NCEO Resources on Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS)

(2017-2022)

1% TOOLKIT

[1% Toolkit: Developing a 1% Cap Waiver or Waiver Extension Request (NCEO Tool #1)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool1WaiverGuidelines.pdf)

The Every Student Succeeds Act allows for states to request a waiver from the 1% cap on alternate assessment participation requirements. Waiver request requirements are described in this Tool (the first of several 1% tools NCEO is developing), along with examples of how states responded to each requirement. The Tool also includes a section on Additional Considerations (reporting on stakeholder involvement; addressing approaches to take when the 95% participation requirement for requesting a waiver is not met). This Tool was developed through a collaborative process with the 44 states participating in the 1% Cap Community of Practice (CoP) during its bi-weekly webinar calls in 2018. Although the CoP was formed at the request of states to be for private state conversations, it was with mutual agreement that this Tool should be shared publicly.

[1% Toolkit: Data Analysis and Use Planning Tool for Examining AA-AAAS Participation: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment (NCEO Tool #2)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool2DataAnalysisAndUse.pdf)

This Data Analysis and Use Planning Tool is designed to help states and districts develop a plan for analyzing and using their AA-AAAS data as part of their efforts to meet the 1.0% cap on state-level participation in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). Developed during the NCEO’s Peer Learning Group 1 (PLG 1), it presents a four-step data analysis framework that is intended to serve as an example and a starting point for states and districts.

[1% Toolkit: State-District Data Display Templates: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment (NCEO Tool #3)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool3DataDisplayTemplates.pdf)

This State-District Data Display Templates tool is designed to provide states and districts with templates to display their data, with the end goal being to support an examination of the displayed data to determine whether there are any unusual results that require further examination and discussion. This tool was developed through the work of NCEO’s Peer Learning Group 1, which focused on ways to dig into state and district data as part of the states’ efforts to meet the 1.0% cap on state-level participation in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

[1% Toolkit: District Dialogue Guide: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment (NCEO Tool #4)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool4DialogueGuide.pdf)

As part of its efforts to meet the 1.0% cap on state-level participation in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS), NCEO’s Peer Learning Group 1 (PLG 1) developed this dialogue guide. It is designed to help district, school staff, and stakeholders engage in thoughtful conversations, tailored to their unique contexts, about participation in the AA-AAAS. It encourages frank discussions that can help to identify ways in which to examine a variety of data sources, use varied analysis methods, and gather relevant information, all toward the goal of ensuring that appropriate decisions are made about participation in the AA-AAAS.

[1% Toolkit: Frequently Asked Questions on AA-AAAS (NCEO Tool #5)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool5FAQ.pdf)

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 1.0% cap on state-level participation rates in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) generated questions answered by the U.S. Department of Education in this Frequently Asked Questions on AA-AAAS. This FAQ tool includes questions that were asked by state personnel during the October 2018 1% Cap National Convening: Supporting States in Implementing ESSA’s 1% State-level Cap on Participation of Students in the AA-AAAS held in Boston, Massachusetts, during the NCEO 1% Community of Practice (CoP) and during NCEO’s Peer Learning Group 2 (PLG 2). The questions are listed in this tool by topic, and include the date the question was answered by the U.S. Department of Education.

[1% Toolkit: Who Should Participate in Your State’s Alternate Assessment? A Slide Presentation Tool for Administrators (NCEO Tool #6)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool6DistrAdmPPT.pdf)

This Slide Presentation tool is designed to support the needs that administrators have for brief but substantive information about who should participate in the state’s alternate assessment on academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). In addition to serving as an information resource for administrators, it may be used for in-person or webinar trainings for educators, and as a handout for educators and parents. Developed during NCEO’s Peer Learning Group 3 (PLG 3), they highlight the purpose of the AA-AAAS, the implications of a student taking the AA-AAS, strategies for talking with parents, and identification of students who should participate in this assessment. The slides may be customized.

[1% Toolkit: Start with the End in Mind: An Infographic to Guide Decisions about Student Participation in the Alternate Assessment (NCEO Tool #7)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool7Infographic.pdf)

This Infographic to Guide Decisions about Student Participation in the Alternate Assessment tool is designed to provide guidance about IEP team decision making for a student’s participation in the state's alternate assessment on academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS), which is meant for a very small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Developed during NCEO’s Peer Learning Group 3 (PLG 3), the tool explains how this important decision can affect the future opportunities available to a student with a disability. The infographic may be given to teachers in IEP trainings, provided to parents and guardians to read before an IEP team meeting, and used to talk with parents and guardians during an IEP team meeting.

[1% Toolkit: A Five-Step Process for Developing and Reviewing District Justifications for Exceeding 1.0% AA-AAAS Participation (NCEO Tool #8)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool8_FiveStepProcess.pdf)

The 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), includes a 1.0% threshold on state-level participation rates in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). This tool presents a five-step process to address the 1.0% threshold requirements for reviewing local education agency (LEA) justifications and providing support, oversight, and technical assistance when appropriate. It includes: (a) three templates for state education agency (SEA) and LEA use; (b) a continuum of support, oversight, and technical assistance SEAs may provide; and (c) additional resources for SEAs and LEAs.

[1% Toolkit: Reasons Why Students with Disabilities Should Take State Tests: A Customizable Template for a Flyer for Parents and Families (NCEO Tool #9)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool9_CustomizableTemplate.pdf)

This resource was developed by NCEO to identify and describe reasons why students with disabilities should take state tests. The purpose of the tool is to provide a concise resource that administrators, teachers, and other educators can use when communicating with parents and families about why it is so important that their children with disabilities participate in state assessments. It also provides strategies to reduce student test anxiety.

[1% Toolkit: IEP Team Resource: Making Decisions about Participation in the Alternate Assessment (NCEO Tool #10)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool10_IEPTeamResource.pdf)

This IEP team resource is designed to support IEP team members, including teachers, school psychologists, English language development specialists, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, paraprofessionals, parents, administrators, and others who may participate in the IEP team meeting. It provides supports for the decision about whether a student with a disability should participate in a general assessment or an AA-AAAS. States can modify the tool as needed to reflect any differences in their IEPs or to link to their own guidelines for participation in the AA-AAAS.

[1% Toolkit: Student Profiles for Alternate Assessment Decision Making (NCEO Tool #11)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool11_StudentProfiles.pdf)

Most states and districts provide training that aims to help individualized education program (IEP) teams make appropriate decisions about student participation in the alternate assessment. Some states include student profile examples in trainings on their alternate assessment participation criteria. Aspects of student profiles are often highlighted to indicate whether students meet or do not meet the state’s criteria. This resource includes examples provided by states participating in NCEO’s 1% Community of Practice (CoP). The profiles may be customized to align with state participation criteria and disability categories.

[1% Toolkit: Disproportionality in the Alternate Assessment Calculator: A Tool for State and Local Education Agencies (NCEO Tool #12)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool12_Disproportionality.pdf)

This Brief explains a tool that State and Local Education Agencies (SEAs and LEAs) can use to examine disproportionality with respect to student group participation in their alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). Examining disproportionality with regard to alternate assessment participation is essentially an inquiry into whether certain groups are over- or under-identified as having a most significant cognitive disability. Participation data for groups of interest (e.g., race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, English learner status, chronic absenteeism) can be entered for a SEA or LEA. The tool then calculates the risk ratio, which is a way to describe the relationship of observed versus expected proportions.

[1% Toolkit: Developing an Assessment Participation Action Plan: A Tool for State Leaders (NCEO Tool #13)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool13_StateActionPlan.pdf)

The purpose of this resource is to provide a tool for states that wish to improve student assessment participation. The tool provides guidance on how state leaders can develop an assessment participation action plan and describes a series of steps that support the development of the action plan. States may customize the tool as needed to meet their needs. This resource was developed through a collaborative process with the 49 states participating in NCEO’s 1% Cap Community of Practice (CoP) during its bi-weekly webinar calls in 2021 and 2022.

[1% Toolkit: Developing an Assessment Participation Action Plan: A Tool for District Leaders (NCEO Tool #14)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tool14_DistrictAction%20Plan.pdf)

The purpose of this resource is to provide a tool for districts that wish to improve student assessment participation. The tool provides guidance on how district leaders can develop an assessment participation action plan and describes a series of steps that support the development of the action plan. States may customize the tool as needed to meet their needs. This resource was developed through a collaborative process with the 49 states participating in NCEO’s 1% Cap Community of Practice (CoP) during its bi-weekly webinar calls in 2021 and 2022.

OTHER 1% CAP RESOURCES

[Proceedings of the 1% Cap National Convening: Supporting States in Implementing ESSA's 1% State-level Cap on Participation of Students in the AA-AAAS](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEO_CSAI_CapProceedings_508compliance_042619.pdf)

This Proceedings document was developed to provide a summary of the 1% National Convening that took place in Boston on October 18 and 19, 2018. More than 200 individuals gathered to listen to each other, share ideas, and develop state-level action plans. The purpose of the Convening was to support states as they work with local education agencies to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirement of a 1% cap on the participation of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). The Proceedings document includes appendices and links to resources that were shared by states and others at the Convening.

[Forum on States and Districts Working Together on the 1.0% Threshold](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOForumReport2019.pdf)

A report on a forum held on June 26, 2019 in Orlando, Florida to discuss how states and districts can work together to meet the 1.0% threshold on participation in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). The forum was a post-session to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA), and was a collaboration of the Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) and the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). This report summarizes both the introductory information provided to forum participants, and the facilitated forum discussions that followed.

[NCEO Brief: Meeting the 1% AA-AAAS Participation Requirement (Brief #29)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief29.pdf)

Up to 1.0% of the total tested state student population in a subject area may participate in the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). This Brief presents the results of analyses of states’ AA-AAAS participation rates from 2015-16 through 2018-19. Information is presented on: (a) the number of states meeting the 1.0% participation requirement in each year from 2015-16 through 2018-19 for mathematics (i.e., math) and reading/language arts (i.e., reading), and (b) states with decreasing and states with increasing patterns of participation rates across the four years in math and reading.

[NCEO Reports: State Approaches to Monitoring AA-AAAS Participation Decisions (Report #432)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport432.pdf)

This report presents the findings of a survey of states that examined the policies, practices, and procedures State Education Agencies (SEAs) used to monitor IEPs for participation decision making in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). It is imperative that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the AA-AAAS because it has short- and long-term implications. The instruction of students taking the AA-AAAS may be reduced in depth, breadth, or complexity, and this may have implications for graduation as well as reduce post-secondary options.

[Considerations for Monitoring Accommodations on the Alternate Assessment (Presentation)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/Presentations/NCSAMonitoringAccommodationsAltAssessments.pdf)

This presentation described considerations for monitoring accommodations on the alternate assessment. It was presented at the 2019 National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA) annual conference.

[Guidance for Examining District Alternate Assessment Participation Rates (Brief)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEO1percentBrief.pdf)

This document provides states with effective and technically defensible practices for monitoring participation rates for alternate assessments at the district level to comply with the federal 1% policy limit on statewide alternate assessment participation for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

[2021-22 Participation Guidelines and Definitions for Alternate Assessments Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (Report #440)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport440.pdf)

This report provides an update to previous analyses of the guidelines, definitions, and criteria states have developed for making decisions about alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) participation. This report provides an analysis of the 2021-22 policies of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. We analyzed criteria that should be used and factors that should not be used to determine participation, the state definitions of “most significant cognitive disabilities,” the information provided to parents about the AA-AAAS, mentions of English learners in materials related to the AA-AAAS, exemption and non-exemption materials regarding participation, and the content areas for which participation decisions are made.

[NCEO Reports: 2018-19 Participation Guidelines and Definitions for Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (Report #415)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport415.pdf)

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on state participation criteria and guidelines for alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). In this report, we analyze criteria for participation, factors identified by states not to use as the basis for decisions, formats of resources provided, and the existence of explicit definitions of students with “significant cognitive disabilities.” Also included are analyses of information covered in state documents about AA-AAAS participation: the type of information provided to parents, the extent to which English learners are addressed, and the inclusion of information about exemptions.

[NCEO Reports: Alternate Assessments for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Participation Guidelines and Definitions (Report #406)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport406.pdf)

This report documents the status of states' assessment participation guidelines and definitions of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that were in place just prior to the start of the 2017-18 school year. With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015, renewed attention was paid to the importance of guidelines for participation in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) and to understanding of who the students are who have significant cognitive disabilities. The analysis includes the factors that states indicated should and should not be considered when making decisions about participation in the AA-AAS. It also documents the format of the guidelines that states made available to decision makers. Finally, it examines the extent to which states provided an explicit definition of "students with the most significant cognitive disabilities."

[NCEO Brief: Strategies for Meeting the 1% State-level Cap on Participation in the Alternate Assessment (Brief #12)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief12OnePercentCap.pdf)

The purpose of this brief is to assist states in identifying strategies to use to meet the state 1% cap on participation in the alternate assessment.

Disproportionality

[NCEO Brief: Guidance for Examining Disproportionality of Student Group Participation in Alternate Assessments (Brief #18)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief18.pdf)

The purpose of this brief is to examine disproportionality with respect to student group participation in Alternate Assessments aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS). It is a companion to the NCEO brief, Guidance for Examining District Alternate Assessment Participation Rates. This brief provides a more detailed examination and illustration of a particular issue, disproportionality. The companion brief outlined a broad framework and general principles to guide the examination of AA-AAAS participation rates, particularly in light of the challenge of small n-sizes and associated uncertainty. It begins by reviewing the framework with respect to its application to address disproportionality in participation in the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. This is followed by an illustration of specific analytic steps, and concludes by providing guidance for further inquiry that links back to the guiding principles in the framework.

[Guidance for Participation and Disproportionality (Video Training Module)](https://vimeo.com/325082455)

This is a video training to help guide states in looking at disproportionality among students participating in state alternate assessments. It presents four guiding principles in making a distinction between “exceptional” vs. “expected” patterns of participation and helps identify disproportionate participation of certain groups of students taking these assessments.

ADDITIONAL AA-AAAS RESOURCES

[NCEO Brief: Including Students with Disabilities in K-2 Academic Assessments (Brief #28)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief28.pdf)

This brief provides an overview of issues related to the inclusion of students with disabilities and English learners with disabilities in early grade (i.e., K-2) assessments. State academic assessments are required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) starting in grade 3. Academic assessments administered in earlier grades often are used to measure progress or growth, for instructional decision making, to predict grade 3 summative assessment performance, and for tracking literacy for reading guarantees. Even though the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in state and district-wide assessments administered before grade 3, these students have sometimes been excluded. This Brief also suggests strategies for improved practices.

[MTSS for All: Including Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Brief)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBriefMTSS.pdf)

The purpose of this Brief is to provide suggestions for ways in which the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a framework for organizing and providing a tiered instructional continuum to support learning for all students, can include students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Ideas for how to make MTSS fully inclusive of all students are presented following a short history of MTSS and a summary of current MTSS models.

Alternate Interim Assessments

[Alternate Interim Assessments for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Video)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MChBTuptySk&feature=youtu.be)

This video offers preliminary guidance for the development of interim assessment options for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. There are federal requirements that all statewide and districtwide administrations of an assessment must have an alternate assessment. Given the importance interim assessments have now when there is an increased need for timely data on student learning and progress, the creation of high-quality alternate interim assessment options for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities requires urgent attention.

[NCEO Brief: Alternate Interim Assessments for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (#23)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief23.pdf)

This Brief offers preliminary guidance for the development of interim assessment options for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. There are federal requirements that all statewide and districtwide administrations of an assessment must have an alternate assessment. Given the importance interim assessments have now when there is an increased need for timely data on student learning and progress, the creation of high-quality alternate interim assessment options for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities requires urgent attention.

Alternate Diplomas

[What Alternate Assessments and Diplomas Really Mean for Students with Significant Disabilities (Presentation)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/Presentations/CEC2020ThurlowLazarusRogers.pdf)

This presentation addressed what alternate assessments and diplomas really mean for students with significant disabilities. It was presented at the 2020 Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) annual conference.

[NCEO Reports: Status of State-Defined Alternate Diplomas in 2018-19 (#416)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport416.pdf)

The purpose of this report is to summarize the status of state-defined alternate diplomas in the 50 U.S. states three years after the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) indicated that states could develop these diplomas and use them in accountability calculations. To count this diploma in a graduation measure for accountability, several criteria must be met, including that it must be standards-based, aligned to state requirements for the regular high school diploma, and obtained within the time period for which the state ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This report documents the status of state-defined alternate diplomas in states in 2018-19 and provides recommendations to states intending to develop a state-defined alternate diploma.

[State Defined Alternate Diplomas (Video)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7i7PdRLVR1k)

Sheryl Lazarus presented "State Defined Alternate Diplomas” in an NCEO and NTACT webinar.

[Considerations for Developing State-Defined Alternate Diplomas for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Brief)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEO_NTACTBriefalternatediplomas.pdf)

This brief describes the criteria that must be met for a State-defined alternate diploma to meet federal requirements for inclusion in the Title I Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR). It includes considerations for states contemplating the development of a State-defined alternate diploma, and recommends steps for those deciding to adopt a State-defined alternate diploma.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

[NCEO Brief: Suggestions for Aligning Alternate Achievement Standards with WIOA (Brief #16)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief16.pdf)

This brief provides information on alternate achievement standards and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, and makes several suggestions about ways to show that a student who meets a state’s alternate academic achievement standards is on track to pursue postsecondary education or competitive integrated employment. Recommendations are also provided for states on how to build a strong system to support the realization of the intent of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and WIOA requirements for their students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

[Strategies for Meeting Requirements for Alternate Assessments and WIOA (Presentation)](https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/Presentations/StrategiesforMeetingWIOARequirements2019.pdf)

This presentation discussed strategies for meeting requirements for alternate assessments and WIOA. It was presented at the 2019 Office of Special Education Programs’ Leadership Conference.

NCEO APR Snapshot Briefs

[NCEO APR Snapshot Briefs: 2018-2019 APR Snapshot #27: AA-AAAS Participation and Performance](https://nceo.info/Resources/publications/APRsnapshot/brief27)

[NCEO APR Snapshot Briefs: 2017-2018 APR Snapshot #24: AA-AAAS Participation and Performance (#24)](https://nceo.info/Resources/publications/APRsnapshot/brief24)

[NCEO APR Snapshot Briefs: 2016-2017 APR Snapshot #21: AA-AAS Participation and Performance (#21)](https://nceo.info/Resources/publications/APRsnapshot/brief21)

[NCEO APR Snapshot Briefs: 2015-2016 APR Snapshot #18: AA-AAS Participation and Performance (#18)](https://nceo.info/Resources/publications/APRsnapshot/brief18)

These reports summarize Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) data used for Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) accountability. Using federally submitted data, we present information on the number of students participating in the AA-AAAS and the performance of those students.

Available at [www.nceo.info](http://www.nceo.info)