Pennsylvania
Department of Education

2026-2027

PASA Getting Ready: What Special Education Administrators Need to Know about PASA Participation and Compliance Requirements



Welcome Special Education Administrator/ PASA Assessment Coordinator (AC)

- This presentation is designed to provide a high-level overview of important tasks for the Special Education Administrator/PASA Assessment Coordinator (AC).
- Please reference the links to additional resources embedded throughout the presentation for more information and full training requirements.

What's New for 26-27….

- PASA DLM Student Enrollment
  - All PASA eligible students according to PIMS will be uploaded in the Kite Educator Portal by the state
  - PASA ACs are responsible for confirming state-level enrollment upload and making any corrections via PIMS
  - Rostering students remains the responsibility of the PASA AC

Important Dates

Date	PASA Activity
Aug. 4, 2026	RTAT (Required Test Administrator Training) opens
Nov. 16, 2026	1st statewide upload- PASA student enrollment file from PIMS to Kite Portal
Dec. 21,2026	2nd statewide upload- PASA student enrollment file from PIMS to Kite Portal (weekly state uploads will start in January through the end of the testing window)
March 8 – May 7, 2027	PASA DLM test window

See the PA DLM homepage for full calendar to outline all required dates and activities: Pennsylvania | Dynamic Learning Maps

PASA Eligibility Criteria

- PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision-Making Companion Tool is the resource that IEP teams are required to use when determining eligibility based upon six criteria for participation in the PASA.
- PASA Eligibility Criteria is available on the PDE website.



PASA Eligibility Criteria:

Decision Making Companion Tool

The PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool is a resource provided to individualized education program (IEP) teams in Pennsylvania to assist in determining eligibility for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). The PASA is appropriate for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet all six requirements listed below. Additional considerations are provided that further define the criteria and assist the IEP team in decision making. Factors that the IEP team should not consider in eligibility determination are also identified.

The IEP team must answer "YES" to **all** six criteria in order for the student to participate in the PASA. If the answer is "NO" to any of the questions, the student must participate in the PSSA/ Keystones with or without accommodations, as determined appropriate by the IEP team.

1 ____YES

Will the student be in grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 11 by September 1 of the school year during which the IEP will be operative?

Additional consideration:
The grade level listed for the student in the PIMS and the PASA digital system must correlate to the assessment decision documented in the current IEP.

2 ____YES

Does the student have significant cognitive disabilities? Pennsylvania defines significant cognitive disabilities as pervasive and global in nature, affecting student learning in all academic content areas, as well as adaptive behaviors and functional skills across life domains.

Additional consideration:
A significant cognitive disability is not directly defined by a Chapter 14 disability category. Typically students with a primary disability category of Specific Learning Disability or Speech Language Impairment DO NOT meet the definition of a significant cognitive disability. Generally, a student with a significant cognitive disability may be characterized as having intellectual functioning below average — cognitive measures of intelligence 2.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean.

3 ____YES

Does the student require intensive, direct, and repeated instruction in order to learn and generalize academic, functional, and adaptive behavior skills across multiple settings?

Additional consideration:
The student's course of study includes functional skills. Instruction typically occurs in a one-to-one or small group setting with opportunity to generalize and transfer skills across multiple settings.

4 ____YES

Does the student require extensive adaptation and support in order to perform and/or participate meaningfully and productively in the everyday life activities of integrated school, home, community, and work environments?

Additional consideration:
A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student functioning across all academic, social, and community settings. The student is expected to require intensive and ongoing supports after graduation.

5 ____YES

Does the student require substantial modifications to the general education curriculum?

Additional consideration:
Substantial modifications change the content expectation by a significant reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level standards as exemplified in the Alternate Eligible Content.

6 ____YES

Does the student's participation in the general curriculum differ substantially in form and/or substance from that of most other students? Students found eligible to take the PASA must have measurable annual goals and short-term objectives reflected in the IEP.

Additional consideration:
Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities likely require objectives, materials, prerequisite hierarchies, and teaching modalities different from the general education curriculum. The student's goals and objectives typically reflect the Alternate Eligible Content.

PASA eligibility determinations are NOT based on:

- IQ score or disability category alone (i.e., All students with an intellectual disability do not automatically qualify for the alternate assessment.)
- English Learner (EL) Status
- Poor attendance
- Expected poor performance on the general assessments
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Low reading or achievement level
- Anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional duress
- Impact of scores on accountability system
- Administrative decision

PaTTAN
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

PASA Eligibility Training

Visit the Bureau of Special Education webpage linked below for a brief overview of PASA Eligibility

PASA Eligibility Criteria Brief Overview (YouTube)
PASA Eligibility Criteria Brief Overview (PowerPoint)

PASA Eligibility Key Data Points

Characteristic:	Typically Evidenced by:
Most significant cognitive disability	IQ of 2.5 or more standard deviations below the mean (i.e.,FSIQ 63 or lower). 'Red flag' primary disability categories do not meet the definition.
Severe adaptive behavior deficits	Scores in lowest possible range on multiple or all adaptive behavior rating scale measures
Extensive supports inside and outside of school	Related services (OT, PT, speech, paraprofessional) Independent living goals, supports coordination after graduation
Substantial modifications	Use of tactile, objects, and/or assistive technology
Intensive instruction	Instruction aligned to PASA DLM Essential Elements typically in a 1:1 or small group setting.
Participation in general curriculum differs substantially	Plan to graduate based upon IEP goals rather than 5 Pathways. Stay in a school aged program beyond cohort year of graduation.

FAQ: PASA Eligibility

I have a student who meets some but not all of the PASA criteria. Can the IEP team still qualify the student to take the PASA?

- No. The IEP team cannot override the state defined criteria. The student must have data to support they meet all six criteria clearly documented in section IV of the IEP.

FAQ: Parent Information

How does the LEA best inform parents/guardians of the implications of taking an alternate assessment?

- The PASA eligibly determination must be reviewed with the IEP team including the parent in section IV of the IEP annually
- While the PASA DLM is aligned to the general education standards, the content is significantly reduced in depth, breadth and complexity
- Parents should understand taking the alternate state assessment correlates with instruction based upon the DLM Essential Elements

Participation Matters

Participation Matters: Talking Points for SEA Policymakers | Talking Points on the Participation of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Assessments | Institute on Community Integration Publications

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WHAT IS MY ROLE AS THE PASA AC?

PASA Assessment Coordinator Requirements and Frequently Asked Questions

PASA AC Responsibilities

- Point of contact on behalf of the LEA to the state and vendor
- Receives timely communications from (alternateassessment@pattankop.net) and PDE
- Ensures all PASA eligible students are accurately rostered and assessed in the DLM Kite Portal
- Enters ‘special circumstance codes’ in the Kite portal for non-assessed students

PASA AC Role

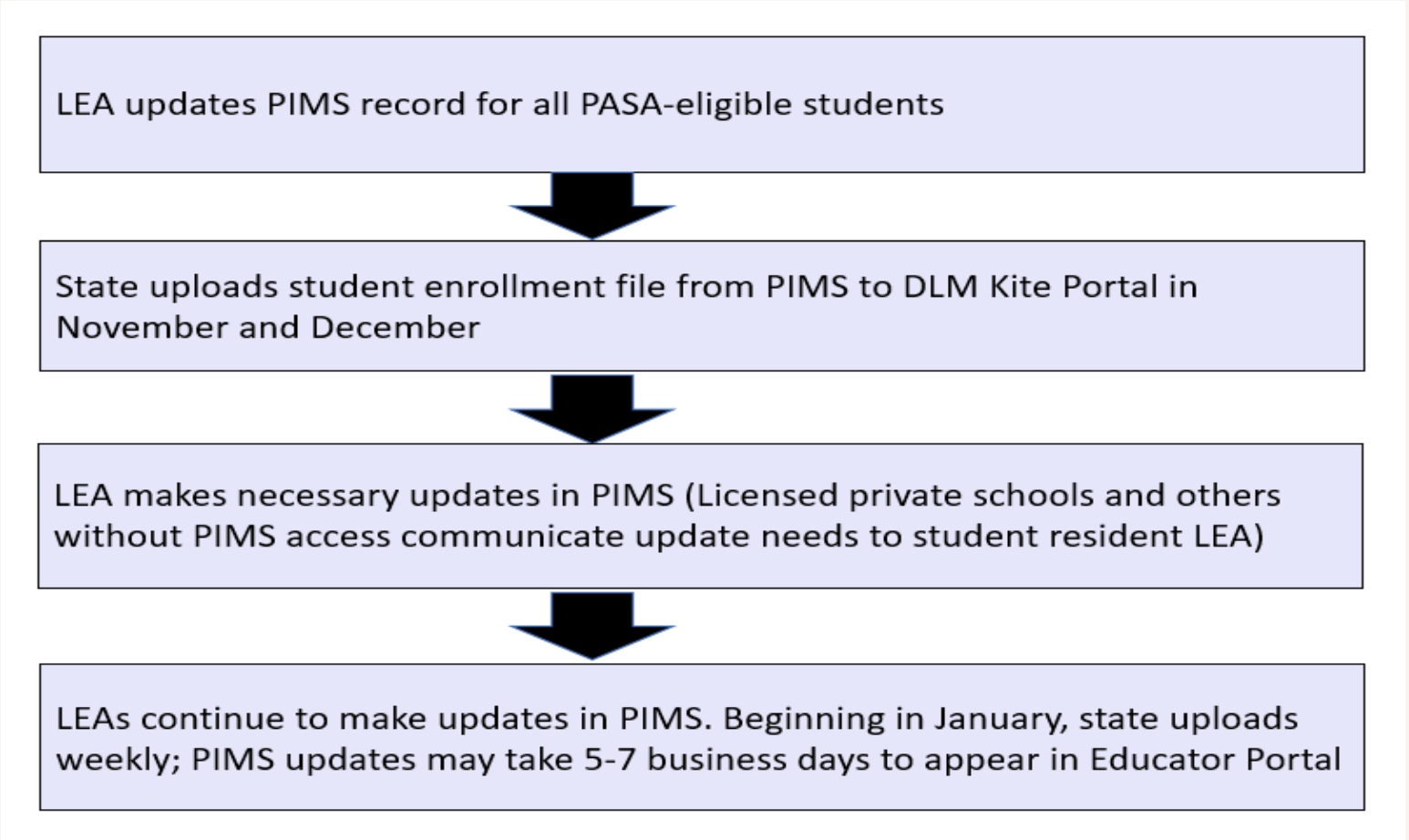
- A Special Education Administrator must be included with the PASA AC role
- More than one PASA AC may be assigned in the Kite Portal
- If your LEA/Service Provider has an individual other than the Special Ed Administrator (e.g., Lead Teacher, Administrative Assistant) currently serving as a PASA AC, they can remain. However, a Special Education Administrator must be included
- PASA AC and DTC (District Test Coordinator) are the same (terminology is interchangeable between PA and the DLM roles)
- Contact alternateassessment@pattankop.net immediately if the assigned PASA AC has been updated for your entity this year

PASA Student Enrollment

New for 2026-27: The state will upload all PASA eligible students directly from PIMS to the DLM Kite Educator Portal

- PASA ACs will no longer upload the 'PIMS PASA DLM Enrollment report'
- The state-wide upload will occur beginning November 16 and update every week starting in January
- Allow 5-7 business days for an update from PIMS to show up in the Educator Portal once the weekly uploads begin in January
- It is imperative for PASA ACs to ensure the accuracy of their PIMS data
- PASA ACs must continue to roster all enrolled students

PASA Student Enrollment Process



FAQ: Student transfers

How does the PASA AC handle a PASA eligible student who moves in or out of the LEA or who is newly found eligible after the initial state upload?

- The data must first be updated in PIMS
- Student enrollment record must be updated when a student moves out of the LEA
- Ensure field 212 is coded with an ‘A’ for a newly eligible student
- Follow the new procedure timelines outlined on the previous slide

FAQ: Students missing from enrollment

I'm a PASA AC at a licensed private academic school. I have PASA eligible students who are not showing up on my enrollment. What should I do?

- Again, all enrollment is taken directly from PIMS. Contact the student's home LEA to ensure they have the student coded properly in PIMS.
- For further assistance, contact the PA Helpdesk at alternateassessment@patttankop.net

FAQ: Student with data error(s)

A student on my enrollment list is showing up as an incorrect grade level. What should I do?

- The student's grade level must be an accurate match in PIMS, DLM Kite Portal, and the IEP
- It is imperative for the PASA AC to check the accuracy of student enrollment data (e.g., grade level)
  - Check the data upon initial enrollment
  - Check again before the testing window opens
  - Guide your TA's to double check the grade level before they begin testing
- A student ultimately tested at the 'wrong' grade level may result in a test invalidation

FAQ: PIMS Data

What are the specific fields in PIMS that must be checked for PASA eligible students?

- Field 212 = A for all PASA eligible students
- Field 226 = AUN of educating entity
- When a student moves, the student enrollment record must be updated in PIMS

Instructionally Embedded Assessment

- PASA DLM offers an optional opportunity for students to participate in an 'instructionally embedded assessment' to inform instruction in real time
- The teacher can check student understanding of specific EEs (Essential Elements) right after instruction has been provided
- Instructionally Embedded Assessment window runs 9/14/2026 - 2/19/2027
- Contact alternateassessment@pattankop.net to be provided a secure way to enroll students prior to the November statewide upload.

1% Requirements for LEAs (Districts and Charter Schools)

Federal Participation Requirements

95% Participation Rate

- PA must improve the overall participation rate of students with disabilities in statewide assessment (PSSA, Keystone, and PASA DLM)

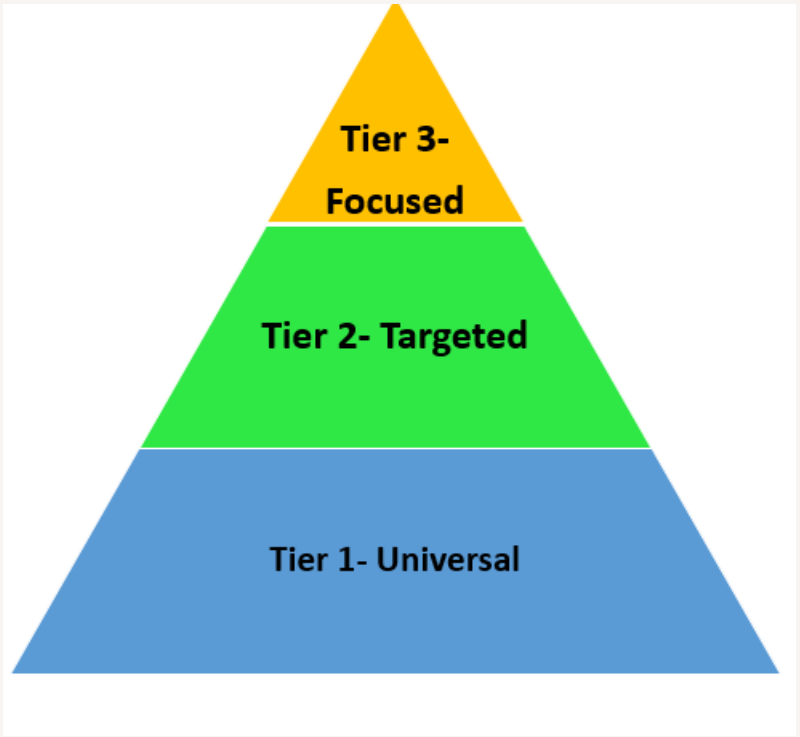


1% Threshold

- PA must ensure that no more than 1% of total tested students are assessed on an alternate assessment (PASA DLM)



PA Tiered System of LEA 1% Oversight & Monitoring



ESSA 1 0 Percent Threshold Justification Requirements | Department of Education | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Click link to review the full description of the tiered system

Who is required to submit justification?

- All LEAs (school districts and charter schools) must submit 1% information to BSE annually
- LEAs who did not exceed the 1% threshold in 2025-26 and do not plan to exceed the threshold this year are only required to confirm that the LEA does not plan to exceed 1% for 2026-27
- LEAs who did exceed the 1% threshold and/or plan to exceed this year are required to answer a series of justification questions

What information is required for the justification?

- LEAs who exceed the threshold may access the PASA 1% Justification form to preview the questions they are required to answer
- Tier 2 and 3 LEAs are required to answer ALL questions on the form
- Link to submit: https://pde.pattan.net/pasaOnePercent
- Due Date: December 07, 2026

FAQ: Tier 2 LEA Requirements

My LEA has been identified as a 'Tier 2' LEA in the 1% oversight and monitoring system. What am I required to do?

- Answer all the justification questions in the system by the identified due date
- Review your LEA's current PASA enrollment to determine if it is appropriate to review any PASA eligibility decisions with the IEP team
- Ensure all PASA eligibility decisions are documented with data in section IV of the IEP
- Tier 2 LEAs may be subject to additional measures of oversight as determined by BSE

FAQ: Tier 3 LEA Requirements

My LEA has been identified as a Tier 3 LEA. What am I required to do?

- Tier 3 LEAs must answer all justification questions
- Work with your regional and state assessment advisor(s) to:
  - Submit required student IEPs
  - Submit the Intensive Needs Review (INR)
  - Reconvene IEP teams as necessary to review PASA eligibility decisions and document evidence of eligibility criteria consideration

Intensive Needs Review (INR)

- The INR is required for all Tier 3 LEAs, but can be used as a resource for any LEA who exceeds the 1% threshold
- Provides a deeper dive into the LEA's data to identify trends or anomalies that may be occurring with PASA participation
- The review should be done as a team to include at least one special education administrator, one building administrator, and one teacher
- Intensive Needs LEA Review

Assessment Participation Resources

1% Compliance Resources

- PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool- PA's PASA DLM eligibility criteria for IEP teams

- PASA DLM parent and family FAQ- this resource can be helpful to IEP teams when discussing PASA participation with families. The resource is housed on the PaTTAN website and is available in translated formats.

- NCEO Tool #10- Making Decisions about Participation in Alternate Assessment

95% Participation Resources

- State Assessment Participation: Why it Matters- PPT slides to address PASA eligibility and 95% participation rates Powerpoint slides to address state assessment participation ratesResources | NCEO- various customizable templates for schools to convey the importance of state assessment participation to students and stakeholders
- Reasons Why Students with Disabilities Should Take State Tests: A Customizable Template for a Flyer for Parents and Families (NCEO Tool #9) (umn.edu)

Need More Information?

- PA DLM Resource Library
- Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA)
- Resources for Families of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (pa.gov)
- PaTTAN - (PASA): Answers to Questions Frequently Asked by Families

Contact Information

PASA DLM enrollment and assessment questions:
PA DLM SERVICE DESK - alternateassessment@pattankop.net

1% compliance and policy questions:
- Lisa Hampe (lihampe@pa.gov)
- Lisa Hauswirth (lhauswirth@pa.gov)



Contact/Mission

For more information on the PASA please visit PDE's website at www.education.pa.gov.

The mission of the Department of Education is to ensure that every learner has access to a world-class education system that academically prepares children and adults to succeed as productive citizens. Further, the Department seeks to establish a culture that is committed to improving opportunities throughout the commonwealth by ensuring that technical support, resources, and optimal learning environments are available for all students, whether children or adults.