Alternate Proficiency Assessment Application for Exception to 1 Percent Cap

The regulations implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allow for the use of alternate assessments, based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. In New Jersey, this alternate assessment is the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM).

ESSA requires that no more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the state may be administered the DLM. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are not prohibited from assessing more than 1 percent of their students with the DLM, but they are required to submit information justifying the need to assess more than 1 percent of students.

In 2017-18, New Jersey exceeded the 1-percent statewide cap on students administered the DLM assessment. Under direction from the U.S. Department of Education, the state is required to conduct activities, statewide and in selected LEAs, to address the number of students participating in the DLM. It is imperative that only those students who meet the DLM participation criteria participate in the assessment. It is equally important that child study teams make individualized decisions for each student regarding participation in statewide assessments. Please refer to the NJDOE’s guidance document for more information on the DLM and participation criteria.

If you anticipate that participation in the DLM in your LEA will exceed 1.0 percent for the 2018-19 school year, you must submit the DLM Justification Form for review. Those LEAs exceeding the 1-percent cap for two consecutive years will receive a site visit from staff from the Office of Special Education Policy and Dispute Resolution (SPDR). This visit will consist of a review of all documents and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students determined eligible to participate in the DLM assessment.

Guidelines for calculating the DLM participation rate can be found on the form and must be completed by the district prior to submission. It is important to include students placed in separate public programs in other LEAs in these calculations. In order to ensure LEAs are using the required criteria for determining if a student with an IEP will participate in the DLM, your signature is required on the form. Justification forms should be submitted by email to kimberly.murray@doe.nj.gov by May 3, 2019. Your participation in this process will enable the NJDOE to ensure the state has the most accurate representation of students with the most significant disabilities in the accountability system.

Contact Information
For questions or assistance, contact Kim Murray, NJDOE, (609) 376-9060, or email Kimberly.murray@doe.nj.gov.

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