

1.0 Percent Participation Justification Form 2023–24

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* requires each public school unit to complete and submit a justification when it anticipates exceeding 1.0 percent of students assessed in a subject area (i.e., reading, mathematics, and/or science) utilizing the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment. Justifications forms from each public school unit will be reviewed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and follow up actions will be determined based on the information provided in this form. Staff from the exceptional children and accountability and testing departments in each public school unit should collaborate to provide the requested information on this form. Responses to Sections 1–4 and the designated signatures are required; it is optional to include additional information (see page 4). After these forms are received from each public school unit, this justification form will be publicly available. As such, the document **must not contain any personally identifiable information**. If necessary, additional pages may be attached to this form.

Section 1: Contact Information

Enter contact information for the primary public school unit staff member responsible for overseeing the completion of the justification form.

3-Digit Public School Unit Code: 390
Contact Name: Dr. Suzanne Cotterman
Contact Phone No.: 919-693-4613
Public School Unit Name: Granville County
Contact Title: Senior Director of Exceptional Children's Program
Contact E-Mail: cottermans@gcs.k12.nc.us

Section 2: Analyzing Contributing Factors

Did the Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams utilize the alternate assessment [eligibility criteria](#) and the [North Carolina Alternate Assessment Decision Making Flow Chart](#) to make alternate assessment participation decisions?

Yes No

Describe how exceptional children case managers have been informed **and** trained on the *Alternate Assessment Eligibility Worksheet and Assurance document* included in the Every Child Accountability and Tracking System (ECATS).

All principals, assistant principals, related service staff, and EC teachers have been provided with professional development which included the following: Interpretation of Reports and Alternative Assessment, Interpreting the instructional implications of evaluation results for cognitive and adaptive measures and How to use the Alternate Assessment Flow Chart. Also, all EC extended content teachers are attending monthly PLCs to discuss eligibility, content, and assessment.

Does the public school unit have any student(s) participating in the alternate assessment with the primary eligibility areas of: Specific Learning Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, or Speech Language Impairment?

Yes No

If yes, explain the criteria the IEP team used to determine how the students met the criteria for participation in the alternate assessment.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Does the public school unit provide a targeted program that may contribute to a higher enrollment of students with significant cognitive disabilities?

Yes No

If yes, explain your answer below:

GCS serves all children who enroll and provides a continuum of service based on the student needs as determined by the IEP team and written in the IEP.

Does the public school unit have a small overall student population that increased the likelihood of exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold?

Yes No

If yes, explain your answer below:

GCS does not necessarily have a small population, but the population has significantly decreased over the last 9 years with the opening and expansion of several NC Charter Schools in and close to the district. Of these Charter Schools, only one provides bus transportation and only two provide free/reduced lunch support. GCS has see both a decrease in the number of students served in our district and also a dramatic shift in the demographics of students being served in the GCS district. Our economically disadvantaged subgroup has increased along with our exceptional children subgroup and our minority subgroups; African-American and Hispanic students. We also have group homes which contribute to our numbers.

Section 3: Assurances

What data sources are used to determine eligibility for students participating on the *Extended Content Standards* that align with the alternate assessment?

Provide your response below:

IEP teams are expected to utilize the guidance for eligibility criteria, the Alternate Assessment Flow Chart, student data, and identified needs for every individual student, from which decisions regarding alternate assessment are determined. Various evaluations such as psychological, educational, and adaptives as well as cognitives, academic and functional skills are reviewed and discussed when determining eligibility for students participating on the Extended Content Standards that align with the Alternate Assessment.

Describe the public school unit’s process for transitioning a student’s instruction from the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* to the *Extended Content Standards* or from the *Extended Content Standards* to the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study*.

Provide your response below:

This is handled on a case by case basis. These decisions take place during the IEP meetings in which the IEP team reviews all relevant and current data to the student’s progress including classroom performance, historical data, progress monitoring, progress on IEP goals, etc. The Alternative Assessment Guidance Document is consistently utilized to guide this discussion.

Describe the public school unit’s annual process for ensuring instruction and assessment on the *Extended Content Standards* is the most appropriate based on the individual needs of the student.

Provide your response below:

This is handled on a case by case basis. These decisions take place during the IEP meetings in which the IEP team reviews all relevant and current data to the student's progress including classroom performance, historical data, progress monitoring, progress on IEP goals, etc. The Alternative Assessment Guidance Document is consistently utilized to guide this discussion. Also GCPS EC Program Compliance Specialists are involved in the IEP process when needed for support.

In the public school unit, how are parents or guardians directly informed annually about the implications of the *Extended Content Standards* in relation to not earning a high school diploma?

Provide your response below:

Parents are informed annually about the implications of the Extended Content Standards during the IEP meetings. At any time if the parent requests additional information regarding curriculums, parents will receive additional guidance and information.

Describe the process for auditing Exceptional Children IEP records for students instructed on the *Extended Content Standards* and participating in the alternate assessment.

Provide your response below:

GCPS EC Administration randomly audits IEP records throughout the school year, which includes students on the Extended Content Standards using the DPI Student Record Protocol.

After completing the Disproportionality Excel document, answer the following guiding questions.

1. In reviewing the data, what subgroups in your public school unit have the largest discrepancy between participants on the general assessment and the alternate assessment?

Males. 51.5% of general participants are male but 68.4% of Extend 1 participants are male. A difference of 16.9%. The second subgroup with the highest discrepancy is the Black subgroup. 35.2% of general participants are black while 39.5% of Extend 1 participants are black, yielding a difference of 4.3%.

2. When looking at subgroup discrepancies, what hypotheses can be formed?

GCPS is experiencing high turnover and vacancies which require more supervision and frequent training of staff. Teachers need more instruction in the ECS.

3. What problem-solving actions will the public school unit take to address the identified hypotheses?

All EC staff have been trained in using the decision flow chart for Alternate Assessment. New staff are required to attend training as they are hired on a rolling basis. ECS teachers are participating in a PLC which addresses the ECS and alternate assessment/eligibility. GCS is holding a parent event to educate parents on the ECS and alternate assessment. GCS has put a plan into place to provide all administrators and EC teachers professional development. We are also strengthening the co-teaching and classroom management skills for all teachers so that they are able to work more effectively with students.

Section 4: Resources and Technical Assistance

What resources and technical assistance does the public school unit need from the NCDPI to ensure that students are being assessed using the appropriate assessment?

NCDPI should continue to provide updated guidance and support district's efforts with information and training modules regarding Alternate Assessments.

Signatures

Superintendent or School Director _____ Date _____

Exceptional Children Director or Coordinator _____ Date _____

Public School Unit Test Coordinator _____ Date _____

The completed justification form must be signed by the superintendent/school director, exceptional children's director or coordinator, and public school unit testing coordinator. The form must be scanned and emailed to alternateassessment@dpi.nc.gov by July 8, 2024.

The NCDPI will notify public school units in writing if further information is needed and will include next steps. For questions, please contact your Exceptional Children Director or regional accountability office.

Note: The following additional information can be included with the justification form, but is not required:

- Evidence that all educators who administer the alternate assessment meet the requirements for test administrators and have received test administration training prior to administering the alternate assessment.
- Evidence that all students have appropriate access to accessibility features on statewide tests.
- A review of the percentage of students taking the alternate assessment at grade 3 versus grades 4–7 versus grade 8 versus high school and an explanation of how Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams are making consistent participation decisions across grade levels.
- A review of data to determine if students are moving from the alternate assessment to the general assessment or vice versa and an explanation for grade levels where this action is more prevalent.
- Evidence that the district is providing appropriate supports and services to students with disabilities to assist in meeting the same graduation requirements as their non-disabled peers.
- An evaluation of students instructed using the Extended Content Standards, but who are spending more than eighty percent (80%) of their day in the general education setting.
- Evidence of data-driven team decisions to determine appropriate instruction and assessment.
- An assessment of varying practices across a district and/or between different schools.
- An explanation of special programs or populations that are served by the district/charter school that may contribute to the alternate assessment participation rate.

