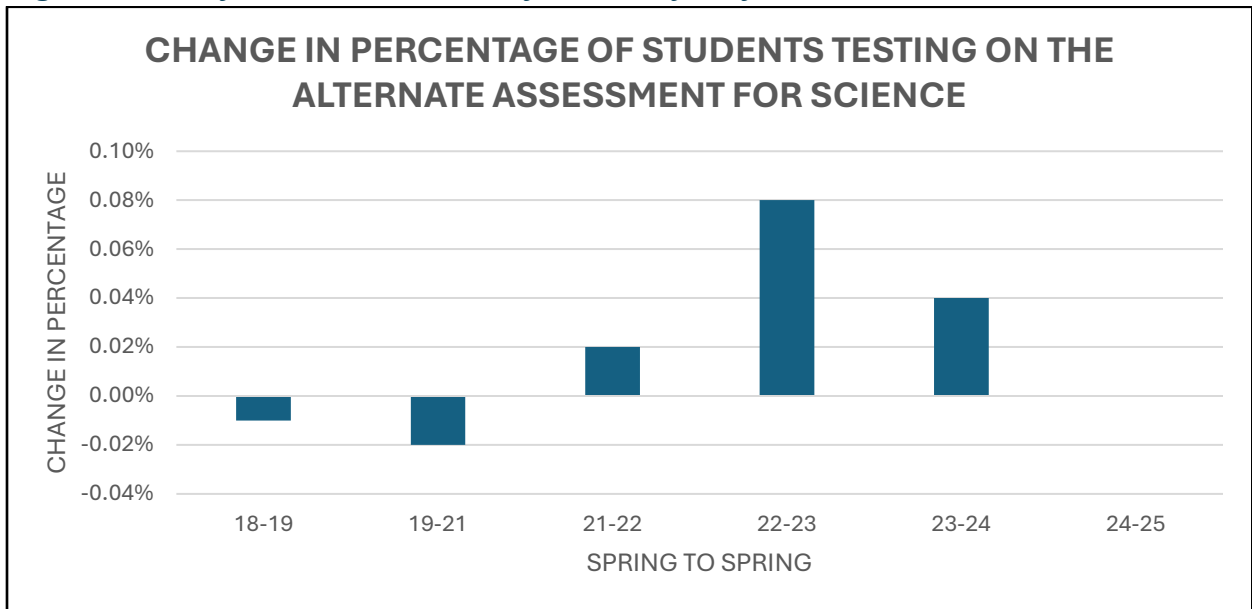
In *Figure 2: Rate of Increase Visual View for the Subject of Math*, the rate of increase in alternate participation was at a peak again, and the rate of increase was significant from the spring of 2022 to the spring of 2023.

Figure 2: Rate of Increase Visual View for the Subject of Math



In *Figure 3: Rate of Increase Visual View for the Subject of Science*, the rate of increase in alternate participation was at a peak again, and the rate of increase was significant from the spring of 2022 to the spring of 2023.

Figure 3: Rate of Increase Visual View for the Subject of Science



APPENDIX 3

2024-2025 One Percent District Justification Questions

District Information

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) requires states to ensure that the total number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed in each subject using an alternate assessment does not exceed one percent (1%) of the total number of students in the state assessed on state-wide assessments. The ESSA requires districts exceeding the cap to submit a justification statement to the State to justify the need to exceed the One Percent Cap requirement.

In Alabama, *the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability is a student with an intelligence quotient (IQ) of three standard deviations below the mean which is an IQ score of 55 or below that significantly impacts intellectual functioning and that exists **concurrently with deficits in adaptive functioning** (defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life).*

1. Local Education Agency (LEA) Name
2. District Contact for One Percent Cap Requirements
3. Email
4. Phone
5. The district operates a special school/center specifically for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. List the name of the school(s).
6. The district has experienced an influx of new residents (factory, organization, population), leading to an unusual increase in student population.
7. Does your district enrollment size result in a greater impact on participation rates? **(for example, a district size of 180 students, with two students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, results in a higher than 1% participation rate).**
8. Describe how the district ensures that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities receive the alternate achievement standards by focusing on individualized education program practices. **(Do not include identifiable information.) (Guidance and Compliance)**
9. Has the district provided a clear explanation of the differences between assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards and those based on alternate academic achievement standards, including any potential effects of state and local policies on a student's education resulting from taking an alternate achievement assessment?
10. Has the district ensured that parents of students participating in the alternate achievement standards are informed of any potential effects of state and local policies on a student's education resulting from taking an alternate achievement assessment during the decision-making process? **(Guidance and Compliance)**
11. Has any training been provided to address the instructional needs of diverse learners, if so what kind and who received it? **(Guidance and Compliance)**



Student Population

12. What percentage of students participating in the alternate achievement standards are in **Grades K-2?**
13. What percentage of students participating in the alternate achievement standards are in **Grades 3-4?**
14. What percentage of students participating in the alternate achievement standards are in **Grades 5-6?**
15. What percentage of students participating in the alternate achievement standards are in **Grades 7-8?**
16. What percentage of students participating in the alternate achievement standards are in **Grades 9-12?**
17. Focusing on the grades with the highest percentage, what training or efforts have been implemented to address those grades and the immediately preceding grades? **(For example, if Grades 7-8 have the highest percentage, focus on Grades 7-8 and 5-6.)**
18. How many students participating in alternate achievement standards are identified as Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)? **(Guidance and Compliance)**
19. How many students participating in alternate achievement standards are identified as Specific Learning Disability (SLD)? **(Guidance and Compliance)**
20. Does your district have identified students participating in the alternate achievement standards with an IQ score higher than 55?
21. For those students who **have** a documented IQ score on record, how many have an IQ score higher than 55?
22. Are there any students participating in alternate achievement standards who do not have a documented IQ score?
23. If yes, what information was used to determine the placement of the student(s) in alternate achievement standards?
24. What is the reason for not having a documented IQ score?
25. How many EL students are participating on alternate achievement standards?

Decision-Making Tool

26. Who does the district require to participate in training on the Decision-Making Tool annually? **(Guidance and Compliance)**
27. Each student identified to participate in the alternate achievement standards has a **current** Decision-Making Tool in PowerSchool Special Programs. **(Guidance and Compliance)**



Examining Disproportionate Representation in Alternate Achievement Standards

The examination of disproportionality with regard to alternate achievement standards participation is essentially an inquiry into whether certain groups of students are over- or under-identified as having a significant cognitive disability. These groups include seven racial and ethnic groups (White, Black, or African American, Hispanic, Native American, or Alaska Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial), socioeconomic status (as determined by a student's eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals), and EL.

What is Disproportionality?

Disproportionality exists when there are differences in typical proportions of participants from a student group who participate in the alternate achievement standards in comparison to the course of study.

Instructions to the District:

Disproportionality data has been provided for the district for the purpose of providing an 'overall' look into subgroup data that may or may not be significant. The district is encouraged to examine the data in order to better understand the population of students participating in the alternate achievement standards. The following questions may help determine if any of the subgroup data is meaningful:

1. Are there pronounced differences between the data in the current year compared to previous years?
2. Are there distinct differences for one or more subgroups?
3. Are there contextual factors to consider such as a spike in enrollment of students with significant cognitive disabilities as a result of an expansion of services?
4. Is the data indicative of the district population as a whole?

NOTE: Districts are considered to have a significant disproportionality issue if the N size for the subgroup is greater than or equal to 10 AND the risk ratio is greater than or equal to 1.50.

28. This district has conducted a thorough review of the Disproportionality Data provided by Student Assessment.

29. Which subgroups are identified, and what steps will be taken to address these subgroups?

District Assurance

We acknowledge that the information provided is valid and accurate and can provide supporting documentation or clarification regarding the content within the justification.

By signing below or using electronic signatures (typing your name), the authorized representatives hereby indicate their authority to execute and confirm the accuracy and validity of the information provided.

30. The district understands that the submitted justification will be **available publicly** in accordance with federal regulations.

31. District Contact for One percent Cap Requirements Electronic Signature.

32. Superintendent's Electronic Signature.



APPENDIX 4

Primary Exceptionalities of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment

The ALSDE guidance and support are to educate LEAs about the alternate assessment being a different way of measuring progress for students, specifically students with the most significant cognitive disability. Adherence and understanding of the definition are vital in this effort. Currently, when the categories of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and Speech and Language Impairment (SLI) are considered, the ALSDE informs LEAs that these categories are an interference to cognition being shown or demonstrated, not a limitation in the ability or capacity to think, typical of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Table 13: Alabama's Alternate Participation by Primary Exceptionality

PRIMARY EXCEPTIONALITY	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025 (ESTIMATED)
Autism	1,624	1,835	1,678	1,843	1,955
Deaf-Blindness	*	*	*	*	*
Developmentally Delayed	158	181	34	*	103
Emotional Disability	10	10	*	*	12
Hearing Impaired	47	33	21	17	20
Intellectual Disability	2,617	2,588	2,191	2,180	2,046
Multiple Disabilities	626	647	527	553	579
Other Health Impairment	439	472	425	424	477
Orthopedic Impairment	82	83	63	53	54
Specific Learning Disability	45	42	23	29	28
Speech and Language Disability	29	31	21	16	14
Traumatic Brain Injury	35	45	35	34	33
Visual Impairment	29	31	15	14	16

*Less than 10.



APPENDIX 5

Differentiated Instructional Guide Course of Study Companion Document Training Impact Data

The Differentiated Instructional Guide’s purpose and use for all students in Alabama should make a great impact on how teachers teach and how they identify progress for all students in light of their current circumstances. The [recording of the training](#) is here as well as the [slides for face-to-face training](#).

Date	Location	Participant Number	Local Education Agencies in Attendance	Percentage for SY 2023-2024
August 22, 2024	Regional Inservice Center (Region 7)	26	Chilton County	1.02
			Talladega County	1.46
			Coosa County	1.02
January 11, 2024	Regional Inservice Center (Region 10)	43	Mobile County	1.72
			Chickasaw City	1.7
			Escambia County	1.83
			Saraland City	1.62
			Coffee County	0.61
			Geneva County	0.90
			Baldwin County	1.01
			Andalusia City	0.99
			Thomasville City	1.59
			Vestavia Hills City	0.85
January 20, 2024	Regional Inservice Center (Region 2)	52	Russellville City	1.36
			Cullman City	1.57
			St. Clair County	1.19
			Scottsboro City	0.9
			Hartselle City	1.26
			Blount County	1.04
			Limestone County	0.98
			Morgan County	1.26
			Huntsville City	1.73
			Madison County	1.34
			Birmingham City	1.45
			Tarrant City	1.16
Muscle Shoals City	0.95			



January 25, 2024	Regional Inservice Center (Region 7)	51	Leeds City	1.40
			Attalia City	0.83
			Oxford City	1.24
			Hoover City	1.44
			Andalusia City	0.99
			I3 Academy	0.58
			Fairfield City	1.86
			Homewood City	0.94
			Talladega County	1.46
			Shelby County	1.66
			Auburn City	1.13
			Etowah County	1.15
			Vestavia Hills City	0.85
			Birmingham City	1.45
			Opelika City	1.37
September 20, 2024	Regional Inservice Center (Region 4)	55	Greene County	0.88
			Sumter County	1.44
			Tuscaloosa County	1.65
			Marengo County	1.09
			Choctaw County	2.73
			Vestavia Hills City	0.85
			Tuscaloosa City	2.26
			Pickens County	1.71
October 15, 2024	Regional Inservice Center (Region 4)	31	Fayette County	1.73
			Jefferson County	1.64
			Tuscaloosa City	2.26
			Bessemer City	1.92
			Tuscaloosa County	1.65
			Demopolis City	1.72
			Linden City	3.23
Marengo County	1.09			



APPENDIX 6

District Self-Assessment Deeper Dive of Assurances Questions

Questions 1-20 are LEA Level 1.0 Percent Team Information

21) What are the systemic barriers or challenges that may be hindering the district's ability to provide clear and accurate information about the "alternate?"

- a) What steps can the district take to improve its communication and outreach efforts regarding the "alternate"?
- b) What is the district's specific understanding of students to be considered for the "alternate" in this context?
- c) How does this definition differ from the state's official definition (if applicable)?
- d) How is alternate assessment defined and used in the schools?
- e) Does it align with state and federal guidelines?
- f) Does it promote the inclusion of students with their typical peers to the maximum extent possible?

22) How is the decision to identify a student for the "alternate" made?

- a) Is it based on teacher recommendation, standardized testing, or other factors?
- b) Who is involved in the decision-making process?
- c) Are there any formal procedures or protocols in place?
- d) What are the district's plans for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the alternate assessment identification process?
 - i) How will the district measure the impact of these decisions on student outcomes?
- e) What alternative approaches or strategies has the district considered for supporting students who may require additional academic or behavioral support?

23) How is the LEA addressing the 1.0 percent cap on the number of students participating in alternate assessments?

- a) Did the LEA have a comprehensive plan in place prior to the 2024-2025 school year to address the potential impact of the 1 percent cap on alternate assessments?
- b) If so, how effective has this plan been in mitigating the impact of the cap?
- c) What lessons have been learned from the implementation of the 1 percent cap, and how will these lessons be applied to future planning?
- d) What specific strategies are being implemented to ensure compliance with the



1% cap, while still meeting the needs of eligible students?

- 24) How is the LEA supporting schools that have exceeded the 1.0 percent cap on alternate assessments?
- 25) What specific interventions or supports are being provided to these schools to reduce the number of students participating in alternate assessments?
- 26) What proactive measures are in place to prevent schools that are currently under the 1.0 percent cap from exceeding it in the future?
- 27) How does the LEA explain to parents/guardians the difference between assessments based on regular grade-level standards and those designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities? Including the potential educational implications for students who take alternate assessments, considering state and local policies.
 - a) What specific information and resources are provided?
 - b) How clear and accessible are these materials?
 - c) How is the criteria for student identification communicated, and is it timely and understandable?
 - d) How are the long-term implications of alternate assessment clearly explained, including potential impacts on future education?
 - e) How does the district address parental concerns and questions, and what support mechanisms are available?
 - f) How does the district collaborate with other agencies to ensure a smooth transition for students identified for alternate assessments?
 - g) How does the district's approach to providing information about alternate assessments align with its overall commitment to transparency and parent engagement?
- 28) How does your district justify identifying students as "alternate" in Kindergarten through Grade 2 when there is no state assessment?
- 29) How does the district differentiate between situations where alternate achievement standards are appropriate and those where alternate assessments are more suitable?
 - a) Are there any specific criteria or conditions that must be met?
 - b) Are these criteria aligned with state or national guidelines?
 - c) How are these criteria applied consistently across different schools and classrooms within the district?
 - d) Are there any variations or discrepancies in the identification process?
- 30) How are staff trained to know the potential risks or consequences of identifying students for the "alternate?"
 - a) How does the district mitigate these risks?
 - b) Who does the training?
 - c) Who is the audience at the training?
 - d) What is the intent of this training?



- e) What are the benefits or advantages of identifying students for alternate assessment at this early stage?
 - i) Does the district have evidence to support these claims?
- 31) How does the district ensure that its assessment and placement practices for ELLs promote equity and inclusion?
 - a) Specifically, how are ELLs assessed, and are IQ tests administered in their native language?
 - b) What strategies are in place to provide ELLs with equal access to high-quality education, regardless of language proficiency?
- 32) How does the district ensure that students considered for the alternate assessment receive appropriate accommodations or interventions prior to the consideration for the alternate assessment?
- 33) How does your district address referrals/placement decisions that stem from educational preferences rather than student and data-supported needs?
 - a) Does the district use alternate assessments to determine student placement?
 - b) What alternative strategies are considered for students needing additional support?
 - c) What legal requirements guide student placement decisions?
 - d) How does the district interpret and apply these regulations?
 - e) Are staff aware of the distinction between assessment and placement decisions?
- 34) How does the district ensure that placement decisions are considered as part of a flexible continuum, allowing for movement between more and less restrictive environments?
 - a) Is the district's placement process flexible, allowing for movement between more and less restrictive environments?
 - b) Is the current placement plan effective, or does it need revision?
 - c) Are there safeguards to prevent misuse of the placement process?
 - d) Are all staff aware that placement is an ongoing process?
 - e) Is there a need for a mindset shift to separate alternate assessment decisions from placement decisions?
 - f) Does a qualified individual review the placement continuum before considering alternate assessments?
 - g) Is this reviewer knowledgeable about evidence-based practices and student needs?
- 35) Which of the following training courses would benefit your district? (Select all that apply.)
 - a) Collaborating with Professionals to Increase Success for Students with Disabilities
 - b) Establishing a Consistent, Organized, and Respectful Learning Environment
 - c) Using Explicit Instruction
 - d) Teaching Social Behaviors
 - e) Teaching Students to Maintain and Generalize New Learning Across Time



and Settings

- f) Sensory Considerations for School Based Decisions
- g) Adapting Curriculum Tasks and Materials for Specific Learning Goals
- h) What is Theory of Mind and Central Coherence and How Do They Impact Learning?
- i) Using Flexible Grouping
- j) Using Assistive and Instructional Technologies
- k) Help them Regulate, Before You Educate: Strategies and Tips for Teaching Self-Regulation in Students
- l) Parental Participation
- m) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- n) Progress Monitoring Graphing Option
- o) The Struggle is Real: Understanding How Executive Functioning Deficits Affect Students

36) Are there specific training modules or technical assistance opportunities that the ALSDE could offer to enhance district capacity in this area? (The ALSDE has no control over the 1.0 percent, the ALSDE can't increase or decrease this percentage.)



APPENDIX 7

Additional Support and Oversight Tier Checklists

<i>Table 15: Tier 1- 1.0 Percent Cap Requirements</i>				
Identifiable Criteria: District/LEA Percentage is between 1.10-1.50				
Title			Details	Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in the Universal Webinar		Link	September 27, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in Justification Statement Office Hour		Link	October 1, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	District Justification Form for the 1% Cap		Link	October 19, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disproportionality		Link	On Demand
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in Tier 1 Webinar		Link	October 25, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Justification Form		Link	November 1-15, 2024
	Root Cause Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment (Collaborative LEA Policies, Practices, and Procedures Discussion)	Self-Assessment Webinar	November 8-22, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide Tailored Professional Learning Plan		Data-Driven	After the Self-Assessment
	Required Annual Trainings	<input type="checkbox"/> DTC or Back to School	Annually	August
		<input type="checkbox"/> January DTC Meeting	Link	January 29, 2025 (2 hours)
		<input type="checkbox"/> ASAP Manual (Case Manager & IEP LEA Representative/s)	Link	January 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making (Case Manager & IEP LEA Representative/s)		Link	On Demand
	Office Hours		Schedule Here!	As Needed



Table 16: Tier 2- 1.0 Percent Cap Requirements

Identifiable Criteria: District/LEA Percentage is between 1.51-1.99				
Title		Details		Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in the Universal Webinar		Link	September 27, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in Justification Statement Office Hour		Link	October 1, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	District Justification Form for the 1% Cap		Link	October 19, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disproportionality		Link	On Demand
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in Tier 2 Webinar		Link	October 22, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Justification Form		Link	November 1- 15, 2024
	Root Cause Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Assessment (Collaborative LEA Policies, Practices, and Procedures Discussion)	Self-Assessment Webinar November 8- 22, 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1) LEA Conducts Internal Records Review	Data-Driven November 14- December 13, 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2) LEA Develops Internal Records Review Data Walk Presentation	Data-Driven November 14- December 13, 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3) LEA Delivers Data Walk Presentation to ALSDE Virtually	Schedule with ALSDE Schedule by January 3, 2025 (Conference Calls will take place after this date.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide Tailored Professional Learning Plan		Data-Driven	At Scheduled Conference
	Required Annual Trainings	<input type="checkbox"/>	DTC or Back to School	Annually August
		<input type="checkbox"/>	January DTC Meeting	Link January 29, 2025 (2 hours)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	ASAP Manual (Case Manager & IEP LEA Representative/s)	Link January 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making (Case Manager & IEP LEA Representative/s)		Link	On Demand
	Office Hours		Schedule Here!	As Needed



Table 17: Tier 2- 1.0 Percent Cap Requirements

Identifiable Criteria: District/LEA Percentage is 2.00 and up					
	Title		Details	Date	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in the Universal Webinar		Link	September 27, 2024	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in Justification Statement Office Hour		Link	October 1, 2024	
<input type="checkbox"/>	District Justification Form for the 1% Cap		Link	October 19, 2024	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disproportionality		Link	On Demand	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in Tier 3 Webinar		Link	November 4, 2024	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify 1.0 Percent Team for LEA		Data-Driven	October 28, 2024	
	Root Cause Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Assessment (Collaborative LEA Policies, Practices, and Procedures Discussion)	Self-Assessment Webinar	November 8- 22, 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1) LEA Conducts Internal Records Review	Data-Driven	November 14- December 13, 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2) LEA Develops Internal Records Review Data Walk Presentation	Data-Driven	November 14- December 13, 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3) LEA Delivers Data Walk Presentation to ALSDE Virtually	Schedule with ALSDE	Schedule by January 3, 2025 (Conference Calls will take place after this date.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide Tailored Professional Learning Plan		Data-Driven	At Scheduled Conference	
	Required Annual Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	DTC or Back to School	Annually	August
		<input type="checkbox"/>	January DTC Meeting	Link	January 29, 2025 (2 hours)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	ASAP Manual (Case Manager & IEP LEA Representative/s)	Link	January 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making (Case Manager & IEP LEA Representative/s)		Link	On Demand	
	On-Site Visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	1) Schedule ALSDE Visit	Schedule Here!	November 8, 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2) ALSDE/LEA Team On-Site	Data-Driven	December 2024
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3) Post On-Site Reflection Activity	Data-Driven	After On-Site Visit
	Office Hours		Schedule Here!	As Needed	



APPENDIX 8

Alternate Tested Students-Percentage for Multiple Years For All LEAs

Table 18: Alternate Tested Students- Percentage for Multiple Years For All Districts

DISTRICT CODE	DISTRICT NAME	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
		- 2017	- 2018	- 2019	- 2021	- 2022	- 2023	- 2024
812	Alabama Aerospace and Aviation							0.00
103	Alabaster City	1.03	1.12	0.96	1.37	1.61	1.39	1.57
101	Albertville City	0.81	0.76	0.86	0.93	1.04	1.14	1.09
102	Alexander City	1.16	1.23	1.74	0.78	1.32	1.04	1.31
104	Andalusia City	0.88	0.85	0.97	0.88	0.78	1.09	0.99
105	Anniston City	1.63	1.30	1.34	1.77	2.48	2.53	1.97
106	Arab City	1.07	0.82	1.21	0.74	1.35	1.58	1.05
107	Athens City	0.92	0.77	0.90	0.84	0.76	0.78	0.84
109	Attalla City	0.87	0.39	0.51	0.97	0.93	1.46	0.83
110	Auburn City	0.94	0.75	1.00	1.07	1.14	0.96	1.13
001	Autauga County	1.05	1.09	0.97	1.08	0.85	1.07	1.37
002	Baldwin County	1.14	1.21	1.11	0.97	0.97	0.94	1.01
003	Barbour County	2.42	1.94	2.66	2.92	2.19	1.66	2.45
113	Bessemer City	1.68	2.28	1.88	2.50	1.90	1.85	1.92
004	Bibb County	1.57	1.35	1.57	1.13	1.66	1.43	1.53
114	Birmingham City	1.14	1.17	0.97	0.88	1.09	1.16	1.45
005	Blount County	0.85	1.20	1.13	1.24	1.27	1.26	1.04
115	Boaz City	0.78	1.15	0.73	0.56	0.32	0.76	0.55
808	Breakthrough Charter School					4.35	1.65	1.33
116	Brewton City	1.57	1.54	1.59	1.95	2.20	1.84	1.42
006	Bullock County	0.92	2.07	1.56	1.42	1.49	1.88	1.18
007	Butler County	0.91	1.37	0.89	1.27	1.51	1.45	1.59
008	Calhoun County	0.98	1.04	1.12	0.70	0.98	0.91	0.88
009	Chambers County	1.65	1.91	2.10	2.05	1.61	1.82	1.53
010	Cherokee County	0.63	0.76	0.64	0.60	0.58	0.47	0.64
121	Chickasaw City	1.40	1.83	1.66	1.29	2.32	2.55	1.70
011	Chilton County	1.24	1.05	1.13	0.98	0.72	0.58	1.02
012	Choctaw County	1.45	1.27	1.67	2.29	2.79	2.57	2.73
013	Clarke County	1.86	1.52	1.47	1.88	1.86	1.96	2.42
014	Clay County	1.99	1.81	1.97	2.27	2.22	2.26	1.68



DISTRICT CODE	DISTRICT NAME	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
		- 2017	- 2018	- 2019	- 2021	- 2022	- 2023	- 2024
015	Cleburne County	0.82	1.22	0.93	1.21	1.11	1.27	0.96
016	Coffee County	0.73	0.53	0.63	0.59	0.49	0.55	0.61
017	Colbert County	1.02	1.06	0.67	0.95	0.85	1.07	1.30
018	Conecuh County	0.42	0.63	0.85	0.69	0.43	0.59	1.74
019	Coosa County	1.16	1.88	2.74	2.00	2.26	2.50	1.02
813	Covenant Academy of Mobile							0.00
020	Covington County	0.80	0.80	0.57	0.69	0.48	0.51	0.52
021	Crenshaw County	1.47	1.21	1.27	2.40	1.33	1.07	1.23
125	Cullman City	1.13	0.76	0.99	1.35	1.32	1.57	1.32
022	Cullman County	0.89	1.00	1.07	1.06	1.24	1.23	1.57
023	Dale County	1.00	0.93	0.78	1.04	1.14	0.77	0.72
126	Daleville City	1.67	1.51	0.92	0.52	1.91	1.37	1.60
024	Dallas County	1.81	2.25	2.18	1.68	1.24	1.27	1.51
127	Decatur City	1.63	1.41	1.51	1.00	1.18	1.34	1.29
025	DeKalb County	1.00	1.07	1.01	1.21	1.32	1.31	1.10
128	Demopolis City	1.49	1.46	1.18	1.02	1.18	2.06	1.72
130	Dothan City	1.42	1.55	1.83	1.61	1.73	1.94	1.80
131	Elba City	0.64	0.32	1.30	0.66	0.32	0.94	1.03
026	Elmore County	0.97	1.03	1.15	1.11	1.02	0.90	1.10
811	Empower Community School						0.00	0.00
132	Enterprise City	0.55	0.45	0.46	0.43	0.35	0.44	0.58
027	Escambia County	1.47	1.34	1.69	1.19	1.42	1.68	1.83
028	Etowah County	0.70	0.79	0.88	0.83	0.99	1.12	1.15
133	Eufaula City	1.20	1.36	1.67	1.24	1.92	1.97	1.68
137	Fairfield City	1.41	1.48	2.22	1.35	1.03	1.06	1.86
029	Fayette County	1.24	1.73	1.19	1.02	1.29	1.98	1.73
141	Florence City	1.31	1.23	1.31	1.51	1.48	1.49	1.45
143	Fort Payne City	0.92	1.07	1.17	1.17	0.93	1.20	1.30
030	Franklin County	1.14	1.32	1.48	1.56	1.63	1.85	1.40
144	Gadsden City	0.84	0.91	0.78	0.90	1.37	1.36	1.40
146	Geneva City	0.82	1.16	1.04	1.06	0.62	0.77	0.90
031	Geneva County	0.94	0.98	0.80	0.80	0.86	1.45	1.25
032	Greene County	0.71	1.49	1.52	0.96	1.06	1.75	0.88
152	Gulf Shores City				0.61	0.96	0.77	1.32
154	Guntersville City	1.16	0.91	1.20	0.88	0.97	1.25	1.22
033	Hale County	0.88	0.96	0.80	1.01	0.93	0.78	0.54
155	Haleyville City	1.01	1.29	1.05	0.84	0.59	0.76	0.25
156	Hartselle City	0.42	0.65	0.64	1.01	0.99	1.10	1.26



DISTRICT CODE	DISTRICT NAME	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
		- 2017	- 2018	- 2019	- 2021	- 2022	- 2023	- 2024
034	Henry County	1.66	1.83	2.08	2.37	2.18	1.61	1.44
157	Homewood City	0.85	0.83	0.86	0.63	0.64	1.00	0.94
158	Hoover City	0.63	0.68	0.67	1.03	1.22	1.22	1.44
035	Houston County	1.49	1.34	1.46	1.60	1.48	1.46	1.57
159	Huntsville City	1.53	1.65	1.68	1.44	1.48	1.72	1.73
805	i3 Academy				0.46	0.32	0.73	0.58
036	Jackson County	0.60	0.54	0.62	0.53	0.81	0.86	0.83
162	Jacksonville City	0.96	0.73	0.94	0.76	0.98	1.54	1.53
163	Jasper City	1.65	1.59	1.67	0.98	0.58	0.69	1.02
037	Jefferson County	1.47	1.63	1.59	1.47	1.45	1.62	1.64
038	Lamar County	0.39	0.73	0.58	0.79	0.90	1.27	1.28
165	Lanett City	0.70	0.88	1.58	1.67	1.05	0.96	1.64
039	Lauderdale County	0.93	0.91	0.79	1.02	0.82	1.03	0.93
040	Lawrence County	1.34	0.96	1.12	1.22	1.23	1.54	1.45
802	LEAD Academy				1.19	0.37	0.53	0.00
041	Lee County	1.29	1.24	1.07	1.13	0.96	1.35	1.57
167	Leeds City	1.40	1.47	1.41	1.34	1.53	1.52	1.40
803	Legacy Prep					0.00	0.00	1.04
807	LIFE Academy						0.00	0.00
042	Limestone County	1.22	1.11	1.06	0.92	0.77	1.03	0.98
168	Linden City	3.95	5.16	4.17	6.67	3.48	5.35	3.23
043	Lowndes County	1.31	1.66	2.26	1.25	1.77	1.95	2.34
044	Macon County	1.19	1.48	1.50	1.49	2.49	1.90	1.97
169	Madison City	1.25	1.04	1.20	1.19	1.02	1.30	1.34
045	Madison County	1.25	1.29	1.39	1.34	1.43	1.56	1.52
800	MAEF Public Charter Schools					0.00	0.00	0.00
810	Magic City Acceptance Academy					0.00	0.55	0.54
046	Marengo County	2.55	1.65	1.68	1.84	0.65	0.92	1.09
047	Marion County	1.27	1.09	1.15	0.87	1.05	1.11	1.36
048	Marshall County	0.81	0.70	0.88	0.99	0.93	1.01	1.16
171	Midfield City	2.50		2.06	1.32	0.99	1.11	0.59
049	Mobile County	1.57	1.50	1.51	1.54	1.62	1.62	1.72
050	Monroe County	1.24	1.21	1.34	2.08	1.58	1.42	1.68
051	Montgomery County	1.57	1.57	1.56	1.54	1.33	1.65	1.46
052	Morgan County	1.17	0.97	1.30	1.35	1.08	0.95	1.26
175	Mountain Brook City	0.74	1.09	1.01	0.98	1.05	0.82	0.93
176	Muscle Shoals City	0.52	0.52	0.33	0.41	1.04	0.76	0.95
178	Oneonta City	0.98	0.72	0.97	0.80	0.94	0.97	0.72



DISTRICT CODE	DISTRICT NAME	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
		- 2017	- 2018	- 2019	- 2021	- 2022	- 2023	- 2024
179	Opelika City	1.07	0.79	1.14	1.08	1.21	1.17	1.37
180	Opp City	0.75	1.49	1.72	1.07	1.67	1.37	1.04
174	Orange Beach City						0.14	0.16
181	Oxford City	1.13	1.24	1.46	1.55	0.96	1.03	1.24
182	Ozark City	1.79	2.28	2.69	2.19	2.31	2.26	3.16
177	Pelham City	0.92	0.68	1.13	1.36	1.41	1.47	1.57
183	Pell City	0.39	0.75	0.91	0.83	1.17	1.40	1.54
053	Perry County	1.60	1.80	1.37	1.56	1.34	1.38	1.15
184	Phenix City	0.81	0.74	0.79	0.48	0.55	1.05	1.10
054	Pickens County	1.27	1.41	1.57	1.09	1.51	1.36	1.71
185	Piedmont City	1.98	1.76	1.18	1.42	1.06	1.69	1.50
055	Pike County	1.10	0.97	0.76	1.16	1.89	1.38	1.04
186	Pike Road City	0.23	0.45	0.93	0.72	1.28	0.95	0.96
056	Randolph County	1.48	1.93	1.55	1.09	1.34	1.71	1.49
188	Roanoke City	0.63	0.88	1.03	0.69	1.15	1.27	1.19
057	Russell County	1.04	1.00	0.98	0.70	0.87	0.72	0.89
189	Russellville City	1.00	0.89	0.95	0.94	1.01	1.13	1.36
187	Saraland City	0.93	1.23	1.09	1.72	1.80	1.63	1.62
196	Satsuma City	0.90	0.75	0.84	0.91	1.28	1.04	1.18
190	Scottsboro City	1.12	0.99	0.92	0.80	0.55	0.82	0.90
191	Selma City	1.45	1.53	1.92	1.70	2.07	2.33	2.12
192	Sheffield City	2.14	2.09	2.14	1.70	1.30	2.05	1.77
059	Shelby County	1.36	1.41	1.62	1.50	1.65	1.73	1.66
058	St Clair County	1.40	1.44	1.27	0.99	1.01	1.10	1.19
060	Sumter County	1.70	2.19	1.62	1.59	1.66	1.87	1.44
193	Sylacauga City	1.77	1.27	1.25	1.43	1.95	2.15	1.99
194	Talladega City	2.06	1.94	2.58	3.27	2.91	2.11	3.68
061	Talladega County	0.98	0.79	0.93	1.19	1.14	1.43	1.46
062	Tallapoosa County	1.56	1.45	1.38	1.35	0.99	0.99	0.70
195	Tallassee City	1.52	1.56	1.52	1.32	1.17	1.93	1.60
197	Tarrant City	1.67	1.16	1.26	1.19	1.50	1.34	1.16
198	Thomasville City	0.62	0.64	0.97	1.28	1.42	1.88	1.59
199	Troy City	1.84	2.62	1.96	2.05	1.92	1.85	2.50
205	Trussville City	0.28	0.67	0.47	1.00	1.28	1.40	1.16
200	Tuscaloosa City	1.41	1.79	1.71	2.07	1.93	2.05	2.26
063	Tuscaloosa County	1.30	1.61	1.43	1.42	1.57	1.64	1.65
201	Tuscumbia City	0.73	0.73	1.00	0.67	0.82	0.80	1.60
801	University Charter School			0.00	0.77	1.69	3.47	2.40



DISTRICT CODE	DISTRICT NAME	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023
		- 2017	- 2018	- 2019	- 2021	- 2022	- 2023	- 2024
202	Vestavia Hills City	0.60	0.68	0.80	0.30	0.31	0.52	0.85
064	Walker County	1.41	1.40	1.28	1.13	1.12	1.12	1.27
065	Washington County	1.69	1.93	1.82	2.12	2.10	2.11	1.28
066	Wilcox County	2.35	2.14	2.63	2.88	2.22	3.42	3.95
204	Winfield City	0.91	0.90	1.08	1.52	1.20	1.12	1.45
067	Winston County	0.55	0.56	0.51	0.99	0.98	1.00	1.27



APPENDIX 9

2024-2025 Projected Alternate Assessment Participation

Table 19: 2024-2025 School Year AA-AAAS Projected Participation by Subject: English Language Arts

Group	Total # of Students in Grades 3-8 and HS Language Arts 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total # of Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8 and HS Language Arts 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total # of Students Taking State Language Arts AA-AAAS Grades 3-8 and HS 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total % of Students Taking State Language Arts AA-AAAS Grades 3-8 and HS 2024-2025 Est (Fall)
All Students	381,101	55,265	5,342	1.40%
English Learners	24,783	3,229	246	0.99%
Asian	5,991	406	92	1.54%
Black	117,641	19,248	2,138	1.82%
Hispanic	45,803	5,095	536	1.17%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3,126	375	27	0.86%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	400	43	13	3.25%
Two or More Races	14,963	2,122	53	0.35%
White	193,177	27,976	2,348	1.22%
Economically Disadvantaged	224,545	40,496	4,200	1.87%
Female	185,514	20,318	1,747	0.94%
Male	195,586	34,947	3,595	1.84%



Table 20: 2024-2025 School Year AA-AAAS Projected Participation by Subject: Math

Group	Total # of Students in Grades 3-8 and HS Math 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total # of Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8 and HS Math 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total # of Students Taking State Math AA-AAAS Grades 3-8 and HS 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total % of Students Taking State Math AA-AAAS Grades 3-8 and HS 2024-2025 Est (Fall)
All Students	381,101	55,265	5,342	1.40%
English Learners	24,783	3,229	246	0.99%
Asian	5,991	406	92	1.54%
Black	117,641	19,248	2,138	1.82%
Hispanic	45,803	5,095	536	1.17%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3,126	375	27	0.86%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	400	43	13	3.25%
Two or More Races	14,963	2,122	53	0.35%
White	193,177	27,976	2,348	1.22%
Economically Disadvantaged	224,545	40,496	4,200	1.87%
Female	185,514	20,318	1,747	0.94%
Male	195,586	34,947	3,595	1.84%



Table 21: 2024-2025 School Year AA-AAAS Projected Participation by Subject: Science

Group	Total # of Students in Grades 3-8 and HS Science 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total # of Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8 and HS Science 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total # of Students Taking State Science AA-AAAS Grades 3-8 and HS 2024-2025 Est (Fall)	Total % of Students Taking State Science AA-AAAS Grades 3-8 and HS 2024-2025 Est (Fall)
All Students	163,456	22,340	2,260	1.38%
English Learners	10,112	1,306	88	0.87%
Asian	2,517	155	33	1.31%
Black	50,790	8,076	930	1.83%
Hispanic	19,346	2,069	225	1.16%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1,404	164	*	0.64%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	169	22	*	3.55%
Two or More Races	6,077	845	77	1.27%
White	83,153	11,009	980	1.18%
Economically Disadvantaged	93,734	16,235	1,776	1.89%
Female	79,696	8,079	756	0.95%
Male	83,759	14,261	1,504	1.80%

*Less than 10.



APPENDIX 10

Alabama Participation Rates Per Subject

Subject	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
English Language Arts	Reading 98.91%	93.65%	98.04%	98.55%	98.64%
Math	99.12%	93.73%	98.35%	98.78%	98.99%
Science	98.39%	92.91%	97.56%	98.21%	98.50%
<i>*SY 2020-2021--ALSDE was granted a waiver from the Participation Rate.</i>					



APPENDIX 11

Questions for probing Cross-State Collaboration on the Definition of a Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disability

1. How do students with the most significant cognitive disabilities typically engage in daily learning activities? Please describe any unique learning characteristics including, but not limited to, communication mode, classroom setting, academic skills, behavior, challenges, or strengths you have observed.
2. What are some of the differences in learning characteristics between students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are receiving instruction aligned to the Alabama Alternate Achievement Standards and students with disabilities who are receiving instruction aligned to the Alabama Course of Study Standards?
3. Based on your experience, please share examples of adaptive functioning challenges that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may encounter and how it may impact their ability to participate in daily school routines and activities.
4. The definition above states that determination is not solely by an IQ test but rather a holistic understanding. Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree with the holistic approach mentioned in the definition.
5. Are there any critical elements that you feel are missing from this definition, or could be improved for clarity? Can you provide examples from your experience where the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability aligns well or falls short?
6. How might this definition impact your teaching or assessment practices? Are there any adjustments or additional supports you might consider based on this definition?

