

The logo for the Ohio Department of Education features the word "Ohio" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a thick, lime-green circle. The background is a blue-tinted photograph of a classroom with students raising their hands and a chalkboard with math problems.

# Ohio

## **One Percent Waiver Extension Request for Reading, Mathematics and Science**

**ESEA section 111(b)(2)(D) and 34 CFR 200.6(c) and (d)**

**Submission to U.S. Department of Education**

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## INTRODUCTION

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, addresses alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Each state must submit a waiver request to the U.S. Department of Education if it predicts exceeding 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment in a subject. Ohio submitted and was granted a waiver for school year 2017-2018. Ohio submitted and was granted a waiver extension request for school year 2020-2021.

Ohio's alternate assessment participation rates were 1.95 percent in reading, 1.99 percent in mathematics and 2.02 percent in science for school year 2017-2018. Due to the pandemic leading to school building closures in March 2020, Ohio was unable to complete statewide alternate assessment testing in spring 2020. Therefore, Ohio used school year 2019-2020 alternate assessment participation data. Participation rates in school year 2020-2021, were 1.37 percent in reading, 1.40 percent in mathematics and 1.45 percent in science (*See Table 1*). Ohio anticipates exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold for the 2021-2022 administration of the alternate assessment in reading, mathematics and science and is requesting an extension to the current waiver.

Table 1 shows the percentage of students who took an alternate assessment by content area in grades 3-8 and high school in school years 2016-2017 through 2020-2021. Using the EdFacts data set, participation for 2020-2021 in reading decreased by .56 percent, mathematics decreased by .55 percent and science alternate assessments decreased by .51 percent.

**Table 1: Participation in Alternate Assessment by Content Area Across Years (EdFacts)**

Content Area	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2020-2021	Change
Reading	1.93%	1.95%	1.93%	1.37%	-.56%
Mathematics	1.97%	1.99%	1.95%	1.40%	-.55%
Science	1.89%	2.02%	1.96%	1.45%	-.51%

As stipulated in the Every Student Succeeds Act, Ohio's improvement plan includes annually requiring justifications from districts and community schools exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold, supporting and monitoring districts and community schools to appropriately use the state's eligibility guidelines for the alternate assessment, and using a statewide tiered system of support to provide appropriate oversight and support to districts that exceed the 1.0 percent threshold.

Ohio's participation rate continues to be above the 1.0 percent threshold. The Ohio Department of Education is collaborating with local and national partners to develop and implement innovative approaches to ensure only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are participating in Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities. An Alternate Assessment Participation Workgroup (Workgroup), created at the Department in early 2017, continues with regularly scheduled meetings and includes representatives from the Offices for Exceptional Children, Learning and Instructional Strategies, Assessment, Innovation and Improvement, Accountability, Data Quality and Governance and Community Schools. This cross-agency team participates in the National Center for Educational Outcomes Community of Practice and Professional Learning Groups, and includes The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Assessment, Standards and Education of Students with Disabilities (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment, Standards and Students (SCASS) members, representatives from the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) ) and members from Ohio's [state support teams](#). The Workgroup has consulted with

numerous stakeholder groups such as the Ohio State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children, the Ohio Association of Pupil Service Administrators and the special education statewide testing advisory committee to gather input and feedback throughout the school year.

Ohio continues to build on the Department's system of regional state support teams to provide technical assistance and monitoring to local districts and community schools. The Department collaborates with state support team directors and key staff members to implement a tiered system of support to assist districts and community schools in reviewing and improving their alternate assessment policies and practices. The goal is to ensure that only eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the state's alternate assessments. Ohio's tiered intervention monitoring plan is described in more detail beginning on page 11 of this document.

As stipulated in the Every Student Succeeds Act, districts and community schools that expect to exceed 1.0 percent participation are required to complete and submit an electronic justification and assurances.

Due to COVID-19, the United States Department of Education waived the requirement for states to collect justifications from districts in school year 2020-2021. However, states were still required to collect assurances from districts that staff are appropriately using Department guidelines and resources. The Department collected these assurances from 701 districts. This is a 75% submission rate, and the Office for Exceptional Children followed up with the 275 districts that did not respond by the due date of Jan. 29, 2020. The majority of 275 non-responders submitted a justification while the remainder of districts were referred to the comprehensive monitoring system team.

#### Alignment to Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education

[\*Each Child, Our Future\*](#) is Ohio's strategic plan for education. The purpose of the plan is to lift aspirations, create hope and excitement, guide development of state-level education policies and promote high-quality educational practices across the state. Introduced in 2018, the plan focuses on three core principles: Equity, Partnerships and Quality Schools – with the goal of creating a system in which each student is challenged, prepared and empowered for his or her future. The Department's work on alternate assessment participation aligns with the purpose and goals of Ohio's strategic plan. The Department is working to reduce participation in alternate assessments not solely to meet federal requirements but to ensure each student has access to rigorous curriculum and assessments that prepares them for future success. *Ohio's goal is to ensure the right students are taking the right tests.*

Building on [\*Each Child, Our Future\*](#) and modeling its partnership-based approach, the Ohio Department of Education convened [stakeholders](#) to craft a plan aimed at improving learning experiences and outcomes for students with disabilities. Beginning in January 2019 and wrapping up in December 2019, stakeholders and staff from the Department worked together to identify a set of recommendations for increasing literacy skills, improving disproportionality, promoting postsecondary success, fostering inclusive leadership and advancing high-quality instructional practices among educators who serve students with disabilities.

These recommendations ultimately resulted in [\*Each Child Means Each Child: Ohio's Plan to Improve Learning Experiences and Outcomes for Students with Disabilities\*](#).

*Each Child Means Each Child* offers recommendations, tactics and action steps to ensure Ohio's 270,000 students currently enrolled in public schools who have been identified with disabilities benefit from the vision and core principles heralded in Ohio's strategic plan for education.

*Each Child Means Each Child* uses data to illustrate what education looks like for Ohio's students with disabilities. Additionally, it organizes recommendations, tactics and actions to improve these educational experiences into three major focus areas:

- Getting to the Problem Early via Multi-Tiered System of Support
- Building Educators' and Systemwide Capacity via Professional Learning
- Educating for Living a Good Life via Postsecondary Readiness and Planning

The plan also contains stories that demonstrate how student outcomes might improve when the recommendations of the plan are implemented.

Ohio's strategic plans recognize that equity of education achievement is a persisting challenge. Access to academically challenging standards is fundamental to achieving equity in education and overreliance on Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities. The alternate assessment can limit students' access to rigorous curriculum and assessment that meet the personalized learning needs of each child. The Department is working with regional state support teams, educational service centers, districts, community schools and other partners to improve the process of identifying students for participation in the alternate assessment to ensure that all students have equitable access to high-quality education and related services leading to post-secondary success. The strategic plans promote a focus on meeting the needs of the whole child. As we improve our ability to meet students' individual learning, behavioral and social emotional needs, fewer students will be at risk of being inappropriately identified as having a disability and therefore being inappropriately assigned to take an alternate assessment.

Ohio's focus on equity as a core principle has made access to appropriately rigorous curriculum and assessment for all students a priority. While the Department is working to reduce the percentage of students participating in the alternate assessment, another priority is to ensure that all students are taking the most appropriate assessments given their unique needs. The Department is working with regional state support teams, districts and community schools to ensure that Individualized Education Program teams are using guidance documents appropriately, consistently applying the criteria for alternate assessment participation and using the available accommodations to provide students with disabilities access to Ohio's State Tests.

Ohio has taken significant steps toward improving the appropriate use of the alternate assessment statewide. These steps include the following:

1. The Department developed three new [Family Resources](#) in spring 2021. These Frequently Asked Questions resources were developed to describe the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities. The first resource addresses the format for the online alternate assessment. The second resource details eligibility and participation in the alternate assessment. The third resource provides information on Ohio's Learning Standards-Extended and instruction for students who participate in the alternate assessment. The family resources are provided in a Spanish version as well.
2. The Department added alternate assessment participation rates to both the [Special Education Profiles and Special Education Ratings](#), which are published annually. Both the profiles and the ratings are available to stakeholders and include easy to understand explanations of the published data. Districts and community schools identified as significantly exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold are assigned to Tier 3 of a tiered intervention and support system. Districts and community schools identified for Tier 3 are required, with the assistance of regional state support team consultants, to complete a root cause data analysis and an improvement plan. Regional state support team consultants piloted the National

Center on Educational Outcomes' [Disproportionality Calculator](#) with Tier 3 districts. All tier 3 districts identified in 2021-2022 will complete the Self-Review Summary Report, an Improvement Plan and the Disproportionality Calculator. These activities are monitored at the state level through Ohio's compliance dashboard.

3. The Department continues to work in partnership with stakeholder groups like OCAL's state [Assistive Technology network](#) and others to provide regional state support teams with training and tools to support appropriate use of the alternate assessment and Ohio's Learning Standards – Extended.
4. The Department implemented the [Alternate Assessment Decision-Making Tool](#) in fall 2020. The tool is embedded in the state's individualized education program documents and required to be utilized when statewide testing is considered. The regional state support team consultants will continue to provide district training on the tool prior to the spring 2022 alternate assessment test administration window.
5. The Department will require all Tier 3 districts and schools to complete the National Center on Educational Outcome's [Disproportionality Calculator](#) as a component of mandatory action steps.
6. Alternate Assessment Workgroup members from across the agency, along with selected stakeholders, participate in ongoing national learning and networking opportunities. These opportunities include the National Center on Educational Outcomes' Communities of Practice and Professional Learning Groups, the TIES Center's Professional Learning Groups, membership in CCSSO ASES SCASS and OCAL's [OCALICON](#) international conference. With support from the United States Department of Education Office for Elementary and Secondary Education, the National Center for Educational Outcomes began providing technical assistance to Ohio on their one percent work in February 2020. Ohio meets with the National Center for Educational Outcomes monthly and the technical assistance is ongoing.

The 2021-2022 state waiver extension request was posted for public comment from November 8-15, 2021.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF ONE PERCENT WAIVER EXTENSION REQUEST

**Component 1**

***Be submitted at least 90 days prior to the start of the state’s testing window for the relevant subject;***

Ohio’s assessment window for the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities opens Feb. 22, 2022. Ninety days prior to the start of Ohio’s testing window (Nov. 22, 2021), the Department will submit a waiver extension request to the United States Department of Education.

**Component 2**

***Provide state-level data, from the current or previous school year, to show:***

***a. The number and percentage of students in each subgroup of students who took an alternate assessment;***

Component two of Ohio’s one percent waiver extension request includes the number and percentage of students assessed in each subgroup of students who took the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (See Tables 2A-2C).

**Table 2A: 2020-2021 Participation in the Reading Alternate Assessment (Grades 3-8 and High School)**

Subgroup	Number of Students Who Took the Standard Assessment	Number of Students Who Took the Alternate Assessment	All Students Tested	Percent Alternately Assessed
<b>All Students</b>	<b>828,659</b>	<b>11,503</b>	<b>840,162</b>	<b>1.37%</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	944	14	958	1.48%
Asian or Pacific Islander	22,163	260	22,423	1.17%
Black, Non-Hispanic	130,111	2,731	132,842	2.10%
Hispanic	55,747	736	56,483	1.32%
Multiracial	47,181	599	47,780	1.27%
White, Non-Hispanic	572,513	7,163	579,676	1.25%
Students with Disabilities	120,344	11,477	131,821	9.54%
Economically Disadvantaged	399,926	7,115	407,041	1.78%
English Learners	25,201	602	25,803	2.39%

**Table 2B: 2020-2021 Participation in the Mathematics Alternate Assessment (Grades 3-8 and High School)**

Subgroup	Number of Students Who Took the Standard Assessment	Number of Students Who Took the Alternate Assessment	All Students Tested	Percent Alternately Assessed
<b>All Students</b>	<b>810,244</b>	<b>11,468</b>	<b>821,712</b>	<b>1.40%</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	923	14	937	1.52%
Asian or Pacific Islander	21,254	260	21,514	1.22%
Black, Non-Hispanic	125,697	2,699	128,396	2.15%
Hispanic	54,512	733	55,245	1.34%



Multiracial	45,973	606	46,579	1.32%
White, Non-Hispanic	561,885	7,156	569,041	1.27%
Students with Disabilities	117,475	11,443	128,918	9.74%
Economically Disadvantaged	389,209	7,066	396,275	1.82%
English Learners	24,659	592	25,251	2.40%

**Table 2C: 2020-2021 Participation in the Science Alternate Assessment (Grade 3-8 and High School)**

Subgroup	Number of Students Who Took the Standard Assessment	Number of Students Who Took the Alternate Assessment	All Students Tested	Percent Alternately Assessed
<b>All Students</b>	<b>355,201</b>	<b>5,225</b>	<b>360,426</b>	<b>1.45%</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	394	9	403	2.28%
Asian or Pacific Islander	9,224	107	9,331	1.16%
Black, Non-Hispanic	53,107	1,157	54,264	2.18%
Hispanic	22,933	323	23,256	1.41%
Multiracial	19,177	247	19,424	1.29%
White, Non-Hispanic	250,366	3,382	253,748	1.35%
Students with Disabilities	50,477	5,214	55,691	10.33%
Economically Disadvantaged	163,363	3,088	166,451	1.89%
English Learners	9,300	226	9,526	2.43%

***b. The state measured the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of students in the children with disabilities subgroup enrolled in grades for which the assessment is required.***

Ohio follows federal requirements for participation in statewide assessments as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act. Students in grades 3 through 8 are required to take both reading and mathematics assessments annually. Students in grades 5 and 8 must take a science assessment. High school students are required to take end-of-course exams in reading, mathematics and science. Ohio did not meet federal requirements for statewide test participation in 2020-2021 through the administration of Ohio's State Tests. Data in Table 3 indicate that the Department measured achievement of 93.5 percent of all students and 91.3 percent of students with disabilities enrolled in grades and courses for which an assessment is required. The Department measured achievement of less than 95 percent of students in the students with disabilities subgroup enrolled in grades and courses for which an assessment is required. Ohio requests a waiver to the 95 percent participation rate requirement found in 34 CFR 200.6(c)(4)(ii)(B) and provides the 2018-2019 participation data in Table 4.

**Table 3: 2020-2021 Participation Rate of All Students and Students with Disabilities (Grades 3-8 and High School)**

Subject	Students Tested	Students Required to Test	Assessment Participation Rate for All Students	Students with Disabilities Tested	Students with Disabilities Required to Test	Assessment Participation Rate for Students with Disabilities
Reading	840,162	892,950	94.09%	131,821	143,194	92.06%
Math	821,712	879,672	93.41%	128,918	141,197	91.30%
Science	360,426	388,238	92.84%	55,691	61,883	89.99%

**Table 4: 2018-2019 Participation Rate of All Students and Students with Disabilities (Grades 3-8 and High School)**

Subject	Students Tested	Students Required to Test	Assessment Participation Rate for All Students	Students with Disabilities Tested	Students with Disabilities Required to Test	Assessment Participation Rate for Students with Disabilities
Reading	911,792	916,706	99.46%	145,029	146,496	99.00%
Math	902,878	908,972	99.33%	143,795	145,599	98.76%
Science	388,947	393,203	98.92%	59,956	61,164	98.02%

### Component 3A

***Include assurances from the state that it has verified that each district or community school that the state anticipates will assess more than 1 percent of its assessed students in any subject using an alternate assessment followed the state’s guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment.***

In school year 2019-2020, 701 districts submitted assurances by Jan. 29, 2020. The majority of 275 non-responders submitted a justification while the remainder of districts were referred to the comprehensive monitoring system team for ongoing follow-up. Districts and community schools that anticipate exceeding 1.0 percent participation are required to detail how they implement the Department guidelines for participation in the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities. The deadline for submitting the district justification form with assurances is March 30, 2022. The Department assures that all districts that had exceeded the 1.0 percent threshold in 2020-2021 did submit an assurances form.

### Evidence of Progress

The Department received assurances from 100 percent of required districts and community schools (those that exceeded 1.0 percent alternate assessment participation in school year 2019-2020), as well as a significant number of districts that did not anticipate exceeding 1.0 percent but submitted the form as well.

### Component 3B

***Include assurances from the state that it has verified that each district or community school that the state anticipates will assess more than 1 percent of its assessed students in any subject using an***

***alternate assessment will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking an alternate assessment.***

The Department continues to address disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup participating in the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (See *Table 2*). Ohio's 2020-2021 EdFacts data shows a decreased number of participants in the economically disadvantaged subgroup. Data continues to show a disproportionate number of black students participating in the alternate assessment, which echoes state-level significant disproportionality data regarding the identification of students with disabilities. The Department continues to assist districts and community schools with the analysis of alternate assessment disproportionality data. In alignment with *Each Child, Our Future's* focus on equity, the Office for Exceptional Children has made disproportionality a high priority focus for 2021-2022. The Alternate Assessment Workgroup plans a targeted analysis of student participation by 1) socioeconomic status, 2) race and ethnicity, and 3) disability category. This analysis will include data at the state level and within identified Tier 3 districts and community schools.

### **Evidence of Progress**

In December 2021, the Department will continue to include alternate assessment participation in Special Education Profiles and Special Education Ratings. Due to COVID-19, the Department postponed the release of Special Education Profiles for school year 2019-2020 to December 2020. By incorporating alternate assessment participation in the profiles and ratings, the Office for Exceptional Children identifies Tier 3 districts and community schools for the supports and monitoring process. This provided the opportunity and the platform to work with districts and community schools in analyzing their participation data. The electronic Special Education Profile system alerts Tier 3 districts of mandatory action steps. Action steps include completing a self-review summary report, improvement plan and completion of the disproportionality calculator within the Department's electronic compliance dashboard. The self-review for alternate assessment requires analysis of participation rates by disability category. State support teams assist districts and community schools in completing the self-review and developing aligned improvement plans.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the Department's Alternate Assessment Workgroup concluded that the self-review summary report could be improved to engage districts and community schools in more rigorous data analysis, especially concerning disproportionality data. In addition to analyzing participation by disability category, the revised self-review requires analysis of participation data by race and ethnicity.

## **Component 4A**

***Include a plan and timeline for improving the implementation of its guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment.***

The Department has made significant progress in improving the use of state guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment by implementing the Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool. A significant improvement was completed in spring 2020 when the Office for Exceptional Children embedded the State's participation guidelines into its online, dynamic Individualized Education Program form. The dynamic form links directly to this participation criteria document.

### **Evidence of Progress**

The Department's updated tool, the Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool, is organized in sections correlated to Ohio's participation criteria to provide additional guidance and specificity to the

participation criteria. The Department's Supports and Monitoring Team in the Office for Exceptional Children continues to use the new tool with Individualized Education Program teams in targeted districts and community schools, including those identified as Tier 3.

The Department worked with its testing contractor, Cambium Assessment, Inc., to address the concern that many students with disabilities who do not include an intellectual component are assigned to the alternate assessment. In 2020-2021, the Department required assessment enrollment procedures for districts to submit the disability category for each student when alternate assessment is selected as their test type. The Department does not consider test records complete for participating students until a disability type is identified. The goal is to provide another opportunity for educators to reflect on and affirm the team's decision to use the alternate assessment. Due to COVID-19 and interrupted testing, the Department was unable to analyze if this new requirement appeared to have any impact on alternate assessment participation. The Department will compare the testing data from school year 2018-2019 with 2020-2021 to see if any correlation can be made between including this additional step and a reduction in participation.

### **Timeline for Improving Implementation of Guidelines**

**September 2020 through May 2021:** The Workgroup provided training and support to external stakeholder groups, including the following:

- The State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC)
- The Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators (OAPSA)
- The Students with Disabilities Testing Advisory
- The Ohio Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials network
- The Low Incidence and Autism Spectrum Disorder network
- The State Support Team Directors
- The State Support Team Alternate Assessment trainers
- The Alternate Assessment Content and Fairness review committee
- The Ohio Test Steering Committee
- The Ohio Test Steering Committee
- The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Assessment, Standards and Education of Students with Disabilities (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment, Standards and Students (SCASS)
- The National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO)

### **Component 4B**

***Include additional steps to support and provide oversight to each district or community school projected to exceed the 1 percent threshold.***

### **Tiered Intervention and Monitoring Plan**

The Department continues to work with districts and community schools directly and through assistance of the State's 16 regional [state support teams](#) to ensure appropriate participation in the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities. The cornerstone of the Department's multifaceted approach is a system of tiered intervention and monitoring designed to improve application of state guidelines for participation in the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities. Implementation of the tiered system of support includes collaboration with the state's 16 regional state support teams. For Tier 1 districts and community schools, the Department provides professional learning opportunities, tools and

resources. For Tier 2 and 3 districts and community schools, the Department collaborates with state support teams to provide additional intervention, support and monitoring through the self-review summary report and improvement plan process in addition to other training opportunities.

Using submitted justifications, Ohio School Report Card data and Special Education Profiles, the Department annually identifies the districts and community schools with the greatest need of intervention and support. Of the 559 school districts and community schools above 1.0 percent participation in school year 2019-2020, the Department maintained 83 for Tier 3 intervention during 2020-2021. In 2021-2022 districts will be notified of their status for required Tier 3 intervention in December 2021. Each of the 16 regions in the state will have approximately 5 traditional districts and community schools identified. The Department uses a multi-point rubric to identify districts for tiered monitoring and support. The Department considers the following data in the rubric:

- 2020-2021 alternate assessment participation rates.
- Multi-year increase in participation rate.
- A spike of more than 1.0 percent participation in a single year.
- Failure to submit a justification when having exceeded 1.0 percent.
- Failure to report alternate assessment data in the Education Management Information System (EMIS).
- Participation of disability types atypical to alternate assessment participation within the district; and
- Information provided in the district's justification form and recommendations from the alternate assessment support staff in the state support teams.

### **Evidence of Progress: Tier 3**

Tier 3 support is provided to districts and community schools that are identified as needing significant support. This tier includes continued Tier 1 and Tier 2 support.

Intervention and monitoring processes related to alternate assessment improved greatly in 2020-2021 due to the use of the Special Education Profiles and Compliance Dashboard. These two tools allowed the Department and state support teams to work together to assist and monitor improvement efforts in Tier 3 districts and community schools. The Special Education Profiles informed districts and community schools of their Tier 3 status and the required action steps. The Compliance Dashboard is an interactive system that allows districts to read and respond to comments from the Department, submit self-reviews and improvement plans and upload documentation of completed action steps. Specialists in the Department's Office for Exceptional Children review and monitor the documentation. State support teams assisted district teams with analyzing data using the Self-Review Summary Report, developing and submitting improvement plans, and implementing planned action steps.

The Alternate Assessment Workgroup created a shared site to share alternate assessment professional learning resources with state support team staff. The State Support Team Alternate Assessment Participation Professional Development Toolkit currently includes presentations, group learning activities, sample forms, parent communication examples from the Office for Exceptional Children and OCALI. This content focuses on the five areas of the self-review summary report that all Tier 3 districts must complete with their regional state support team before developing an improvement plan. The Office of Assessment, Office for Exceptional Children and OCALI collaborated with state support team alternate assessment trainers to meet weekly between Nov. 15, 2020, and Feb. 5, 2021, to discuss implementation of the Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool and test administrator training.

The Teaching Diverse Learners Center at OCALI launched a new webpage on [Literacy Access for All](#). This free, video-based learning series provides educators and other specialists with the strategies, research and

support resources to effectively design instruction and assessment in a way that provides universal access across courses, lessons and learning activities.

Organized in 10 chapters, Ensuring Access to the General Curriculum for All Learners was created for educators and by educators and is grounded in research and evidence-based practices. The series explores practical, easy-to-use strategies and resources designed to ensure all learners have access to the general curriculum. The series covers the following areas:

Chapter 1: Ensuring Inclusive Dispositions and Presuming Competence

Chapter 2: Design Rich Tier I Core Instruction and Assessment

Chapter 3: Designing Inclusive Learning Environments and Rich Tier I Instruction and Assessment

Chapter 4: Language and Communication Access: ALL In!

Chapter 5: Reading Research in Language and Literacy: From Research to Practice

Chapter 6: Stretching Word Recognition to Include Learners with Complex Needs: Access to Communication, Reading, and Writing for ALL Learners

Chapter 7: Stretching Language Comprehension to Include Learners with Complex Needs: Applying Reading and Writing Across Content Areas

Chapter 8: Tier 1 Planning Continued: Integrating Learner Supports within Standards-Based Instruction and Assessment

Chapter 9: Targeted Interventions: Tiers 2 and 3

Chapter 10: Curriculum Screening, Audit, Selection, and Deselection

The Department provided technical assistance and resources to Tier 3 districts and community schools as outlined in the 2019-2020 waiver extension request. Evidence of implementation for each action step is listed in Table 5 below. Some of the sample documents referenced are available via web-based links or are available in the appendices (marked with an asterisk).

**Table 5: Evidence of Tier 3 Progress 2020-2021**

Planned Action Steps	Evidence of Implementation 2020-2021
<p>1. Districts and community schools will, with the assistance of the Department and state support team consultants, construct goals to be included in improvement plans for appropriately identifying students for participation in the alternate assessment. Improvement plans should include measurable outcomes, timelines, frameworks for technical assistance, updated procedures and training opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office for Exceptional Children Comprehensive Monitoring Process*</li> <li>• District Self-Review Summary Report*</li> <li>• District Improvement Plan Template*</li> </ul>
<p>2. The Department will review records (e.g., Evaluation Team Reports, Individualized Education Programs) and evaluate current determination processes, policies and procedures used to qualify students for participation in the alternate assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office for Exceptional Children Comprehensive Monitoring Process*</li> </ul>
<p>3. The Department and state support team consultants will assist districts and community schools with analysis of subgroup participation data to identify and address any disproportionalities in assignment of subgroups to the alternate assessment. Districts and community schools with significant disproportionalities will address the root causes as part of their improvement plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Self-Review Summary Report*</li> <li>• District Improvement Plan Template*</li> <li>• State Support Team Alternate Assessment Participation Professional Development Toolkit*</li> </ul>
<p>4. The Department and state support team consultants will engage in discussions with teachers, administrators and Individualized Education Program team members as part of monitoring processes and root cause analysis as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office for Exceptional Children Comprehensive Monitoring Process*</li> <li>• Parent meetings led by Office for Exceptional Children staff*</li> <li>• Parent public meeting notice and notification letter*</li> </ul>
<p>5. Parents and families will be notified of monitoring procedures and records reviews and provided opportunities to ask questions and participate in discussions as members of the Individualized Education Program teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent meetings led by Office for Exceptional Children staff*</li> <li>• Parent public meeting notice and notification letter*</li> </ul>
<p>6. The Department’s Office of Innovation and Improvement will include alternate assessment participation in its school improvement processes for high-priority schools and districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance Support Tool*</li> </ul>

## Evidence of Progress: Tier 2

Tier 2 support is for districts and community schools that need moderate support. This tier includes continued Tier 1 support.

The Department provided technical assistance and resources as outlined in the 2020-2021 waiver. Evidence of implementation for each action step is listed in Table 6 below. Some of the sample documents referenced are available via web-based links or are available in the appendices (marked with an asterisk).

**Table 6: Evidence of Tier 2 Progress 2020-2021**

Planned Action Steps	Evidence of Implementation 2020-21
<p>1. Department staff, in collaboration with state support team consultants, will lead regional and local professional learning opportunities focusing on analyzing data and reviewing special education records.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Support Team Alternate Assessment Participation Professional Development Toolkit*</li> <li>• Regional meetings with special education administrators</li> <li>• Ohio Statewide Testing and Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee meetings*</li> <li>• Presentations at Ohio Association of Pupil Service Administrators meetings and other professional organizations*</li> </ul>
<p>2. Department staff, in collaboration with state support team consultants, will provide training opportunities for special education leaders, as well as district and school administrators to ensure Individualized Education Program teams have the necessary resources and are using them properly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Support Team Alternate Assessment Participation Professional Development Toolkit*</li> <li>• Regional meetings with special education administrators</li> <li>• Presentations at Ohio Association of Pupil Service Administrators meetings and other professional organizations*</li> </ul>
<p>3. The Department will develop training resources to address disproportionality in the assignment of subgroups of students to the alternate assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Support Team Alternate Assessment Participation Professional Development Toolkit*</li> <li>• Office for Exceptional Children Comprehensive Monitoring Process*</li> <li>• <a href="#">Universal Support Training Materials</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Alternate Assessment Decision-Making Tool</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Disproportionality Calculator</a></li> </ul>

## Evidence of Progress: Tier 1

Tier 1 support is for districts and community schools that are above the 1.0 percent participation threshold, as well as any districts or community schools seeking assistance with alternate assessment participation.

The Department provided technical assistance and resources as outlined in the 2020-2021 waiver. Evidence of implementation for each action step is listed in Table 7 below. Some of the sample documents referenced are available via web-based links or listed in the appendices (marked with an asterisk).



**Table 7: Evidence of Tier 1 Progress 2020-2021**

Planned Action Steps	Evidence of Implementation 2020-2021
<p>1. The Department will develop professional development resources on appropriate alternate assessment participation and completion of required justification forms for exceeding 1.0 percent participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Decision Framework for Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spring 2020 Alternate Assessment Directions for Administration Manual</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Online Test Administration Certification</a></li> </ul>
<p>2. The Department will present at multiple statewide conferences and other events for teachers and administrators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Support Team weekly meetings*</li> </ul>
<p>3. State support teams will continue to provide training on decision-making processes for Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate assessment participation rates added to Special Education Profiles and Ratings*</li> <li>• Ohio Statewide Testing and Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee Meetings*</li> <li>• <a href="#">Decision Framework for Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines</a></li> <li>• Family Resource on Alternate Assessment (<a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</li> <li>• Family Resource on Participation (<a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</li> <li>• Family Resource on Extended Standards and Instruction (<a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Online Test Administration Certification</a></li> </ul>
<p>4. The Department will provide resources, including data analysis tools, to address disproportionality in assignment of student subgroups to the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate assessment participation rates added to Special Education Profiles and Ratings*</li> <li>• Monthly state support team Directors' Meetings*</li> <li>• State Support Team weekly meetings*</li> </ul>
<p>5. Parent and family engagement staff will work with districts and community schools to ensure families understand how IEP decisions about alternate assessment participation are appropriately made and the implications of participation in the alternate assessment for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Decision Framework (Flowchart) for Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ohio Learning Standards-Extended</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spring 2021 Alternate Assessment Test Administration Manual</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Alternate Assessment Practice Site Guidance Document</a></li> <li>• Family Resource on Alternate Assessment (<a href="#">English</a> <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</li> <li>• Family Resource on Participation (<a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</li> <li>• Family Resource on Extended Standards and Instruction (<a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</li> </ul>

Planned Action Steps	Evidence of Implementation 2020-2021
<p>6. Technical support from the Department is available to all stakeholders through phone support and a dedicated email address (<a href="mailto:AAparticipation@education.ohio.gov">AAparticipation@education.ohio.gov</a>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email support provided by Department staff via <a href="mailto:AAparticipation@education.ohio.gov">AAparticipation@education.ohio.gov</a></li> <li>• Phone support provided by Department staff at 614-466-13217 or 1-877-644-6338</li> <li>• <a href="#">ODE AASCD Web Page</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ohio Alternate Assessment Test Portal</a></li> </ul>

## ACTION STEPS FOR 2021-2022

1. Conduct a targeted analysis of student participation in alternate assessment by 1) socioeconomic status, 2) race and ethnicity, and 3) disability category. This analysis will include data at the state level. An analysis of disproportionality data will help the Department clarify statewide trends and support local districts and community schools in improving their use of alternate assessments.
2. Continue the rigor of the self-review summary report for Tier 3 districts and community schools. The Department will continue to engage districts and community schools in a rigorous data analysis, especially concerning disproportionality data utilizing the disproportionality calculator.
3. The Department will continue to develop and disseminate resources and training to districts about the Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool. Ohio will continue partnership with the OCALI to produce instructional support material and training resources to address students who transition to the regular assessment.
4. Expand the State Support Team Alternate Assessment Participation Professional Development Toolkit with new and updated content on how to apply the participation criteria, fully engage parents and improve their understanding of the alternate assessment participation decision making process, and other elements covered in the self-review summary report. Regional and local professional development will provide opportunities to dispel some of the misunderstandings observed in district and community school justification forms.
5. Continue and modify, as needed, use of a multitiered system of statewide support to improve the appropriate use of alternate assessment. The Department will continue to apply the action steps by tier as outlined in Tables 5, 6 and 7 above.
6. Continue participation in national networks and learning opportunities for state staff. Working collaboratively with other members of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Assessment, Standards and Education of Students with Disabilities (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment, Standards and Students (SCASS).
7. The Department will widely disseminate new family resources to parent and engagement specialists in the state support teams to share with families for better understanding of the assessment, eligibility and Ohio's Learning Standards – Extended and instruction for students with a most significant cognitive disability.
8. Continue to receive technical assistance form the National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO) as well as participate in the 1% Community of Practice and Peer Learning Groups hosted by NCEO and the TIES Center.

## APPENDICES

- A. Alternate Assessment Family Resources
- B. Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool
- B. Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool Frequently Asked Questions
- C. Alternate Assessment Technical Assistance meetings with NCEO: Work Plan, Sample Meeting Notes
- D. Office for Exceptional Children Comprehensive Monitoring Process: Onsite checklist and review record
- E. District Self-Review Summary Report template
- F. District Improvement Plan template
- G. Parent meetings led by Office for Exceptional Children staff: Sample PowerPoint
- H. Parent public meetings: Sample notice and notification letter
- I. Regional meetings with special education administrators: Sample schedules and communications
- J. Ohio Statewide Testing and Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee: Sample meeting agendas
- K. Presentations at Ohio Association of Pupil Service Administrators meetings and other professional organizations: Sample PowerPoint
- L. State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children: Sample agenda
- M. State Support Team Alternate Assessment Trainers: sample agenda
- N. Alternate assessment participation rates added to Special Education Profiles and Ratings: Sample PowerPoint
- O. Monthly state support team Directors' Meetings: Sample PowerPoint